

Mr. K.A.D.P.K. Kodippili from Sri Lanka



I am an Assistant Director of the Disaster Management Center (DMC) in Sri Lanka, and I would like to start by thanking ADRC for giving Sri Lanka this opportunity to improve its disaster risk reduction efforts. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the Hon. Mahinda Samarasinghe (Minister, Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights), Prof. Rajeewa Wijesinghe (Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights), and Maj. Gen. Gamini Hettiarachchi (Director General, DMC) for giving me this opportunity to serve my motherland.

Sri Lanka is a small island with an area of 65,610 sq. km. It has a tropical climate and is prone to floods, landslides, droughts, cyclones, and tsunamis. On 26 December 2004, Sri Lanka suffered a massive disaster, with a devastating tsunami decimating its southern, western, eastern and northern coastlines. A tsunami of this magnitude was unprecedented, and devastated two thirds of Sri Lanka's coastal belt. More than 35,000 lives were lost and 100,000 houses were destroyed in 13 districts along the coast. Approx. 5,000 people went missing.

In May 2005, the government of Sri Lanka passed the Disaster Management Act (Act No. 13 of 2005). The National Council for Disaster Management (NCDM) was established pursuant to that act, and the DMC was established to serve as the lead disaster risk management agency under the NCDM responsible for implementing the NCDM's directives. In December 2005, the Ministry for Disaster Management was established.

The authorities listed above have performed their roles as disaster management agencies admirably, and have reduced the risk of disasters in Sri Lanka. The ADRC's visiting researcher program is a great opportunity for me to build on what has already been done and to gain extensive knowledge about disaster risk reduction. During my time here, I would like to learn about tsunami risk reduction, the disaster management system in Japan, early warning mechanisms, school preparedness plans and various disaster related activities, such as evacuation drills and hazard mapping. I also would like to study data analysis systems, get involved in various risk reduction activities, and visit many disaster related agencies. I was also a victim of the 2004 tsunami, and I experienced many hardships as a result of that disaster. I hope to help Sri Lanka become better prepared for all disasters through my service with the DMC.

I am confident that the knowledge I gain through ADRC's visiting researcher program will help my homeland create safer communities. Again, I am grateful to all who have been involved in affording me this valuable opportunity.