



Regional Symposium on Disaster Risk Management

South Eastern University of Sri Lanka

In collaboration with

District Disaster Management Centre, Ampara

16 December 2021



Background

The entire world is facing increased impacts of disasters and climate change events. Sri Lanka's diverse geographical features, its location in the Indian Ocean, and higher exposure to extreme climate events make it a highly vulnerable nation to climate change and disaster impacts. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) - 2030 sets the key priorities for the nations and communities to mitigate, prepare to respond, and prevent where possible the disaster impacts by 2030.

Yet, there has been a large data gap to systematically monitor the SFDRR priorities in the country and it has to be complemented by regional initiatives in policy and research levels. A number of research initiatives and knowledge sharing platforms in the regions in Sri Lanka, particularly in the Eastern coastal region are very limited. Hence, to inculcate the regional research needs and resources to raise awareness on disaster risk management through multidisciplinary approach, a "Regional Symposium on Disaster Risk Management" was organized by the Research Centre – Technology for Disaster Prevention at the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, Oluvil in collaboration with the District Disaster Management Centre, Ampara on 16 December 2021. The symposium included guest speeches, a keynote address and presentation of papers with the participation of key stakeholders in Disaster Management in the Southeastern region of Sri Lanka.

Objectives of the symposium

- Provide a platform for the Disaster Management Professionals and Researchers to advocate for building a disaster resilient region and communities
- Raise awareness on the emerging disaster risks in the region and help preparing the communities to build resilience
- Support to improve the resilient building investments in the eastern region and communities to disasters
- Promote multi- and inter- disciplinary approach in disaster management research by inspiring professionals and community-based practitioners to share their experience

**Closing remarks and future direction for Disaster Risk Management in the
Southeastern region of Sri Lanka**

1. Southeastern region of Sri Lanka is highly prone to multiple disaster risks such as floods, cyclone and tsunami. A cross-sectoral and multi-risk approach needs to be promoted to mitigate the impact to the lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable people which are further exacerbated due to rapid urbanisation and climate change impacts.
2. The other emerging risks in the region include human-elephant conflict, sea erosion and public health threats such as COVID19 and other epidemics (dengue). An innovative approach needs to be devised to restraint the impact to the communities.
3. The region experiences periodic severe drought, hence drought resilience agriculture and livestock development to be further researched to mitigate drought impacts.
4. Promote disaster risk management knowledge through School Based and Community Based Disaster Risk Management approaches and build a culture of disaster resilient activities in the region.
5. The role of local authorities in disaster risk mitigation need to be increased and development planning need to be risk-sensitive to contribute in the achievement of sustainable development goals.
6. The data deficiency in the disaster management sector need to be bridged through effective multi-stakeholder partnerships at the regional level to assist research-informed decision making of the policy makers.
7. The research, practice and policy interface need to be strengthened at the regional level to support the achievement of national disaster risk reduction targets.