

Global agendas for building more disaster resilient communities

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A training event with local government and key stakeholders on "Global agendas for building more sustainable, disaster resilient communities" was facilitated by GDRC Professors Dilanthi Amaratunga & Richard Haigh on the 12th July 2016.



Photo: GDRC's Prof. Richard led the discussion and also presented the basics of climate change agreement

This event was initiated by the Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities with the full support of the Eastern Provincial Council of Sri Lanka. Its Minister of Transport Hon. Ariyawathie Galappathi and its Chief Secretary Mr.D.M. Sarath Abayagunawardana led the proceedings with the participation of 20 other government officials from the region.

The basis for the training event was the new global agreements on disaster risk reduction (Sendai Framework), climate change (COP21) and sustainable development (Sustainable Development Goals - SDGs).



Photo: (L to R) : **Hemanthi Goonasekera**, National Coordinator, Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities, **Hon Minsiter, Ariyawathie Galappaththi**, Chief Secretary of the Eastern Province, **Mr.D.M. Sarath Abayagunawardana**, & **Prof. Richard Haigh**, GDRC at University of Huddersfield.

For these new global agreements to succeed, local government and other key stakeholders must be empowered to act to accelerate national governments efforts in building more sustainable, disaster resilient communities.



Photo: **Prof. Dilanthi Amaratunga** introduced the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sustainable Development Goals

The vital role of resilient property and construction in supporting implementation of these agreements has been widely recognised. When elements of the built environment are damaged or destroyed, the ability of society to function – economically and socially – is severely disrupted. The protective characteristics of the built environment offer an important means by which humanity can reduce the risk posed by hazards, thereby preventing a disaster. Conversely, post-disaster, the loss of critical buildings and infrastructure can greatly increase a community's vulnerability to hazards in the future. Finally, the individual and local nature of the built environment, shaped by context, restricts our ability to apply generic solutions. As a major consumer of services and intermediate products such as raw materials, chemicals or electrical equipment, construction and property impacts many other economic sectors. It is also resource intensive and a major consumer of scarce natural resources such as land, water, minerals and energy.

In this context, this high level training event examined the scope and implications of these agreements, and considered the role of key stakeholders at the local level in their implementation towards supporting the development of disaster resilient communities.



Photo: section of the event participants

The event also had close links with the following projects of the GDRC:

- CRESCENDO (Community Resilience Engaging Society, Culture, and ENvironment against Disaster Outcomes)
- CADRE (<http://www.hud.ac.uk/research/researchcentres/gdrc/researchprojects/cadre/>) (Collaborative Action towards Disaster Resilience Education)
- ASCENT (<http://www.hud.ac.uk/research/researchcentres/gdrc/researchprojects/ascent/>) (Advancing Skill Creation to ENhance Transformation)

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