



Private-public partnerships can play an effective part in increasing disaster preparedness and response, according to UN officials and representatives of global corporations who took part in a debate in New York this week. The event was hosted by the missions of Turkey and Germany to the United Nations, with the aim of highlighting the role of the private sector in reducing the suffering caused by natural hazards.

"The United Nations is ready to work with the private sector to manage disaster risk," said Jordan Ryan, Assistant Administrator and Director, UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery at the event, which was also attended by Assistant Secretary-General Catherine Bragg of the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. "Our networks stretch around the world, from the halls of power to the smallest farming communities. The UN is ready to collaborate, share knowledge and skills, build resilience and improve planning for disasters."

"We believe in public-private partnerships that spread the benefits of social outcomes more widely," said Ms. Zeynep Özbil, Director of Corporate Citizenship at Turkcell. The Turkish mobile phone operator won praise for its relief and rebuilding programmes in Van, Turkey, after the region was struck by a devastating earthquake in 2011. Turkcell was granted the UN Elite Award for the US\$ 5.7 million worth of projects it initiated under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and in association with the Turkish Education Foundation, to help build quake-resistant housing for teachers and dormitories for students.

German postal and logistics operator Deutsche Post DHL was commended at the event for its partnership with UNDP and OCHA, initiated in 2005. The agreement has seen the company train more than 400 staff volunteers for deployment after natural disasters to help alleviate bottlenecks at airports by sorting, storing and repackaging relief items. The teams have been deployed to some 20 countries including Myanmar, Pakistan, Haiti, Indonesia and New Zealand. Another programme trains airport workers to deal with the influx of relief aid that follows a natural disaster.

"Airport workers in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Lebanon and Turkey – all countries that are vulnerable to natural hazards – have been trained through the scheme to cope with incoming relief goods, storing them and delivering them quickly via our Disaster Prevention Programme," said Dr. Christof Ehrhart, Head of Corporate Communications and Responsibility at Deutsche Post DHL. "And when a disaster happens, our DHL Disaster Response Teams continue to be on standby for immediate support at the affected airports."

Source: [UNDP News](#)