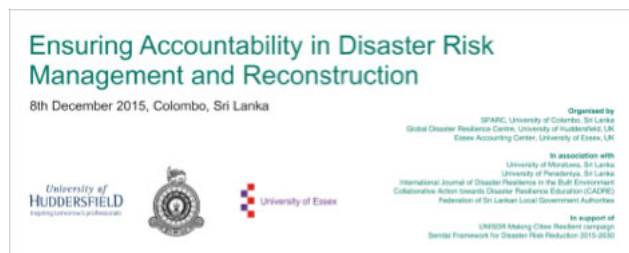


International Workshop on Disasters and Accountability

Tue, 22 Dec 2015 11:37:00 GMT



An international workshop entitled **"Ensuring Accountability in Disaster Risk Management and Reconstruction"** was organized as a part of a global, regional and national partnership by SPARC, University of Colombo-Sri Lanka and Global Disaster Resilience Centre (GDRC), University of Huddersfield-UK, and Essex Accounting Centre, University of Essex-UK on the 8th December 2015 in Colombo Sri Lanka.

This was also in support of UNISDR Making Cities Resilient campaign and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. The main question that the workshop addressed was how to ensure accountability in Disaster Risk Management and Reconstruction? Keynote of the event was delivered by Dr Jerry Velasquez, Chief of the Advocacy and Communications Section and Head of the Making Cities Resilient Campaign of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) on "Promoting Accountability in Reducing the Impacts of Disasters to the Poor and Vulnerable". It included a detailed analysis on global guidance, Challenges to promoting accountability in DRR, Social demand for accountability in DRR, and DRR accountability as a moral responsibility.

Photo: Dr Jerry Velasquez, Chief of the Advocacy and Communications, UNISDR, delivering his keynote speech



Accountability theme was further discussed in the light of sub themes such as, accountability of government and other institutions for their conduct and performances in preventing and managing disasters, tools of accountability and access to information, role of the organised and capable citizen groups in establishing social accountability, contextual and cultural appropriateness of the accountability tools and accountability in the built environment after major disasters that included abstract presentations and a policy discussion.

Key policy makers and experts attended this international workshop including:

- Professor P.S.M. Gunaratne, Vice Chairman, University Grant Commission, Sri Lanka
- Professor Lakshman Dissanayake, Vice Chancellor, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka,
- Mr.R. P.Samarakkodi, Additional Director General, Disaster Management Centre, Sri Lanka
- Dr. A. Mallawatantri, Country Representative, IUCN,
- Ms. Wasantha Samaraweera, Add. Secretary, Min. of Disaster Management,
- Col. S. Madugalle, DDG, SLRCS,
- Mr. R.Jayasekara, Director Forecasting, Dept. Meteorology as the panellists.
- Prof. Sujeeva Setunge, RMIT University, Australia,
- Mr. R.M.S Bandara, National Building Research Organization, Sri Lanka

Photo: Section of the workshop participants



The panel discussion that was planned as part of the workshop was expected to come up with evidence-based recommendations as to how effective accountability mechanisms could be built into intervention programs in different but interrelated fields. Panelists are expected to approach the issue from the point of the organisations they represent and the subject areas that come under their purview. Particular attention was paid to specific accountability tools that might be developed and institutionalised, and their contextual

and cultural appropriateness. It was hoped that the panel discussion would provide a basis for the formulation of a draft policy outline and a set of accountability tools dealing with both prevention and management of disasters.

The panel discussion focused on the five key themes of the workshop. They were:

1. Accountability of government and other institutions for their conduct and performances in preventing and managing disasters
2. Tools of accountability and access to information
3. Role of the organised and capable citizen groups in establishing social accountability
4. Contextual and cultural appropriateness of the accountability tools
5. Accountability in the built environment



Photo: panel discussion

Key organisational team included Professor Siri Hettige, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga, Professor Richard Haigh and Ms Kushani De Silva, University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom and Dr Kelum Jayasinghe, University of Essex, United Kingdom.

Photo: Global Disaster Resilience organising team with Dr Jerry Velasquez, Chief of the Advocacy and Communications, UNISDR (from L to R) – Dr Kaushal Keraminiyage, Professor Richard Haigh, Dr Jerry Velasquez, Ms Kushani de Silva, Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga, Dr Chamindi Malalgoda



Photo: Professors Dilanthi Amaratunga & Richard Haigh with Dr Jerry Velasquez, UNISDR

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