

'Disaster Resilience Must Be Built Into Infra Projects'

Our Bureau

New Delhi: Economic affairs secretary Anuradha Thakur on Wednesday stressed the need to embed disaster resilience in the design and financing of infrastructure projects, underscoring that disasters are not merely environmental issues but also significant developmental and fiscal challenges.

Highlighting the economic impact of disasters, she said that every damaged road, disrupted power system and flooded urban network results in lost growth, strained public finances and setbacks to livelihoods.

"We recognise that resilience is not an add-on. It is a must, and it has to be embedded into (infrastructure projects) as we plan, finance and execute... not necessarily only after the disaster takes place," Thakur said in a keynote address on 'Mobilising Finance for Resilience' at an event organised by the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

The economic affairs secretary highlighted three points. First, investing upfront in bolstering disaster-resilient infrastructure reduces long-term costs, avoids disruptions and safeguards public finances. "It is

not merely a safeguard. In fact, it's a productivity enhancing investment," she said.

Second, disaster resilience needs to be mainstreamed and not marginalised, which would require alignment across ministries, sectors and implementing agencies, according to her.

Third, partnerships are essential for knowledge-sharing, standard-setting and capacity-building, especially for developing countries that face the highest disaster risks with the least resources, she said.



Anuradha Thakur

MAINSTREAMING DISASTER RESILIENCE

Global infrastructure losses due to climate and disaster risks are estimated at \$845 billion a year, with actual losses much higher, according to a report prepared by the CDRI, in collaboration with the DEA, released at the event.

The report, titled 'Mainstreaming Disaster Resilience into Infrastructure Projects in India', said the country's \$4.51 trillion infrastructure investment target by 2030, and its aim to become a \$30 trillion economy by 2047, hinge on embedding resilience in infrastructure systems.

It recommended incorporating resilience clauses into contracts, integrating disaster risk assessments across the project lifecycle, bolstering hazard data systems, building institutional capacity and creating innovative financing mechanisms.