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I am Dinesh Hemachandra and I am a geologist at the National Building Research Organisation (NBRO) in Sri Lanka. I am currently serving as a Visiting Researcher at the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) in Kobe.

Sri Lanka is an island in the Indian Ocean, located south of the Indian subcontinent. As a tropical island, it has beguiled travelers for centuries with its palm-fringed beaches, diverse landscapes, and historical monuments. Sri Lanka's climate is governed by the Intertropical Convergence Zone and by the Bay of Bengal. Sri Lanka experiences two distinct monsoons, namely the southwest and northeast monsoons which bring rainfall to the island from those directions. Due to these rhythmic rainy seasons, Sri Lanka is vulnerable to hydro-meteorological and geological disasters. Landslides have caused damage to lives and property in populated hilly areas with increasing frequency over the last three decades.

The NBRO was established in 1984 to investigate geo-hazards in vulnerable areas, and it began mapping landslide hazards in 1993. Vulnerable landslide zones are identified mostly using landslide hazard maps and preliminary landslide investigations conducted when landslide disasters occur.

The Indian Ocean tsunami tragedy of 2004 drove the government of Sri Lanka to take steps to strengthen its disaster management system. As a result, the Disaster Management & Human Rights Ministry was formed on 12 December 2005. Just after the tsunami of 2004, NBRO, as a pioneer in the field of disaster management, conducted rapid assessments and started mitigation activities at landslide hazard sites in Matale, Kandy, and Padiyapelella districts.

The Visiting Researcher Program at ADRC has been a great opportunity for me and my country to learn about disaster countermeasures through various activities, including conferences, seminars, and visits to disaster-affected areas and other organizations.

During my stay, I will also be able to immerse myself in traditional Japanese culture by participating in various festivals and eating many Japanese foods. It will be my great pleasure to develop friendships with many students and other people. I look forward to taking all of the skills and disaster management knowledge that I gain through this Visiting Researcher Program and putting them to good use back at my workplace in Sri Lanka.