

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
Asian Conference on Disaster Management - 2011

Address by

Hon. Minister Mahinda Amaraweera, Member of Parliament

Ministry of Disaster Management

Government of Sri Lanka

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

Hon. Dulip Wijesekara, Deputy Minister to the Ministry of Disaster Management, Hon Shozo Azuma, Senior Vice Minister of Cabinet office for Disaster Management, Government of Japan, Secretary to the Ministry of Disaster Management, Professor Shigeru Itoh, Chairman of Disaster Reduction Center, Japan. International Delegations of the ADRC member countries, Representatives of Ministries and Departments, **Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen,**

It gives me a great pleasure to deliver this inaugural speech at the **“Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction”** Jointly organized by the Government of Sri Lanka and the Government of Japan, with the support of Asian Disaster Reduction Center and Disaster Management Center of Sri Lanka.

It is a great privilege to be here with you today at this important Conference to have the opportunity, to share some thoughts on progress and the challenges for disaster risk management and development needs.

“Mahinda Chintana” The Government policy documents for development, in Sri Lanka emphasise the importance of Disaster Management. Emerging from nearly three decades of conflict, Sri Lanka is now racing ahead to rebuild the country’s development. Over the next decade, major investments are being planned in economic infrastructure. However, unprecedented impact of disasters can affect these development goals, unless adequate considerations and mechanisms are built into disaster management mechanisms.

Asia is becoming more and more prone to natural disasters such as floods, cyclones, earthquakes, landslides, Tsunamis; and man-made disasters Chemical Accident, Industrial accidents, oil spills etc. The recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan has been an eye opener for many Nations, to review our approaches for development and disaster risk management.

Since 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, with the support of several International partners, Government of Sri Lanka adopted legal and Institutional frameworks for disaster risk management. We have developed a 10-year Road Map for Disaster Risk Management at the national level. The National Policy on Disaster Management in Sri Lanka considers the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). This initiative is a good example for Regions and Countries how Localized initiatives could be adopted in the globally agreed-upon frameworks.

Organising this conference in Sri Lanka shows our close relationship with the Regional networks on disaster management mechanisms. In order to overcome the socio economic challenges, an integrated approach must be adopted in keeping with the Global and Regional strategies. Therefore, this conference is an excellent platform to share our experiences and to strengthen our relationship for efficient disaster Risk Management in the region.

Ladies & Gentlemen

To conclude my speech, let me place on record our appreciation for the hard work done by Asian Disaster Reduction Center under the stewardship of Prof. Shigeru Itoh, Chairman, Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC). Government of Sri Lanka greatly appreciate the work done by ADRC by assisting us our efforts to increase National capacities for Disaster Risk Reduction.

We look forward to have close collaboration with the other members of the ADRC and UN agencies as well as our International partners and friends, through forums as this and through bilateral arrangements, in our National efforts towards ensuring a safer Sri Lanka.

I wish all success for this conference. I wish you a very pleasant and enjoyable stay in Sri Lanka.

Thank you.