

Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2011
13 – 15 June 2011, Cinnamon Grand Hotel, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Welcome Remarks by Major General Gamini Hettiarachchi,
Director General of Disaster Management Centre

The Honorable Mahinda Amaraweera, Minister of Disaster Management,
The Honorable Dulip Wijesekera, Deputy Minister of Disaster Management
The Honorable Shozo Azuma, Senior Vice Minister of Cabinet Office for
Disaster Management, Government of Japan
Mrs. S. M. Mohamed, Secretary to the Ministry of Disaster Management, Sri
Lanka
Secretaries of the Ministries,
Prof. Shigeru Itoh, Chairman, Asian Disaster Reduction Centre,
Mr. Sujith Mohanty Regional Programme Officer, UNISDR,
Mr Takeo Murakami Deputy Director Cabinet Office Japan
Mr. Atsushi Koresawa from ADRC,
Representatives of the International Agencies,
Representatives of the ADRC Member Countries,
Director Generals, Head of Departments, and other Officers,
Distinguished Guests and Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

On behalf of the Ministry of the Disaster Management and Disaster Management Centre, it is a great pleasure for me to welcome all of you to the opening ceremony of the Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2011. First, I would like to take this opportunity to pay our gratitude to Hon. Mahinda Amaraweera, Minister of Disaster Management for gracing the opening ceremony as the Chief Guest of this important conference especially for taking time off from your busy schedule. Your presence is really encouraging for all of us here and I warmly welcome you to the inaugural session of this conference. Also, I warmly welcome Hon. Dulip Wijesekera the Deputy Minister of Disaster Management to this event. We are also very privileged and honored by the presence of Hon. Shozo Azuma, Senior Vice Minister of Cabinet Officer for Disaster Management of the Government of Japan. Your Excellency, a very warm welcome to you. I also welcome all delegates who are present at the Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2011.

Ladies and Gentlemen, In Sri Lanka, we have witnessed and learned lessons from many disasters arising from both natural and human induced hazards mainly during the last decade the floods and landslides in 2003, 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2011; droughts in 2000 and 2004, and the catastrophic Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004, are some of the damaging events. Events of the past have taught us and the communities to take proactive measures to safeguard lives and properties. However, the challenge is even greater today as there have been a demonstrated increase in the occurrence of natural hazards due to changing demographics, development patterns which are further increased due to climate change.

L&G The Disaster Management Centre under the Ministry of Disaster Management has achieved a significant progress in the disaster risk reduction activities in Sri Lanka. DMC is working in close collaboration with all other stakeholder agencies to ensure the safety of people in Sri Lanka. The National Disaster Management Coordinating Committee, the Sri Lanka's National Platform is a unique platform in the region, which meets monthly under the chairmanship of the Secretary to the Ministry of Disaster Management to discuss the programmes and issues on disaster management in the country. During the last six years, L&G DMC has implemented programmes at various levels, to strengthen the capacity for disaster early warning dissemination, preparedness and response planning, community awareness and disaster risk reduction.

Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2011 is jointly organizing with the Asian Disaster Reduction Center, Cabinet Office Japan, UNISDR, Ministry of Disaster Management and Disaster Management Centre of Sri Lanka. This Conference aims to examine the current challenges posed by natural hazards that Asian countries are increasingly facing and exchange experiences and lessons for better managing the disasters while following up on the progress made towards the implementation of Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and of Incheon Regional Roadmap on disaster risk reduction through Climate Change Adaptation in Asia and the Pacific.

Today, L&G, there are more than seventy international delegates representing nearly twenty Asian countries gathered here, and I would like to extend a warm welcome to Sri Lanka and also to this conference. I strongly believe that with the active participation of all participants, the ACDR2011 will

be a great success.

On this occasion, I should express a special word of thanks to Ms. S. M. Mohamed, Secretary to the Ministry of Disaster Management for her guidance and facilitation provided in organizing this event. Ministry of Disaster Management and the Disaster Management Centre are very grateful to the Asian Disaster Reduction Center for selecting Sri Lanka to host this conference and we also thank UNISDR for being a partner for this event and also for the continuous assistance provided to Sri Lanka.

Once again, L&G, I would like extend a very warm welcome to all distinguished guests and participants to this conference. I wish the conference to be productive and fruitful and I wish all the international participants a pleasant and enjoyable stay in Sri Lanka.

Thank you.