

United Nations Development Programme, Sri Lanka

with technical assistance from:

Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery

Disaster Reduction Unit (DRU)



Project title:

Early Warning Systems in Sri Lanka

Project number:

XXXXX

Estimated start date: 1/01/2005
Estimated end date: 30/06/2006
Implementing agency: UNDP
Partners: Sri Lankan Disaster Management Centre, ISDR, IOC, United Nations University, Met Department and National Building Research Organisation
Total budget: 125,000 US\$
Project site: Sri Lanka

General background:

The tsunami that struck on 26 December 2004, together with the floods and landslides of May 2003 and various small to medium scale disasters over the past few years have highlighted Sri Lanka's disaster-prone situation. Recurrent disasters have caused losses to human lives, property and the environment, and have often eroded development gains. It is crucial, therefore, that disaster risk is taken into account within all development planning processes.

Over the past two decades, the government, national technical institutions and UN agencies have launched a number of initiatives to strengthen disaster risk management capacity at all levels in Sri Lanka. However, as highlighted by the recent tsunami, there are still gaps in institutional mechanisms and capacities to manage disaster risks. There is a clear need to further enhance ongoing disaster risk management capacity building initiatives.

It is necessary, therefore, to establish an effective early warning system for all natural disasters, giving priority for those more frequent in the recent past, such as flash floods, tropical cyclones, tornadoes and lightning, and at the same time for rarer but equally destructive hazards such as tsunamis.

Project summary:

This project is designed to strengthen early warning systems at the national, regional and local levels, in particular in the

districts, divisions and villages as part of the overall aim to reduce long-term disaster risk. It will be integrated with and partly supported by the UN Flash Appeal project "Strengthening of Early Warning Systems in Countries Affected by the 26 December 2004 Tsunami", (TSU-REG-05/CSS06-REGION), which is coordinated by the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction through its Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning (PPEW) and in cooperation with UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC). UNDP will interact with partners in this project, such as ISDR, IOC, United Nations University, to assist and capitalize upon their assessments and other activities.

Overall and specific objectives:

- To address the environmental factors related to tsunami risk by building national capacities to integrate environmental assessments and management, national and regional early warning systems and disaster risk reduction work. Essentially, the project specifically addresses the following areas:
- institutionalizing early warning systems (national, regional and local) and strengthening capacities for observation, detection, and prediction;
- utilizing existing IG command emergency communication systems to give warning messages;
- generating public awareness;
- building and sustaining community-based volunteer groups to give early warning messages.

Expected results:

- Institutionalization of early warning systems (particularly tsunamis, landslides and floods);
- Community-based flood and landslide monitoring system and early warning dissemination mechanism;
- Strengthening dissemination of early warning mechanisms to communities;
- Local level action and overall coordination;

Activities:

- Strengthen the capacity of the institutions using early warning systems to improve multi-hazard forecasts (floods, landslides, tsunamis, etc.) and to ensure

- appropriate actions to avoid their adverse impacts;
- Strengthen the capacities of relevant institutions to understand and effectively act on tsunami early warnings;
 - Map the selected vulnerable locations along the coast and establish appropriate signs and evacuation routes;
 - Establish community-based flood-level monitoring networks along vulnerable river basins;
 - Establish an integrated pilot model for real-time landslide monitoring based on real-time precipitation measurements;
 - Train village volunteers, CBOs, local NGOs and other community leaders in flood-level monitoring, the identification of possible disasters (tsunamis, landslides, etc), early warning communication and evacuation mechanisms;
 - Establish linkages between early warning providers and information delivery systems such as the police;
 - Establish and strengthen linkages between information delivery systems via local authorities to vulnerable communities;
 - Establish local warning systems such as sirens and loudspeakers;
 - Conduct early warning information programmes for the police;
 - Carry out mock drills;
 - Establish procedures to take action after credible warnings;
 - Develop evacuation guidelines;
 - Identify community leaders to coordinate post-warning operations;

Project manager:

Ramraj Narasimhan
Disaster Reduction Specialist
United Nations Development Programme
12, Gower Street
Colombo 5 Sri Lanka
Ph: +94-11-5333704/ 06/ 08 (Extn:102)
Fax: +94-11-5333709
Mobile: +94-777772571
ramraj.narasimhan@undp.org

BCPR regional focal point:

Kamal Kishore
Regional Disaster Reduction Advisor
Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
South and South West Asia
55, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi -110003 India
Tel: +91-11-2433 2388, 2433 1425 Extn. 107
Fax: +91-11-2433 1334 Cell: +91-9810095470
kamal.kishore@undp.org

BCPR Geneva Asia – Pacific focal point

Angelika Planitz
Disaster Programme Specialist
UNDP/BCPR
Tel.+41 (-022) -917.8703
Fax.+41 (022) -917.8060
angelika.planitz@undp.org
<http://www.undp.org/bcpr>