

## 4-2-2. Disaster Prevention Investigation Mission in Sri Lanka

### 1) Summary

The monsoon rainstorm hit the mid-western part of Sri Lanka on May 17 - 18, 2003, causing the most devastating large scale landslide disaster in the post-colonial history of the country, which killed 252 people and affected approximately 600,000 people (more than 150,000 households). Landslide damages concentrated in the Matara and Ratnapura districts, where many houses were damaged.

At the request from Sri Lanka's National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC), ADRC dispatched a mission to conduct a field investigation into the feasibility of constructing a disaster prevention system for reducing meteorological disasters in Sri Lanka.

### 2) Dates

August 4 – 9 , 2003

### 3) Investigation Mission

(Name/Title, Organization)	: (Field of Investigation)
Fumiaki Yoshimura (Chief researcher, ADRC)	: Disaster Reduciton Administration
Tetsushi Kurita (Chief researcher, ADRC)	: Disaster Reduciton Systems
SriGowri Sanker (Visiting researcher, ADRC)	: Binational Cooperation
Hiroaki Minakami (Engineer, Japan Weather Association)	: Meteorological Systems

### 4) Details

Table 4-2-2-1 Details of the Field Investigation

Date	Locations	Activities	
Aug. 4	Arrival in Colombo	—	
Aug. 5	NDMC	Was briefed on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural disasters in Sri Lanka</li> <li>• Damages from the flood disaster in May</li> <li>• Disaster prevention system in Sri Lanka</li> </ul>	
	Meteorological Agency	Investigated the current meteorological system	
	JBIC	Gathered information on the current situation of Sri Lanka	
	JICA		
Aug. 6	Japanese Embassy	Paid a courtesy visit to the minister and vice-minister	
	Ministry of Social Welfare		
	Sri Lanka Telecom		Investigated public communication network (fixed and mobile phones)
	Ministry of Irrigation		Investigated flood prevention measures
	Geography Bureau		Investigated the progress in map data collection
Aug. 6	National Institute of Architecture	Investigated the status of the sediment disaster hazard map	
	Meteorological Bureau	Exchanged views on the system to be constructed in future	
Aug. 7	National Institute of Architecture	Had hearings for sediment disaster investigation	
	Japanese Embassy	Reported the findings of the investigation	
	JBIC		
Aug. 8	Ratnapura district	Investigated sediment disaster sites	
Aug. 9	Departure from Colombo	—	



Fig. 4-2-2-1 Meeting with the Social Welfare Minister (center)

## 5) Findings

### (1) Sediment Disaster Damages in Ratnapura district

The mission visited the landslide disaster sites in the Ratnapura district, where damages from the sediment disaster in May concentrated, to be briefed on the damage situation by district administrators. Each victim household who lost their house would receive 100,000 rupees and land to build a new house on from the Government. Households who had their houses half-destroyed would respectively receive 40,000 rupees to have their houses repaired. However, half-destroyed houses located on hazardous areas were deemed as completely-destroyed. This allowed their owners to secure new housing with no financial burden. Reconstruction works were scheduled to complete by October.

Compulsory relocation of residents had already been under way in the hazardous spots (designated by the Government) around the sediment disaster areas. Evacuees were temporarily staying at refugee camps while waiting for their houses at new locations to be completed.



House resisted  
the landslide

Fig. 4-2-2-2 Landslide Site

(The whole area was designated as a hazard area. The occupants of the house had already moved out)



Fig. 4-2-2-3 A house with the highest water level marked on its wall

(2) Necessity of Developing a Disaster Reduction System

The hearing survey with Sri Lankan disaster reduction-related organizations revealed that installation of measuring equipment such as rain gauges and weather radars would not automatically lead to reduction of meteorological disasters, and that it was necessary not only to develop human resources for the operation of such equipment but also to establish a sustainable disaster reduction framework including financial aspects.

The mission explained these facts to Sri Lankan disaster managers, and proposed to develop a disaster reduction system consisting of the following components:

- Monitoring and forecasting systems for rainfall, landslides, etc.
- Training programs for disaster managers
- Creation of community-by-community hazard maps and evacuation plans