Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

National Policy on Disaster Management

Ministry of Disaster Management

February 2013

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<center>**National Policy for Disaster Management in Sri Lanka**</center>

1. Preamble

The Indian Ocean tsunami of December 26th, 2004 highlighted the need for a systematic approach to disaster management in Sri Lanka. The recommendations of the Parliament Select Committee (PSC) on Natural Disasters (2005) which was convened immediately after and the Disaster Management Act No 13 of 2005 (DM Act) provided the basis for the current disaster management approach. The PSC Report and the DM Act require the formulation of a national disaster management policy.

Sri Lanka is known to be impacted by multiple hazards including floods, landslides, cyclones, droughts, rock falls, land subsidence, earth tremors, storm surges, coastal floods, coastal erosion, salinity intrusion, forest fires, high winds, tornadoes etc. More localized hazards such as lightning strikes, epidemics and hazards related to environmental pollution are also prevalent. In addition to natural hazards, the country is also exposed to a number of human induced hazards such as industrial accidents, urban fires, technological emergencies, major accidents involving use and transport of chemical/ hazardous material, climate change impacts.

Frequency of occurrence of natural disasters is in an increasing trend, which may be attributed mainly to un-planned development, environmental degradation, human intervention and climatic changes etc. Disasters have the potential to takes away the hard earned development gains and especially the vulnerable groups finds it difficult to recover from disaster impacts. As such poverty reduction initiatives need to include disaster reduction measures.

Management of disasters requires in-depth understanding of hazards, causes and ways and means of minimizing disaster risks and active engagement of multiple agencies and stakeholders. In this context, managing disasters requires a concerted and coordinated national approach in line with global principles and initiatives such as the five point priority actions in the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005- 2015 including partnerships.

Accordingly, the National Disaster Management Policy of Sri Lanka has been formulated to ensure the sustainability and resilience of the nation.

2. Vision, Mission and Objectives of Disaster Management in Sri Lanka:

Vision :

"Towards a Safer Sri Lanka"

Mission:

"Effective disaster management for safety and resilience of lives and properties"

The Objectives

To achieve sustainable and resilient disaster management through:

    i.   Appropriate institutional, legal and implementation mechanisms;

    ii.   Informed, scientific, multi-hazard risk reduction approaches mainstreamed in development and reconstruction based on national priorities.

    iii.   Participatory, multi-agency, multi-stakeholder engagement in line with national and international standards for effective disaster relief and response

3 Regulatory and Institutional Framework for Disaster Management

3.1 Disaster Management Act

Sri Lanka Disaster Management Act No.13 of 2005 provides for the coordination at the highest executive level, establishment of the institutional framework for disaster management including the National Council for Disaster Management (NCDM), Disaster Management Centre (DMC) and elaborates powers and functions of the institution. The Act also recognizes the cross-cutting nature of disaster management. Act empowers HE the President to declare state of disaster.

3.2 National Council for Disaster Management

National Council for Disaster Management, chaired by HE the President includes the Leader of Opposition, Ministers in charge of subjects listed in the Act, Chief Ministers of Provinces, five Members of Parliament representing opposition appointed by the Speaker of Parliament. The NCDM provides guidance and monitors the implementation of the provisions of the Act.

3.3 Ministry of Disaster Management

Ministry for Disaster Management was established in December 2005 and in January 2006 the function of Human Rights was added. The National Building Research Organisation and Department of Meteorology were placed under the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights. In 2010 ministry was renamed as Ministry of Disaster Management and functions as the secretariat of the NCDM.

3.4 National Disaster Management Policy

Parliament Select Committee on Natural Disaster (2005) recommended (*PSC recommendations were made after the enactment of DM act*) and the Disaster Management Act provided the mandate for the development of national policy.

3.5 National level co-ordination

In the event of a major disaster National Council for Disaster Management coordinates with all ministries and agencies responding to disaster and provides guidance.

The ministry in 2007 established the National Disaster Management Coordinating Committee (NDMCC) as the national platform, in line with HFA, to coordinate activities of stakeholder agencies in disaster management Sector.

3.6 Sub National level co-ordination

Sub national coordination at Provincial, District, Divisional, Local Government and village/community levels is facilitated by line ministries and national agencies through provincial and district administrations. Members of the NDMCC coordinate at appropriate levels with the guidance and assistance provided by the government.

4.0 Guiding Principles

4.1. Relief

Discourage continuous dependency on disaster relief.

4.2 Equity and Equality

Recognize that all affected people have the right to receive disaster assistance regardless of race, gender, religion, social status.

Maintain equity in resource distribution during a disaster based on the severity and the vulnerability. Priority should be given to more vulnerable groups such as children, differently abled ~~disabled~~, senior citizens and women etc.

4.3 Transparency and Accountability

Ensure that service delivery agencies implement progarmmes and projects in a transparent and accountable manner with respect to need identification, resource mobilization, fund management and equitable service delivery covering all those who are in need.

4.4 Participation and Right to access information

Recognize the right of disaster prone communities to participate and contribute in decision making processes related to DRR and response.

National and sub national Institutions should ensure provision of information and active participation of communities and stakeholders in decision making processes.

Recognize the right of stakeholders and the general public to receive information on services, facilities to re- establish their lives after a disaster event such as documentation, insurance, ID etc,.

4.5 Quality Service Delivery

Services provided by agencies conform to national quality standards as stipulated by relevant authorities including reliability, accuracy, clarity and timeliness.

4.6 Legitimacy of service delivery agencies

Only legitimate entities cleared by national security authorities and relevant government institutions will ~~be authorized to~~ engage in the delivery of services. Accept the cross cutting nature of the subject of disaster management and the need to recognize and empower relevant sector agencies to safeguard the lives and properties.

4.7 Collective Responsibility

Government, non-government, private, academic, media and other organizations and individuals are required and be responsible to adopt coordinated, collective, consultative and synergistic approaches in disaster management initiatives while complying with national policy directives.

5.0   National Disaster Management Policy Statements

5.1 Governance on Disaster Management

People should be aware of the potential hazards to which they are exposed, their vulnerability and capacity to respond based on preparedness

5.1.1 Disaster Management will accept principles of good governance through participatory, transparent, accountable decisions making at all levels.

5.1.2 Disaster Management policies, legislations and regulations will meet the emerging needs and minimize the impacts of disasters on people, economy, infrastructure and the environment.

5.1.3 DM initiatives will comprise planned, multi-agency and participatory   approaches

5.1.4 Public Private Partnerships in disaster management will be encouraged

5.1.5 Disaster Management subject at all levels to be managed by trained, professional staff having access to state of the art knowledge.

5.1.6 Plans and programmes in Disaster Management reflect national and international commitments

5.1.7 All formal and informal education systems will contribute to strengthen and mainstream concepts of Disaster Management.

5.1.8 Comprehensive and reliable information and data systems to support Disaster Management will be established and made accessible to the public and all other stakeholders.

5.1.9 Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) to be accepted as a tool for disaster risk reduction at local level.

5.1.10 Early Warning messages generated by designated agency for a specific hazard will be accurate, clear and concise and issued by a single authorized agency as a unified message covering all potential vulnerable areas.

5.1.11 Specific concerns of communities including gender, special needs, vulnerabilities and capacities will be addressed in all stages of the disaster management cycle.

5.2 **Disaster Risk Reduction(DRR) to be mainstreamed into overall planning and development**

5.2.1 Development projects and initiative will accommodate inter-linkages among disasters, poverty and development and DRR measures will be based on comprehensive risk analysis studies.

5.2.2 Potential impacts of Climate Change on disaster risks will be addressed.

5.2.3 Indigenous knowledge and material to mitigate impacts of hazards including climate change will be promoted.

5.3 Early Warning and Emergency Response systems will be in place at national, regional, local and community level to minimize the loss of lives, injury to human population and damage to properties due to disasters

5.4 A balanced approach to be adopted for risk management, planning, preparedness, post-disaster relief, recovery and mitigation

5.5 "Built back Better" principles will be promoted in reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes

5.6 Needs of victims of disasters will be addressed as per national and international guidelines.

5.7 Development of tools and methods for scientific research in DRR will be promoted and supported.

5.8 Civil societies and private sector organizations involved in risk reduction, disaster mitigation, relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction should obtain the consent of the relevant ministry prior to engaging in such activities.

6.0   National Strategies for Disaster Management

6.1   Governence

6.1.1 A bi- partisan Council with the technical contribution from professional bodies and individuals to provide the vision and guidance for effective disaster management.

6.1.2 A coordination mechanism involving all stakeholders to be in place at national and sub-national levels to ensure synergy and minimum duplication of activities

6.1.3 A mechanism to evaluate impacts of DRR investments by agencies in terms of minimizing damages and losses.

6.1.4 Institutional and legal systems to ensure preparedness, response, relief, recovery and mitigation in an effective manner.

6.1.5 For disaster risk assessment and management, ministries are encouraged to adopt community based consultative approaches.

6.1.6 The acts, policies, regulations and guidelines relating to Disaster Management should be reviewed periodically and amended to address the emerging needs

6.1.7 Strengthen state agencies related to Disaster Management with sufficient legal mandate, institutional capacity and ICT systems.

6.1.8 Disaster Management Planning to be based on multi -hazard maps, risk assessment and state of the art tools and methods

6.1.9 International norms, standards and guidelines in Disaster Management to be consulted and adopted where applicable to Sri Lanka.

6.1.10 Encourage innovative use of private sector Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs to reduce social vulnerability.

6.1.11 Land use, involuntary resettlements and rehabilitation criteria to promote DRR should be in line with government policies and guidelines relating to physical planning, resettlements, local government and other areas.

6.2 **Mitigation**

6.2.1 Disaster Risk Reduction to be mainstreamed in to the planning and development processes

6.2.2 A mechanism to evaluate potential disaster impacts of projects in relation to all public and private sector investments.

6.2.3 Enable an environment to promote risk transfer and risk sharing

6.2.4 Promote the incorporation of DRR into planning and implementation of rural, urban, and regional development initiatives.

6.2.5 Incorporate DRR concepts and development control processes for construction in hazard prone areas.

6.2.6 Appropriate guidelines for identification of land use practices for hazard prone areas including plans and strategies to relocate potentially vulnerable populations

6.2.7 Update multi -hazard profiles, vulnerability and risk assessment at regular intervals.

6.2.8 Promote the use of space technology for damage assessment, disaster response and development of hazard maps

6.2.9 A system of certification to be adopted for construction and other industries to ensure implementation of regulatory requirements in respect of disaster risk reduction.

6.2.10 Promote research programmes on disaster management and climate change adaptation including traditional methods and approaches

6.3 Preparedness

6.3.1 Develop strategic tools and approaches such as a National Disaster Management Plan and a National Emergency Operation Plan for Sri Lanka.

6.3.2 Stakeholders to be made aware of potential hazards, their vulnerability, accessing early warning, response mechanisms and to be made confident in taking appropriate and timely action based on preparedness plans.

6.3.3 Ministries and government agencies will be equipped with Disaster Preparedness and Response Plans

6.3.4 All public and private sector business continuity plans to incorporate options to sustain operations during and after disaster situations.

6.3.5 Promote training programs to build the capacity for disaster preparedness and response.

6.3.6 Efforts to promote primary first aid, Cardiopulmonary resuscitation(CPR) and other emergency techniques, among citizens

6.3.7 Academic institutions will be encouraged to implement academic programs to strengthen the capacity of professionals in disaster management.

6.3.8 Educational institutions will enter into strategic partnerships for integrating disaster management in curricula in schools, technical colleges and universities.

6.3.9 Capacity of media personnel to be enhanced to support different aspects of disaster management.

6.3.10 Early Warning communications should be accurate, timely, clear, concise and initiated by designated agencies. Early Warning dissemination shall be done by a single designated agency.

6.3.11 Public should be confident of the accuracy, timing, advices related to Early Warning and follow guidelines.

6.4 Emergency Operations and Response

6.4.1 Access to emergency services should be made available at national and sub national levels on 24/7 basis through Emergency Operations Centers, Call Centers and other mechanisms.

6.4.2 Disaster Management agencies will be timely activated and effectively coordinated by using Standard Operation Procedures (SOP).

6.4.3 Search and rescue capacity for different types of disasters will be developed.

6.4.4 During emergency situations national security, immigration and emigration, international assistance and quality of goods and services are ensured through efficient coordination by qualified/trained staff.

6.4.5 International linkages will be established, fostered and maintained to ensure the services of Disaster Management professionals and knowledge shared across borders.

6.4.6 Medical assistance made available to all needy people and steps will be taken to prevent post disaster health hazards, including identification and proper disposal of dead bodies.

6.4.7 A system is available to provide information on victims of disaster, internally displaced, missing persons, damaged and lost properties and reunion of families.

6.4.8 Service agencies will take immediate action to revive the affected public utilities to restart essential services damaged and destroyed due to disasters.

6.5 Relief and Early recovery

6.5.1 Immediate food, water & sanitation, medical, counseling assistance, shelter, clothing and other needs are provided adequately and in a timely manner.

6.5.2 Relief operations will be in line with internationally accepted standards, procedures and facilities

6.5.3 Facilities to provide continuous education will be arranged

6.5.4 Documentation services for affected will be provided during early recovery period

6.5.5 Speedy recovery of the disrupted livelihoods of affected communities ensured through timely and adequate assistance.

6.5.6 Establish systems to provide search and rescue services, security to safe places and properties of displaced persons and support to people with special needs

6.5.7 Declaration of state of disaster should be used to address operational constrains, facilitate risk reduction and to provide assistance to affected and displace people

6.5.8 Provision of houses in safe locations will be given priority if relocation is required. -

6.5.9　In case of an extended stay in safe places steps will be taken to provide additional services beyond immediate relief until the resettlement process is completed.

6.6　Recovery, Resettlement and Rehabilitation

6.6.1　Ensure appropriate guidelines are available for identification of lands for resettlement of people living in disaster prone areas

6.6.2　Systems to support reconstruction/repair, replacement of damaged properties, and other recovery needs are available through government, private sector agencies and civil society organizations including risk transfer mechnisms.

6.6.3　Continued counseling services will be ensured to address post disaster related trauma and other psychological needs of affected persons.

6.6.4　Appropriate steps will be taken to address recovery needs of commercial establishments with particular attention on private establishments to ensure uninterrupted operations.

6.6.5　NGOs/ Civil Society Organizations will be encouraged to rehabilitate public and private infrastructures and properties damaged due to disasters.

6.6.6　"Build-Back-Better" principle will be applied in all cases of rehabilitation and reconstruction programs.

7.0　Provisions for revision

Policy will be reviewed after every five years or after occurrence a major disaster event and updated to suit the emerging needs.