Sri Lanka Country Paper

Disaster Management Policy in Sri Lanka

Presented at the
South Asia Policy Dialog Workshop – New Delhi India
21-22 August 2006

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Disasters that have affected in Sri Lanka

- Floods
- Landslides
- Cyclones
- Droughts
- Tsunami
- Sea Erosion
- Epidemics

Floods during the Southwest Monsoon
May-September
Floods during the Northeast Monsoon

September - December
Landslides

Droughts

- Drought is the most significant hazard in Sri Lanka in terms of people affected and relief provided.
- South-Eastern district of Hambantota and the North-Western region of Mannar and Puttalam are frequently affected.
- Drought tendency is markedly less in the South-West of Sri Lanka where there is heavy rainfall.
Regional droughts occur once in every 3 – 4 years. Severe drought occurs once in 10 years.

Main Causes of drought:
- Least rainfall
- Deforestation
- Improper land use
- Unplanned cultivation

Drought – 2001

- Severe drought occurred in 7 Districts of the country:
  - Hambantota
  - Moneragala
  - Kurunegala
  - Puttalam
  - Ratnapura
  - Badulla
  - Ampara
Cyclones

Tracks of Cyclones and Storms (1901 - 2000)
Courtesy MDS

Tsunami 2004

- Southern, Western, Eastern and Northern coastal belt is prone to Tsunami
- The unprecedented havoc caused by Tsunami had devastated two thirds of the coastal belt of Sri Lanka
- More than 31,000 lives were lost and 63,472 houses were completely damaged in thirteen districts along the coastal belt of Colombo, Kalutara, Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Ampara, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi, Jaffna, Puttalam and Gampaha districts.
- Approximately 4,100 people were missing.
- Devastated the infrastructure, including secondary and tertiary roads, public and private buildings including schools, health centres, hospitals, power lines, water supply lines, water reservoirs and wells, main and secondary irrigation canals, culverts, sewerage systems etc, coupled with huge socio-cultural problems.
26th Dec. 2004 Tsunami – Districts Affected

Legislative Background

- Tsunami of December 2004, floods and landslides of May 2003 and various small to medium scale disasters in Sri Lanka over the past few years have brought back into focus the fact that Sri Lanka is a disaster prone country.

- Recurrent disasters have caused losses to human lives, property and the environment and eroded development gains.

- Need to strengthen all aspects of Disaster Risk Management (DRM) – both proactive risk reduction as well as reactive disaster response mechanisms

- Tsunami has reaffirmed the urgent need for a DRM legislation in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan Parliament passed the “Sri Lanka Disaster Management Act No 13 of 2005.”
Sri Lanka Disaster Management Act, No.13 of 2005

- Establishment of *Institutional* and *Legislative systems* for a ‘legal’ framework for DRM
- Addresses Disaster Management (DM) holistically, leading to a policy shift from response based mechanisms to a proactive approach
- Provide for establishment of National Council for Disaster Management (NCDM) and Disaster Management Centre (DMC)

DRM Institutional Framework in Sri Lanka

- **National Council for Disaster Management**
  - Chair Person: H.E. President
  - Vice Chairmen: Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition

- **Ministry of Disaster Management & Human rights**

- **DMC**

  (Activities will be coordinated through Disaster Management Coordinators)
Organizational Structure of the Disaster Management Centre

National Level

- Disaster Management Centre (Director General)
- National Consultants
- Disaster Management Technology, Mitigation Unit (Director)
- Forecasting, Early Warning & Dissemination Unit (Director)
- Preparedness Planning Unit (Director)
- Training, Education & Public Awareness Unit (Director)
- Personnel & Administration Branch (Deputy Director)
- Media Unit (Deputy Director)

Intermediate & Local Levels

- District Emergency Operation Centres (DRM Coordinators)
- Disaster Management Assistants

Coordination Mechanism for Disaster Risk Management

- National Council for Disaster Management (DMC)
- Provincial Councils
- District Secretariats
- Line departments
- District NGOs and CBOs
- Through District DRM Coordinators
- Local Authorities
- Divisional Secretariats
- Grama Niladaries
- Villages

- Department of Meteorology
- GSMB
- NBRO
- NSF
- CCD
- NARA
- CMC & Fire Brigade
- SL Navy
- Mahaveli Authority
- Department of Irrigation
- NWS&DB
- Atomic Energy Authority
- CEA
- CEBS
- Department of Social Services
- Marine Pollution & Prevention Authority
- Medical Research Institute
- Department, Of Agriculture
- Others
National Policy

• It is accepted that
  ❖ Disaster cannot be a voided. However Impact could be minimized.
  ❖ Managing disaster in 21st century require a national approach
  ❖ Disaster Management need to be incorporated in to national plan for development to
    ❖ Prevent occurrence of Disasters
    ❖ Mitigate impacts
    ❖ Ensure adequate preparedness for effective response
    ❖ Ensure sustainable development

National Policy Cont....

• Policy provided for;
  ➢ Development of National Disaster management Plan & National Emergency Operation Plan
  ➢ Understanding of roles and responsibilities all stake holders in DM
  ➢ Encouraging CBDM
  ➢ Capacity building & Public Awareness
  ➢ Effective use of resources
• There are 23 Guiding Principals;
  ▪ Ensure coordination among all stakeholders
  ▪ Decentralization of DRM activities with funds
  ▪ Only one agency responsible for issuing early warning
  ▪ Ensure development of realistic DM Plan at all levels
  ▪ Effective use of Media for warning and awareness

• Propagate culture of volunteerism
• Adopt Incident Command System
• Ensure social justice and equity
• Involve professional expertise on DRM activities
• Exercise transparency and Accountability
Strategy for DRM

- Technical Advisory Committees appointed as per DM Act to guide DMC
- National Emergency Response Committee to coordinate activities
- Provincial, District, Divisional, Local Authority & Village level committees will coordinate and implement DM activities
- EW Centre, Risk assessment data collection analysis centre, 24/7 NOC, and DMC will be in one location and linked to all local centres.

Strategy for Disaster Response

- Divisional Secretaries/ LA, Village DM committees will be 1st responders,
- If the disaster is beyond 1st responders capacity District & Provincial authorities will respond at appropriate level
- If the disaster is of national magnitude then central Government will take action
Funds for Disaster Management

- DMC to establish a special DM fund as provided in the DM Act and provide fund to LA, PC for DRM activities
- Disaster Management included as a line item in the national budget ensuring allocation fund by government agencies for DM
- Incorporation of Disaster Risk Assessment in to EIA ensure allocation of funds for mitigation works in new projects

Regional Cooperation

- In 2003 floods and 2004 tsunami immediate response came from countries from the region
- Expert advice received for reconstruction phase was valuable
- In formulating legislation countries in the region made available professionals in DM
- Wealth of experience in the region for design of infrastructure in disaster prone areas, post disaster construction & retrofitting is very useful
Conclusions and Recommendations

• Promote the establishment of Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (OCTWS) and establish communication system between OCTWS and respective disaster management agencies in the region
• Explore the possibility of using satellite communication facility available in the region, in favorable terms, for post disaster search & rescue and relief distribution activities.
• Reach an agreement to provide real time data to all agencies involve with the issue of disaster warning messages in the region

Conclusions and Recommendations
Cont……

• Create discussion forums for the regional disaster management experts & organizations to meet regularly to share experiences and advise on changes needed

• Strengthen the Capability and Capacity in the region for disaster response
Thank You!