



National Workshop on Anticipatory Action for Disaster Mitigation in Sri Lanka

06 June 2023

Colombo, Sri Lanka

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and Winson Gnanatheepan



INITIATIVE ON
Climate Resilience

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CGIAR Initiative on Climate Resilience

The CGIAR Initiative on Climate Resilience, also known as ClimBeR, aims to transform the climate adaptation capacity of food, land, and water systems and ultimately increase the resilience of smallholder production systems to better adapt to climate extremes. Its goal is to tackle vulnerability to climate change at its roots and support countries and local and indigenous communities in six low-and middle-income countries to better adapt and build equitable and sustainable futures.

Learn more about ClimBeR here: <https://www.cgiar.org/initiative/climate-resilience/>

Disclaimer

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SUMMARY

The workshop addressed how Anticipatory Action (AA) strengthens the disaster preparedness in Sri Lanka's vulnerable community for flood and landslide disasters, especially during monsoon seasons. World Vision Lanka, with support from stakeholders like the Disaster Management Centre and the National Building Research Organization, is implementing an Anticipatory Action for Disaster Mitigation Project in Nuwara Eliya. Collaborating with the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), they pilot the approach in a drought-prone area, integrating it into the "AWARE" platform for enhanced coordination. The workshop aimed to share project findings, discuss the way forward, and feature insights from key figures. The panel discussion delved into necessary governmental initiatives, early warning system enhancements, and the role of civil society in mitigating slow-onset disasters. The event concluded with plans for a national AA dialogue platform, working group establishment, inclusive implementation, and continuous sharing of project experiences. The proactive nature of Anticipatory Action and its potential to enhance disaster preparedness at the national level was emphasized.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA	Anticipatory Action
AWARE	Early Warning, Early Action and Early Finance
ClimBeR	CGIAR Initiative on Climate Resilience
DMC	Disaster Management Center

BACKGROUND

Given its vulnerability to a range of natural hazards, Sri Lanka finds itself at heightened risk of encountering both flood and landslide disasters. These occurrences are notably exacerbated during the monsoon seasons, which transpire from May to September and October to January, contingent upon the specific region. Recognizing the need for effective disaster management, it becomes imperative to prioritize proactive approaches over traditional reactive measures in order to mitigate and curtail the impact of these disasters. This strategic shift is crucial for enhancing the country's resilience and responsiveness to the challenges posed by floods and landslides.

Anticipatory Action refers to a proactive approach taken to mitigate the impact of impending disasters or crises before they occur. This strategy involves identifying potential risks or threats, monitoring early warning signals, and implementing measures to reduce the vulnerability of communities and systems. The goal is to take preventive actions in advance, based on forecasted events or indicators, to minimize the severity of the impact and enhance overall preparedness.

World Vision Lanka (WVL) is presently executing an Anticipatory Action for Disaster Mitigation Project, receiving support from key stakeholders such as the Disaster Management Centre and the National Building Research Organization. The project's implementation spans the Ambagamuwa and Nuwara Eliya Divisional Secretariats in the Nuwara Eliya District. This initiative is an integral component of a larger pilot project conducted by World Vision International across six countries in the Asia Pacific Region. Funding for this broader effort is provided by Aktion Deutschland Hilft (ADH) Germany.

Furthermore, WVL and IWMI have established a collaborative partnership to pilot this approach in a drought-prone area and integrate the framework into the "AWARE" platform. This platform, functioning as an early warning to early action and finance dashboard, facilitates enhanced coordination and accountability for anticipatory action coordination. The joint efforts of WVL and IWMI aim to contribute meaningfully to disaster mitigation and community resilience in the specified regions.

Workshop objectives

The primary aim of this national workshop is to formally present and acquaint participants with the ongoing activities of the Anticipatory Action Project within the Thalawakale Divisional Secretariat Division. The workshop serves as a platform to comprehensively introduce the various aspects, objectives, and progress of the project, fostering a deeper understanding among stakeholders regarding its implementation and impact within the specified geographic area.

The specific objectives of the workshop are to:

- To share the findings of the studies conducted under the anticipatory action project implemented in Nuwara Eliya
- To discuss the way forward of the anticipatory action initiatives in the country.
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PROCEEDINGS

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The workshop commenced with a warm welcome from Dr. Simon Langan, the Country Manager of the International Water Management Institute. Dr. Dhanan Senathirajah, National Director of World Vision Lanka, provided an insightful overview of the significance of integrating anticipatory actions in the humanitarian sector and the potential benefits for vulnerable communities.

Introduction to ClimBer Initiative

Dr Mark Smith, the Director General of the International Water Management Institute, shared opening remarks and valuable insights into the ClimBer initiative, highlighting collaborative efforts aimed at mainstreaming anticipatory action in Sri Lanka and the broader region.

Feasibility Study and Operational Framework

Mr. Susith Arambepola and Eng. (Prof.) Udeni Nawagamuwa presented the findings of the feasibility study, impact-based forecast study, and operational framework for anticipatory action. The experts identified existing gaps at both grassroots and national levels and proposed remedial measures to address these gaps.

Keynote Address on Landslide Vulnerabilities

Eng. (Dr.) Asiri Karunawardena, Director General of the National Building Research Organization, delivered a keynote address emphasizing how anticipatory action can mitigate landslide vulnerabilities. He also highlighted the government's expectations for support from partners to reduce disaster vulnerabilities.

Anticipatory Action Protocols and AWARE Platform

Mr. V. Premakumar, Team Leader of the World Vision Lanka Anticipatory Action Project, briefed participants on the anticipatory action protocols. Dr Giriraj Amarnath offered an in-depth exploration of the Early Warning Early Action and Early Finance (AWARE) platform developed by

the IWMI. The AWARE platform was thoroughly explained, emphasizing its key role in promoting seamless coordination among multinational and international institutes. Dr. Amarnath illustrated how this digitalized Anticipatory Action framework can be effectively facilitated, providing a comprehensive understanding of its functionalities and potential for enhancing collaborative efforts in disaster preparedness and response.

Experiences and Challenges

Mr. Sisira Madurapperuma, Director of the Preparedness for Response and Recovery Department at the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, shared his experiences, including challenges and opportunities encountered in implementing the anticipatory action project.

PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE WAY FORWARD OF ANTICIPATORY ACTION IN SRI LANKA

Moderator:

Ms. Ereesha De Silva, Senior Project Coordinator, International Organization for Migration in Sri Lanka.

Panelists:

Mr. U W L Chandradasa, Disaster Management Expert and Freelance Consultant

Dr. Senaka Basnayake, Director, Climate Resilience Department, Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre

Ms. Gothami Chandrarathna, Director Operations, Janathakshan (GTE) Ltd

Dr. Niranga Alahakoon, Researcher, Disaster Risks and Remote Sensing International Water Management Institute (IWMI)

Key points in panel discussion

During the panel discussion, the panelists engaged in a comprehensive dialogue regarding the necessary governmental initiatives to mainstream anticipatory action. The conversation also inquired into strategies for enhancing the country's early warning system. Furthermore, the crucial role of civil society organizations was thoroughly examined, emphasizing how anticipatory action could be instrumental in mitigating the impacts of slow-onset disasters like drought.

The discourse was multifaceted, involving the identification of key measures that the government should adopt to integrate anticipatory action effectively. Simultaneously, there was a dedicated exploration of ways to strengthen the country's early warning infrastructure for more robust disaster preparedness.

The role of civil society organizations emerged as a focal point of discussion, highlighting their potential contributions to anticipatory action strategies. The panelists actively explored how these organizations could play a pivotal role in enhancing community resilience and response mechanisms.

Importantly, the panel delved into the nuanced realm of slow-onset disasters, examining how anticipatory action could be strategically employed to alleviate their impacts. This comprehensive discussion allowed participants to share diverse perspectives and insights on charting the way forward for anticipatory action, fostering a collaborative and informed exchange of ideas among stakeholders.

Way forward priorities

- Establishing a national anticipatory action dialogue platform with government partners.
- Establishing a working group for anticipatory action at the national level.
- Promote inclusive approach in implementing anticipatory action.
- Supporting government agencies in enhancing the forecasting and dissemination of early warning messages.
- Continuously sharing the experiences of the pilot projects implemented for landslide, flood and drought hazards.
- Lobbying with early finance donors in accessing funds.

CLOSING REMARKS

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Winson Gnanatheepan emphasized the importance of advancing Anticipatory Action (AA) as a strategic approach to disaster reduction at the national level. Recognizing the timeliness of the AA, he emphasized the importance of considering prior financial approaches and agreements as an important part of it. Furthermore, Mr. Winson highlighted the need to align these strategies with the mandates of disaster management institutes, emphasizing the proactive nature of AA and its potential to enhance the overall disaster preparedness and response framework. This insight advocates for a comprehensive and strategic integration of Anticipatory Action, positioning it as a pivotal component within the broader context of national disaster risk reduction and management strategies.

ANNEXURE

Annex - 1 : Photos from the ClimBeR Sri Lanka Launch, National Workshop



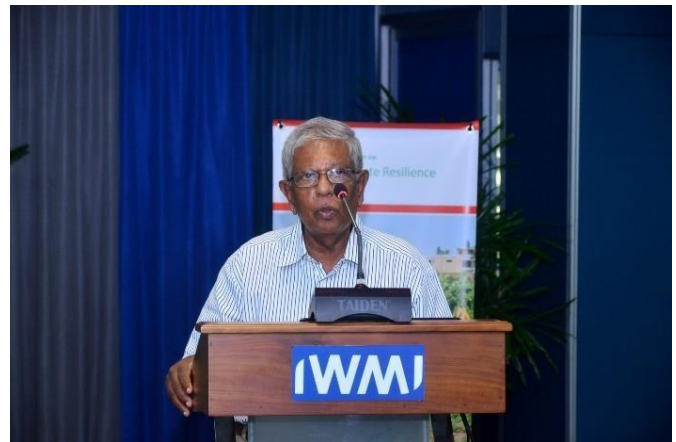
*Opening remarks by Dr. Mark Smith
(Director General IWM)*



*Opening remarks by Dr. Dhanan Senathirajah
(National Director – World Vision)*



*Presenting the findings by Eng. (Prof.) Udeni
Nawagamuwa (University of Moratuwa)*



Presenting the findings by Mr. Susith Arambepola



Presenting the Overview of AWARE by Dr. Giriraj Amarnath (IWMI – ClimBeR WP4 Lead)



Presenting AA protocols by Mr. V. Premakumar (Team leader – World Vision Lanka Anticipatory Action Project)



Keynote speech by Eng. (Dr.) Asiri Karunawardena (Director General of the National Building Research Organization NBRO)



Closing remark by Mr. Winson Gnanatheepan (Specialist – Disaster Risk Reduction)



Panel Discussion moderated by Prof. Buddi Marambe

Panelist and Moderator (Left to Right): Mr. U W L Chandradasa, Disaster Management Expert and Freelance Consultant, Ms. Gothami Chandrarathna, Director Operations, Janathakshan (GTE) Ltd, Ms. Ereesha De Silva (Moderator), Senior Project Coordinator, International Organization for Migration in Sri Lanka, Dr. Senaka Basnayake, Director, Climate Resilience Department, Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, Dr. Niranga Alahakoon, Researcher, Disaster Risks and Remote Sensing International Water Management Institute (IWMI)

All photos provided by IWMI

Annex – 2 : Agenda

National Stakeholder Workshop on Anticipatory Action for Disaster Mitigation

Date: 6th June 2023

Time: 09:15-13:45

Venue: Yellow River Auditorium, International Water Management Institute, Pelawatta

Time	
09:15-09:30	Registration
09:30-09:35	Welcome remarks by Dr. Simon Langan, <i>Country Manager-Sri Lanka, International Water Management Institute</i>
09:35-09:45	Opening remarks by Dr. Dhanan Senathirajah, <i>National Director, World Vision Lanka</i>
09:45-09:55	Opening remarks by Dr. Mark Smith, <i>Director General, International Water Management Institute</i>
09:55:10:10	The concept of Anticipatory Action and Project Overview by Mr. J Jebaraj, <i>Regional Project Manager, Anticipatory Action, World Vision South Asia Pacific</i>
10:10-10:40	Findings of the Anticipatory Action Feasibility and Impact Based Forecast- Mr. Susith Arambepola, <i>Disaster Risk Management Expert</i> and Eng. (Prof). Udeni Nawagamuwa, <i>Senior Lecturer, Department of Civil Engineering, University of Moratuwa</i>
10:40-11:00	Draft Framework for the Anticipatory Action by Mr. Susith Arambepola, <i>Disaster Risk Management Expert</i>
11:00-11:20	Group Photo and tea break
11:20-11:40	Keynote address: Anticipatory Action as an approach to reduce landslide vulnerabilities in Sri Lanka by Eng. (Dr). Asiri Karunawardena, <i>Director General, National Building Research Organization</i>
11:40-11:50	Anticipatory Action Protocol and way forward, Mr. V Premakumar, <i>Team Leader, Anticipatory Action Project-World Vision Lanka</i>
11:50-12:05	Introducing CGIAR Climate Resilience "AWARE" Platform for Anticipatory Action, Dr. Giriraj Amarnath, <i>Research Group Leader - Water Risk to Development and Resilience and Principal Researcher - Disaster Risk Management and Climate Resilience, International Water Management Institute</i>
12:05-12:15	Experience Sharing of Government Officer-DDMCU and NBRO Nuwara Eliya, Eng. Peter Martin Premananth, <i>Provincial Engineer, Department of Agrarian Development, Central Province</i>
12:15-12:25	Regional experience in implementing AA projects, challenges and opportunities Mr. Sisira Madurapperuma, <i>Director, Preparedness for Response and Recovery Department, Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre</i>
12:25-13:25	Panel Discussion: Moderator: Ms, Ereesha De Silva, <i>Senior Project Coordinator, International Organization for Migration, Sri Lanka</i> Panelists: Dr. Niranga Alahacoon, <i>Researcher - Remote sensing and Disaster Risk. International Water Management Institute (IWMI)</i> Mr. U W L Chandradasa, <i>Disaster Management Expert and Freelance Consultant</i> Dr. Senaka Basnayake, <i>Director, Climate Resilience Department, Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre</i> Ms. Gothami Chandrarathna, <i>Director Operations, Janathakshan (GTE) Ltd</i>
13:25-13:35	Discussion
13:35-13:45	Closing Remark by Mr. Winson Gnanatheepan, <i>Specialist Disaster Risk Reduction, World Vision Lanka</i>
13:45	Lunch