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UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction



TICAD 9 (Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development) ILO-UNDRR High-Level Thematic Event

Jobs and livelihoods, enhancing resilience: A means to address root causes of protracted crises

About the event

The Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9) took place in Yokohama, Japan, from 20 to 22 August 2025.

The International Labour Organization (ILO), together with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, organized a high-level thematic event entitled “Jobs and livelihoods, enhancing resilience: A means to address root causes of protracted crises” on 21 August 2025, from 15:20 to 16:50. The session brought together 80 on-site participants and more than 350 participants via global livestream.

This high-level thematic event was designed as an interactive dialogue to explore how mainstreaming decent work into disaster countermeasures can build more resilient communities and enable sustainable and inclusive growth across Africa. The event was particularly timely given Africa is facing a multitude of interconnected crises, including political insecurity, climate change, and increasingly frequent and intense natural hazards, which strain resources, fuel conflicts, and deepen vulnerability, threatening jobs and livelihoods. If unaddressed, they can lead to forced displacement, disproportionately affecting marginalized groups and destabilizing peace and security. The event emphasized that tackling the root causes of fragility and structural vulnerabilities by providing equal employment opportunities alongside enhancing disaster management systems is critical for the socioeconomic development of the continent.

The event's format combined opening remarks, a panel discussion, and reflections from social partners with an engaging audience discussion. It brought together a diverse group of stakeholders—including representatives from governments, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector—to share practical experiences from the field, particularly through their interactions with communities and workers. The discussions highlighted how employment-intensive investment approaches, anchored in a rights-based and long-term strategy, can be integrated into policies and practices to enhance disaster prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery, while also creating quality jobs and rebuilding trust in crisis-affected areas. The event provided a platform for discussions that can be translated into tangible actions toward a more resilient and equitable future for African countries. The following sections provide a summary of the messages and discussions from each session.



Opening remarks

Mr. Nobuharu Imanishi

Ambassador, Deputy Assistant Minister and Deputy Director-General for Global Issues, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

Mr. Nobuharu Imanishi, Ambassador, Deputy Assistant Minister and Deputy Director-General for Global Issues, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, representing the Government of Japan, emphasized the vital role of employment and livelihoods in building resilient societies. He noted that Japan, with its frequent exposure to natural hazards, has long prioritized disaster risk reduction (DRR), and viewed this event as a valuable opportunity to share its perspective and explore how decent work can contribute to effective DRR strategies. He further highlighted that employment opportunities must be central to disaster countermeasures, particularly in Africa, where climate change and political unrest continue to pose serious threats to communities.

Mr. Imanishi outlined three key reasons for integrating employment into DRR strategies: first, restoring livelihoods enables communities to rebuild independently, breaking the cycle of poverty and social instability; second, job creation—supported by continuous investment and skills development—serves as a strategic pillar of DRR; and third, a human-centred recovery approach that ensures equal access to opportunities and strengthens social protection for all, including vulnerable groups, lays the groundwork for inclusive and sustainable resilience.



“Livelihood recovery is the bedrock of resilience.”

“We should never forget to integrate the perspectives of vulnerable groups, including women and children.”

Japan’s support for ILO projects was highlighted through examples such as the Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) in Madagascar, where infrastructure development and restoration have created green jobs, and an ongoing project in Côte d’Ivoire that has generated employment opportunities for youth. Mr. Imanishi also noted the role played by Japanese NGOs in those projects, particularly in bringing Japanese expertise into practice on the ground.

Mr. Imanishi concluded by expressing confidence that the event would foster co-created solutions to global challenges and reaffirmed Japan’s commitment to supporting Africa’s sustainable development through continued partnership with the ILO, UNDRR, and African nations.

Mr. André Bogui

ILO Assistant Director-General and Director of the Director-General's Office

Following the opening remarks by the Government of Japan, Mr. André Bogui, ILO Assistant Director-General and Director of the Director-General's Office, delivered a statement emphasizing the urgent need to integrate employment dimensions into disaster risk management, particularly in the African context.

Mr. Bogui described the multifaceted crises confronting Africa, from political instability and conflict to increasingly frequent and severe climate-related disasters.

He noted that these challenges place strain on limited resources and disproportionately affect vulnerable groups such as women, youth, refugees, and informal workers. He raised concern that without inclusive and proactive responses, these pressures could undermine development progress and social cohesion.

“Sustainable resilience is built through decent work and social justice. Decent employments go beyond income.”

Mr. Bogui stressed that long-term resilience must be built on a foundation of decent work, which encompasses fair working conditions, rights at work, social protection, and participatory dialogue. While reconstruction efforts often generate short-term employment, lasting impact depends on equitable labour markets and local capacity-building. To illustrate this, Mr. Bogui shared the example of an ILO EIIP project in Mozambique, supported by the Government of Japan, which rehabilitated rural roads after two cyclones in 2019. It created over 7,400 days of employment, enhanced workers' skills, and strengthened local institutions. He also referenced the 20th ILO Regional Conference in Ethiopia, where delegates from 53 countries, including 25 African Ministers, reaffirmed their commitment to employment-intensive investment approaches.

Mr. Bogui concluded by underscoring that DRR efforts must address inequality and exclusion, and that promoting decent work as a central pillar is essential to achieving inclusive, sustainable, and peaceful development.



“We cannot reduce disaster risk without addressing inequality and exclusion.”

Mr. Kamal Kishore

Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSO) for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of the UNDRR

Mr. Kamal Kishore, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSO) for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of the UNDRR, began by commending the Government of Japan for organizing TICAD 9 and for prioritizing resilience within its agenda. He reflected on the decade since the adoption of the Sendai Framework, noting progress in reducing disaster-related mortality but warning that other targets—such as reducing the number of people affected, economic losses, and infrastructure damage—are falling short of the targets. Mr. Kishore stressed that without investing in resilient livelihoods and decent work, the goals set out in the Sendai Framework will remain unmet.

“There are more people getting affected, there are more people who are losing their houses, there are more people who are losing their jobs, as a result of disasters.”

He emphasized Africa’s unique vulnerability and opportunity, citing three reasons why resilience is critical for the continent: its large number of least developed and landlocked countries with significant development aspirations; the pronounced impacts of climate change, including floods and droughts affecting millions; and the complex interplay of disaster risk, fragility, and violence. To advance resilience, Mr. Kishore proposed three priorities. First, early warning systems should extend beyond saving lives to safeguarding livelihoods by providing timely information. Second, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises must be supported, as they often fall through the cracks after disasters despite their central role in sustaining communities. Third, every disaster should be treated as an opportunity to build back better—by strengthening public assets and enhancing livelihoods.

Mr. Kishore concluded by urging proactive planning, integrating a forward-looking approach into national systems before disasters strike, and using recovery as a chance to strengthen livelihood resilience.



“We have to use every disaster to build back better, not just build back better stronger schools and stronger houses and stronger infrastructure, but more resilient livelihoods.”

Panel discussion

The panel discussion brought together diverse voices from governments, academia, civil society, and the private sector to explore how to strengthen disaster prevention, support inclusive community recovery, and enhance resilience—particularly through decent work creation. Moderated by **Mr. Kamal Kishore, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of the UNDRR**, the session highlighted the effectiveness of employment-intensive investment approaches, community-based infrastructure, and climate-resilient innovations in addressing the root causes of fragility. The panellists shared practical experiences from African countries, illustrating how multi-stakeholder collaboration and locally driven solutions can foster resilience, restore livelihoods, and advance equitable development.

Panellists contributions

Mr. Soja Lahimaro, Associate Professor at the University of Fianarantsoa and former regional governor in Madagascar, reflected on his governance experience in the Androy region—often referred to as the “cemetery of projects” due to its chronic underdevelopment and vulnerability. He noted that this region is also among the most displaced in Madagascar, largely due to natural hazards. He emphasized the transformative impact of the ILO’s Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP), supported by the Government of Japan, which helped communities recover from climate-induced disasters and regain their livelihoods. Mr. Lahimaro underscored that sustainable development in disaster-prone regions requires long-term commitment and economic incentives, and that learning from the expertise of UN agencies such as the ILO and UNDRR is highly beneficial. He also pointed out the importance of scaling up successful interventions to reach displaced populations and marginalized communities. He concluded by stating that while there is still a long way to go, the country is now on the path to social justice, decent work, and gender equality.



Ms. Josia Nyamien Epse Coulibaly, Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability Manager at Olam Agri in Côte d’Ivoire, brought a private sector perspective rooted in field experience. As an example of the impacts of climate shocks, she described how a pest attack three years ago devastated agricultural production and livelihoods, causing a 50% decrease in production in the north of Côte d’Ivoire. In response, her team introduced an innovative



solution: producing biochar from agricultural waste to improve soil fertility, enhance productivity, and sequester carbon. She explained that it helped farmers become more resilient to climate change while also supporting private sector development. Ms. Coulibaly stressed that investing in climate resilience is not only socially responsible but also economically sound, benefiting both communities and businesses. She introduced a collaborative project with the ILO that supports refugee populations and local farmers through green jobs, increasing productivity by 30 to 35 percent while creating decent work for youth and women—demonstrating that collective action is key to developing effective responses to these challenges.

Ms. Yuka Iwamura, Project Manager in charge of projects in Africa, Community Road Empowerment (CORE) Uganda, shared insights from her 14 years of experience implementing community-based infrastructure projects across Africa. She introduced Japanese "Do-nou" technology—a cost-effective, labour-intensive road construction method that uses locally sourced materials to improve access to essential social services such as schools and hospitals.



The technology also has applications in water detention, erosion control, and flood management. Ms. Iwamura explained how CORE's on-the-job training programmes empower vulnerable groups—such as youth, women, and refugees—to acquire skills, form enterprises, and access employment. She emphasized that CORE's approach is to work with communities, not for them. The organization transfers skills through a paid work-based skills initiative and encourages trainees to register their own companies to ensure sustainability. She cited successful collaborative projects with the ILO's EIIP in eight Sub-Saharan African countries, including Kenya and Gambia.

In these projects, youth trained by CORE established small and medium-sized enterprises that created long-term employment opportunities for their communities. To ensure lasting impact, she also highlighted that involving local authorities is key, as they are able to replicate and scale up the projects after completion.

Closing reflections

To conclude the panel discussion, Mr. Kishore summarized the key takeaways. He stated that while disasters and crises adversely affect livelihoods, this outcome is not inevitable. By exercising imagination, it is possible to turn climate-related challenges into opportunities that create new and decent jobs. He highlighted that planning and implementing infrastructure projects in an inclusive way—by using local materials, building local capacity, and ensuring durability—not only creates valuable assets but also improves access to markets and social services, ultimately leading to more resilient livelihoods and decent work.

“When we make investment, we make sure that it generates resilient employment at scale. That's a corner stone of resilience as well.” – Mr. Kamal Kishore



Interactive discussion

The interactive segment, moderated by **Mr. Gamelihle Sibanda, Senior Employment Intensive Investment Programmes Specialist at the ILO Office in Pretoria**, provided an opportunity for social partners to share perspectives on the role of workers' and employers' organizations in disaster response and resilience-building, followed by a Q&A session with the audience. The discussion underscored the importance of inclusive dialogue and multi-stakeholder collaboration in shaping policies that protect livelihoods and promote decent work before, during, and after crises.

Remarks from **Ms. Yoshiko Norimatsu**, Assistant General Secretary, RENGO (Japanese Trade Union Confederation)

Ms. Yoshiko Norimatsu, Assistant General Secretary of RENGO, emphasized the critical role of workers and trade unions in disaster response and recovery, drawing on lessons from the 2024 Noto Peninsula earthquake. She explained that RENGO's approach combines emergency fundraising, volunteer deployments, and policy advocacy. Following the earthquake, RENGO swiftly mobilized an emergency fund for affected prefectures and coordinated volunteer engagement, with nearly 3,000 union members participating over four months, coordinating efforts through local social welfare councils. Ms. Norimatsu highlighted that these actions go beyond charity—they reflect structured social dialogue that ensures workers' voices influence decision-making. She stressed that protecting employment and occupational safety during recovery is essential, alongside implementing special unemployment benefits for those who lost jobs due to disasters. RENGO also addressed gender-specific needs by advocating for women's safety in shelters and partnering with medical professionals. She concluded by stating that social dialogue is the key enabler for timely and comprehensive action, and integrating workers and unions into resilience frameworks is indispensable for effective disaster risk management.



Remarks from **Ms. Emiko Nagasawa**, Senior Advisor, Labor Legislation Bureau, KEIDANREN (Japan Business Federation)

Ms. Emiko Nagasawa, Senior Advisor at the Labor Legislation Bureau of KEIDANREN, presented the private sector's perspective on resilience, stressing that for Japanese businesses, disasters are not exceptional but part of the continuum of daily life. She outlined three pillars for corporate preparedness: robust Business Continuity Planning (BCP), swift and coordinated emergency response that protect the lives of employees, and leveraging innovation, such as ICT and AI, for early warning and resilient design. Ms. Nagasawa introduced two concepts rooted in Japanese experience: Human Security Infrastructure, which integrates physical and social systems to protect lives and livelihoods, and the Phase-Free approach, ensuring everyday products and spaces serve emergency functions without added cost. She illustrated how these principles enable businesses to safeguard operations while supporting communities during crises. She reaffirmed KEIDANREN's commitment to mainstreaming decent work in resilience strategies, emphasizing that safe and sustainable employment underpins human dignity. Her closing message—"every day, together, smartly"—captured the essence of preparedness, collaboration, and innovation as drivers of resilience and inclusive growth.



Q & A with the audiences



The interactive Q&A session provided clarity on practical applications and platforms for collaboration.

The first question, posed by an official from the African Union Commission and directed to Ms. Yuka Iwamura, sought specificity on the types of roads targeted by CORE's Do-nou technology and its applicability across Africa. Ms. Iwamura explained that the method is designed for gravel and community access roads, which constitute the majority of rural roads in Africa. She highlighted that these are often unclassified roads overlooked by national budgets. The Do-nou method fills this gap by utilizing local materials and labour to create durable, semi-permanent surfaces, making roads all-weather and improving accessibility to essential social services in remote areas.



The second question asked how to establish platforms that enable collaboration among governments, international organizations, private sector actors, and NGOs during disasters. In response, Ms. Emiko Nagasawa highlighted the Global Coalition for Social



Justice as an existing mechanism that fosters multi-stakeholder engagement. While disaster resilience is not yet a dedicated theme within the Global Coalition for Social Justice, she suggested it could become a future focus, offering a space for coordinated action and knowledge sharing. Both responses underscored the importance of appropriate solutions and inclusive partnerships in advancing resilience strategies.

Closing remarks

Ms. Fanfan Rwanyindo Kayirangwa

ILO Assistance Director-General and Regional Director for Africa



The event concluded with remarks by Ms. Fanfan Rwanyindo Kayirangwa, ILO Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Africa, who stressed the need to transition from reactive disaster response to proactive preparedness, prevention, and resilience-building. She expressed gratitude to the Government of Japan for its leadership and support for the ILO's mandate, and to UNDRR for its long-standing collaboration, noting that resilience and decent work are mutually reinforcing priorities.

Ms. Rwanyindo Kayirangwa highlighted the Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) as a cornerstone of the ILO's approach, enabling decent job creation while strengthening community resilience. With over five decades of experience, EIIP has proven effective in addressing the root causes of fragility—tackling poverty, exclusion, and lack of opportunities—while prioritizing marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities, refugees, and internally displaced persons, thereby fostering social cohesion and dignity. She emphasized that EIIP's local focus, use of community labour and materials, and integration of skills development set it apart from short-term cash-for-work measures. This approach embeds social justice into infrastructure and environmental investments and ensures sustainability beyond project completion, as demonstrated by its impacts across Africa—from rural roads in Kenya to green works in Madagascar, post-disaster rehabilitation in Mozambique, and green technologies for “build back better” in Côte d'Ivoire—all of which created quality jobs.

Ms. Rwanyindo Kayirangwa called for scaling up proven solutions through partnerships that place people and decent work at the centre of resilience strategies, urging governments, employers, and workers to champion job creation as a pillar of disaster risk reduction. Her closing message was clear: ***Let us build on what works, scale it up, and ensure that communities across Africa not only recover but thrive.***

