ABAC APEC Business Advisory Council

ABAC APEC BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL PHILIPPINES

in partnership with

pdrf PHILIPPINE DISASTER RESILIENCE FOUNDATION

LIVEABLE CITIES PHILIPPINES

FORUM REPORT

FROM RISK TO READINESS

Sharing Best Practices in Disaster Resilience

September 24, 2025
08:00 - 11:00 (GMT+8)
Zoom

ABOUT THE FORUM

On September 24, the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) and ABAC Philippines, in partnership with the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation – a leading non-stock, non-profit organization dedicated to disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) – and Liveable Cities Philippines – an advocacy project committed to building more competitive, sustainable, resilient and liveable cities – organized a forum entitled, “From Risk to Readiness: Sharing Best Practices in Disaster Resilience.”

Based on the latest World Risk Index 2024, 16 APEC economies are “Very Highly” exposed to natural disasters (Frege et al., 2024). Not only does this entail high exposure to ever-worsening natural, human-induced disasters, such as typhoons, floods, earthquakes, and wildfires but also massive pressures on the capacities of Asia-Pacifc economies to be able to withstand the effects of disasters. In 2024 alone, the worst-affected Asia-Pacific economies lost more than $135 billion in disaster-related events (MunichRe, 2025).

Given the need for uninterrupted development of ABAC 2025’s Sustainability Working Group (SWG) initiatives on Green Growth, Energy Security, and Food Security, the Council deems disaster resilience as a key, cross-cutting priority, making it imperative for the region to assess and develop effective policies and actions in member-economies and the Asia-Pacific.

To forge collaboration towards disaster resilience, the forum leveraged the expertise of public and private resilience leaders, experts, organizations, and stakeholders across the globe. The discussions uncovered key challenges, shared practical knowledge and solutions, and forwarded cross-border and cross-sector collaboration towards disaster resilience. The insights gained shape approaches and recommendations to ensure that APEC economies can overcome shocks, protect vulnerable sectors, and maintain progress toward resilient and sustainable growth.

PARTICIPATION

14 Economies

10 APEC Economies

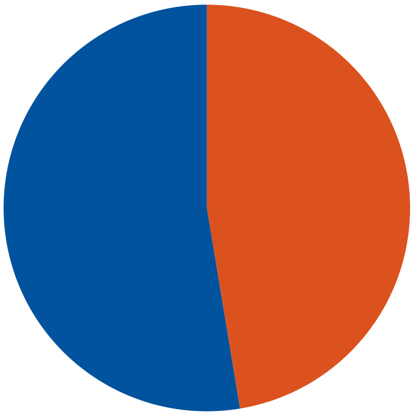
4 Non-APEC Economies

46.7% **Public Sector**

32.4% **Private Sector**

14.3% **CSO/NGO**

6.7% **Academe**



52.6% **Male**

47.4% **Female**

"Strong partnership, clear communication, and shared objectives among public and private players will lead to more efficient disaster response and reduce the impacts of natural disasters on lives and livelihoods."

VERONICA GABALDON
Executive Director
Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation

SPEAKERS

PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP FOR DISASTER RESILIENCE

JOSE HARRY M. BARBER
Officer-in-Charge, Disaster Resilience Service
Office of Civil Defense (OCD), Philippines
PRESENTATION

DR. LI WEI-SEN
Secretary General
National Science and Technology Center for Disaster Reduction (NCDR), Chinese Taipei
PRESENTATION

REGIONAL COLLABORATION FOR DISASTER RESILIENCE

KRISHNA PUTRA TANAJA
Deputy Executive Director
ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Centre)
PRESENTATION

LUIS DOÑAS
Head of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, **National Disaster Prevention and Response Service (SENAPRED), Government of Chile**
Alternate Co-Chair, **APEC Emergency Preparedness Working Group (EPWG)**
PRESENTATION

PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT FOR DISASTER RESILIENCE

VERONICA GABALDON
Executive Director
Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF)
PRESENTATION

FLORIAN RHIZA NERY
Deputy Programme Coordinator
OCHA-UNDP Connecting Business initiative (CBi)
PRESENTATION

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Disaster resilience is both a humanitarian and economic imperative.

Global losses reached $22 billion in 2023, but cascading and indirect effects pushed the real annual toll to $2.3 trillion. Agriculture absorbs the bulk of drought-related losses (84% historically), showing the uneven burden on vulnerable sectors. With every $1 invested in disaster risk reduction saving up to $15 in recovery costs, resilience should be treated not as an optional add-on but as a central economic strategy.

The Philippines demonstrates policy response to extreme vulnerability.

Consistently ranked the world's most at-risk economy, the Philippines experiences around 50 earthquakes daily and has 24 active volcanoes, on top of typhoon exposure. The *Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 (Republic Act 10121)* institutionalized a comprehensive, four-pillar framework for disaster governance. This has been strengthened by the *Declaration of a State of Imminent Disaster Act (Republic Act 12287)*, which embeds anticipatory action principles and authorizes local governments to allocate their DRRM funds for preparedness and prevention, not just post-disaster response.

Preparedness pays dividends, as proven by Chinese Taipei's experience.

A 25-year investment in resilience measures reduced deaths from 2,500 in the 1999 Chi-Chi earthquake to just 20 in a similar-magnitude quake in 2024. This success was achieved through strict enforcement of building codes, seismic retrofitting of schools, early warning systems, and continuous public drills. The integration of IoT, AI, and over 600 government datasets into an "information supply chain" ensures that alerts reach both authorities and the general public in real time, proving that technology and education together save lives.

"We must bounce back from natural disasters better than how we were before it. The ultimate resilience dividend is when disaster preparedness benefits our communities, even if a disaster does not strike."

GUILLERMO M. LUZ
Alternate Member
ABAC Philippines

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Regional coordination multiplies the effectiveness of domestic systems.

The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Centre) embodies the principle of "One ASEAN, One Response," deploying rapid-response teams, stockpiled relief goods, and harmonized operating procedures across member-economies. Chile complements this with strong engagement in APEC, the UN system, and India's Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. Both examples show that multilateral cooperation creates scale, standardization, and shared capacity, allowing economies to respond more quickly and learn collectively.

Financial innovation is central to closing the resilience funding gap.

Chile's experience with the 2018 Pacific Alliance Catastrophe Bond demonstrated that pooled, parametric insurance can provide rapid payouts—activated during Peru's earthquake—while incentivizing higher safety standards through tiered triggers. While hydro-meteorological risks proved too complex for regional pooling, the initiative acted as a "learning lab." Chile has since issued $630 million in its own earthquake catastrophe coverage (combining bonds and swaps), illustrating how collective experiments can evolve into resilience financing in economies.

Private sector engagement is critical for building resilience.

The Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF), formed after Typhoon Ketsana in 2009 and reoriented toward resilience after Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, demonstrates how businesses can institutionalize disaster response and preparedness. Its cluster system organizes companies by sectoral competencies (energy, telecom, logistics) and aligns them with government and humanitarian players. The private-sector-led Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in Clark, supported by the "Handa" risk assessment tool, illustrates how corporate resources and innovation directly enhance resilience in economies.

Businesses are moving "from donors to doers."

The OCHA–UNDP Connecting Business initiative (CBi) shows how organized networks of companies worldwide are actively responding to disasters, not just funding them. With 21 networks representing over a million businesses, CBi has supported 189 crises since 2016. Examples include Indonesian chambers creating virtual EOCs, Mexican networks mobilizing hundreds of tons of aid, and Peruvian networks using AI hubs for coordination. Importantly, CBi targets MSMEs with peer-to-peer learning and simple readiness tools, proving that resilience must cascade down to the smallest enterprises.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Capacity building and knowledge transfer underpin sustainable resilience.

Both the Philippines' Office of Civil Defense training institute and Chinese Taipei's National Fire Agency training center are open to private sector and international partners. These institutions deliver hands-on training in urban search and rescue, alongside technical knowledge in AI-driven analytics and data integration. By embedding learning and skill transfer, resilience systems gain long-term sustainability and can adapt to emerging risks.

Community engagement and "last mile" communication determine success.

Sophisticated warning systems are ineffective if local communities cannot understand or trust the message. Translators or "facilitators" who convert technical, scientific language into simple and culturally relevant terms are critical. As Dr. Li stressed, preparedness depends on motivating households and villages to act early, not just equipping high-level authorities.

Strong governance anchors all resilience efforts.

Governance emerged as the linchpin across all discussions. Financial instruments, regional mechanisms, and private-sector partnerships all require effective institutions to ensure that resources and knowledge reach communities. Governance ensures accountability, coherence, and political commitment, transforming policies and tools into tangible resilience on the ground.

Watch the forum recording here:

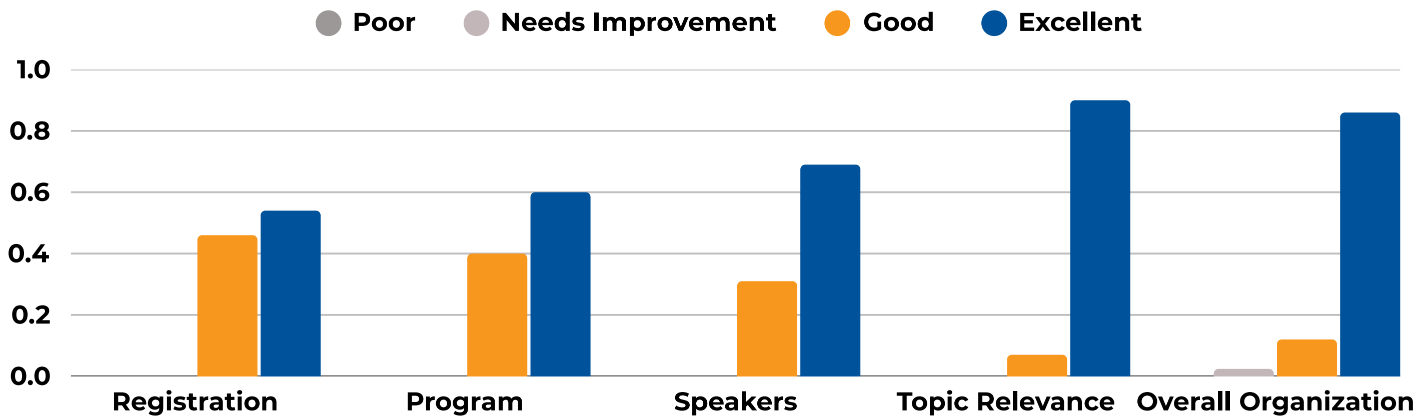
https://bit.ly/ABACDisasterResilienceForum2025

"This is a moment of reckoning. We need to work together, share the load, do things differently – to be bold and brave. We need to bring in the innovations and ingenuity of governments, businesses, and civil society together."

FLORIAN RHIZA NERY
Deputy Programme Coordinator
OCHA-UNDP Connecting Business initiative (CBi)

FEEDBACK

Please rate the following from 1 (Poor) to 4 (Excellent).



Figures are in percentage (1.0 = 100%)

What topics are you interested in learning more about?

- Building effective community-driven DRRM programs
- Clarifying Public-Private Partnership mechanisms for more efficient coordination
- Enhancing cross-border cooperation through regional interoperability and supply chain readiness initiatives
- Inclusive resilience by strengthening the nexus of DRRM and gender development
- Public transport recovery from major natural disasters

Audience Testimonies

"The emphasis on cross-sectoral collaboration, technological innovation, and inclusive strategies reflects a growing consensus that resilience is not just a reactive measure but a proactive investment in sustainable development. The Philippines' active participation through ABAC reinforces its commitment to shaping a more prepared and equitable APEC community."

"I'm looking forward to similar events of ABAC and partner agencies and organizations in the future, online and in-person."

"'*Who for?*' is a reminder that the object of our efforts to improve capabilities, leverage resources from all stakeholders, and invest in preparedness is for it to materialize at the community-level. We must bring the community to the forefront of our efforts."

LUIS DOÑAS
Head of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, SENAPRED, Government of Chile
Alternate Co-Chair, APEC EPWG

SPECIAL THANKS

APEC Emergency Preparedness Working Group (EPWG)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Connecting Business initative (CBi)

ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Centre)

National Disaster Prevention and Response Service (SENAPRED) - Government of Chile

National Science and Technology Center for Disaster Reduction - Chinese Taipei

Office of Civil Defense - Philippines

ABAC International Secretariat

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