











"ANTICIPATORY ACTION IN SRI LANKA: TOOLS, MECHANISMS, AND A PATHWAY FORWARD"



NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

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WORKSHOP REPORT



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OVERVIEW

Over the past years, the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) has played a crucial role in responding to a wide range of disasters and crises across the island. SLRCS has offered humanitarian assistance and services to tens of thousands of individuals affected by various natural disasters, including floods, landslides, cyclones, drought, and other emergencies such as the Indian Ocean Tsunami, the COVID-19 pandemic, Dengue outbreaks, and the MV X-Press Pearl Ship fire. Additionally, SLRCS has actively supported over 500,000 people grappling with the humanitarian crisis stemming from Sri Lanka's economic challenges.

Given Sri Lanka's tropical location, the country is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which has intensified the severity of weather and climate-related disasters. On average, these events affect over 100,000 people annually. In recent history, the highest number of affected individuals was recorded, totalling 579,368 in 2016 and 876,654 in 2017, primarily due to landslides and floods. Furthermore, over 10 million people were affected by drought in 2017 and 2018 (NDRSC, 2016 & 2017). These statistics underscore the necessity for SLRCS to enhance its disaster preparedness efforts, enabling effective responses to future climate and weather-related disasters. Strengthening Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) work in collaboration with stakeholders and introducing innovative concepts like Anticipatory Actions are essential to equip SLRCS with new emergency preparedness and response tools, allowing for proactive assistance to vulnerable communities.



BACKGROUND

The concept of Anticipatory Actions (AAs) represents an innovative approach that leverages weather and climate forecasts to initiate early interventions before disasters occur. This concept is rooted in the belief that, by employing advanced forecasting and risk analysis, humanitarian organizations can allocate resources and implement preparedness measures in anticipation of potential disasters. The IFRC, in collaboration with various partners within the RCRC Movement, including the German Red Cross and the Red Cross Climate Centre, has developed AA programmes in different countries to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of disaster response. The IFRC has actively work towards promoting AAs to enhance disaster preparedness and response, both within and outside the RCRC Movement.

In Sri Lanka, the SLRCS, in collaboration with other humanitarian agencies and the Disaster Management Centre, is actively engaged in promoting Anticipatory Actions (AAs). With the support of IFRC, SLRCS organized the inaugural Anticipatory Actions stakeholder dialogue workshop in Colombo. This workshop aimed to introduce and advocate for the concept of AAs while fostering collaboration to initiate its implementation in Sri Lanka. SLRCS conducted a mapping of organizations already involved in anticipatory actions in Sri Lanka. The results of this mapping are detailed below:

- >> Humanity & Inclusion
- >> UNDP Sri Lanka
- Child Fund Sri Lanka
- World Vision Lanka
- >> UN-Habitat

- Janathakshan
- Sarvodaya
- Sri Lanka Red Cross Society
- ACTED
- Save the Children
- United Nations Children's Fund Sri Lanka Country Office



WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Upali Sirimanna, Vice President of SLRCS, extended a warm welcome to participants representing a diverse group of stakeholders from Government and UN agencies, NGOs, INGOs, research institutions, academia, and the RCRC Movement. The key highlights of his opening remarks are as follows:

- Mr. Sirimanna expressed gratitude for the readiness to embrace a novel approach to disaster management in Sri Lanka.
- He emphasized the importance of shifting from a historically reactive approach, where the focus was on responding after disasters, to a proactive approach that involves responding before disasters occur.
- Mr. Sirimanna emphasised the workshop's significance for all participants, as it provides a platform to initiate the Anticipatory Actions in Sri Lanka in a more systematic way.

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES



Ms. Ganga Kariyawasam, the Anticipatory Action focal point at SLRCS, provided participants with an overview of the key organizations involved, explained their collaborative processes, and introduced SLRCS's role. She outlined the workshop's objectives, which include: increasing awareness of Anticipatory Action among stakeholders in Sri Lanka, sharing existing knowledge and experiences available within the country, and initiating the development of a roadmap for implementing AAs in Sri Lanka.

The introduction included an explanation of the three components of the RCRC Movement, including the roles played by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), IFRC, and the RCRC National Societies. This involved an exploration of how these entities within the Movement work together and collaborate with local and international stakeholders to address disaster–related challenges. The emblems used by the ICRC, SLRCS (the National Society of Sri Lanka), and the IFRC are shown below.







WHAT IS ANTICIPATORY ACTION? WHY, HOW, WHO!

Raymond Zingg, IFRC Regional AA Coordinator, provided an overview of Anticipatory Action and a foundational understanding of this concept. Key points covered in the session include:

- AA is an approach that systematically links early warnings and forecasts to specific actions designed to protect lives and livelihoods ahead of a hazard. These actions are linked to pre-arranged financing.
- Other terms used by practitioners for AA include Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) and Forecast-Based Financing (FBF).



- Key components of AA encompass early warnings and forecasts, actions to protect lives and livelihoods, and pre-arranged financing, which are mobilized before the disaster occurs. For instance, a flood forecast with a 5-10 days' lead time informs us about where and when the main impact of the flood will occur.
- AAs are feasible for weather-related hazards like floods, droughts, cyclones, cold and heat waves, and landslides, while health hazards such as dengue and socio-economic humanitarian crises like population movements can also be considered for AAs. Flash floods, tsunamis, and conflicts pose challenges for AAs, and earthquakes are not feasible.
- The session delved into why AAs are important, emphasizing that AA is a more dignified way of providing humanitarian assistance to people at risk, ensuring that communities can take action to reduce the traumatizing effects of experiencing a hazard event.
- Ongoing AA initiatives in the region in different countries, the types of hazards considered for AA, trigger mechanisms, and the main actions were also presented.

Key Discussion Points

- Donors are increasingly interested in Anticipatory Action for several reasons.
- The type of external donor assistance and response for Anticipatory Actions.
- The need for resources to sustain Anticipatory Action.
- >> The priorities of Anticipatory Action.

PANEL DISCUSSION

The panel discussion was organised to discuss and better understand the current initiatives, experiences and what exists already including role of the Disaster Management Centre on Anticipatory Actions in Sri Lanka.

WORLD VISION SRI LANKA - ANTICIPATORY ACTIONS



Presented by Mr. Winson Gnanatheepan, Disaster Risk Reduction Specialist.

World Vision's approach to Anticipatory Action involves several key components and measures to enhance disaster preparedness and response:

- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are being established to provide clear guidelines and protocols for the effective implementation of Anticipatory Action initiatives.
- Identifying and targeting vulnerable families is crucial to ensure that early finance and support reach those who are most at risk during disasters.
- >> Strengthening the capacity of safety centers is essential to enable them to respond effectively to and support communities during disasters.
- >> Capacity Enhancement of District Disaster Management Coordination Units (DDMCUs) at the district level is essential to improve coordination and response efforts.
- Capacity Enhancement of Grama Niladhari Divisional Disaster Management Committees (GNDMCs) and local-level committees is crucial for community engagement and preparedness.
- >> Selecting an appropriate financial service provider is a critical step in facilitating early finance to affected communities.
- >> Conducting community simulations helps communities prepare for potential disasters, ensuring they understand and can respond to early warnings and actions.
- >> Ensuring that the Anticipatory Action protocol is validated and reliable for use in real-world scenarios.
- Developing an accountability mechanism is essential to address the needs and concerns of affected communities and ensure transparency and accountability in Anticipatory Action initiatives.
- Establishing a National Operational Framework for Anticipatory Action provides a structured approach to coordinating and implementing Anticipatory Action at the national level.
- Developing a database using Open Street Map helps in identifying and tracking ouseholds at risk, aiding in targeted response efforts.
- >> Embedding Anticipatory Action within the organization's structure and culture ensures its long-term sustainability and commitment to proactive disaster response

Specific interventions and experiences

- World Vision has focused on landslides and flood hazards in Nuwara-Eliya district involving 20 tea state divisions
- >> Engagement with District Technical Committee Working Group/National Early Warning
- >> Feasibility Study and Vulnerable Community Identification
- >> Challenges working at Grama Niladhari (GN) and Divisional Secretariat (DS) Level and the the importance of community-level engagement. Capacity-building at the GN and DS levels is essential to ensure effective implementation.
- Market assessment, provision of cash and voucher based assistance and relief items.

NATIONAL BUILDING RESEARCH ORGANISATION - AA FOR LANDSLIDES RISK MANAGEMENT



Presented by Mr. Chinthaka Rathnasiri, Director (Acting) – Human Settlements Planning & Training Division

The National Building Research Organization (NBRO) as the focal point for landslide risk management in Sri Lanka has developed a comprehensive approach to address the landslide risks and further to make necessary improvements to support Anticipatory Actions:

- NBRO has developed a comprehensive database on landslide risk information related to 14 districts in Sri Lanka which has been declared as susceptible for landslides. In this, landslide hazard mapping; conducted in 1:50,000 and 1:10,000 scales, and ground investigations conducted based on reported cases for risk assessment has been used.
- NBRO is operating 24X7 Early Warning System for landslide disasters in Sri Lanka during monsoonal seasons and Early Warnings are disseminating through the Emergency Operation Unit of the DMC based on real time rain fall information collected using automated rain gauges network installed.
- Furthermore, NBRO is providing technical services on development activities in landslide prone areas for incorporating risk reduction measures and resilience construction practices. NBRO makes proposals and undertake designing and implementation of structural mitigation of identified high risk infrastructure, public buildings and settlements for landslides.
- With the current technological development, NBRO is in a position to support implementation of AA at local level utilising risk information databases and Early warning system. Further, technological advancement programmes are being implemented to improve the accuracy of Early Warning and impact based forecasting.
- Mainstreaming AA in the landslide risk reduction process, developing planning and operational process with the formulation of implementation protocols, among multi stakeholders is required to address.

IFRC - FINANCING

Mr. Raymond Zingg, IFRC Regional AA Coordinator presented the financing mechanisms available currently internationally and opportunities for future for Sri Lanka. Key highlights of the talking points are as follows:



No-Regret Actions

- If the anticipated triggers for Anticipatory Action do not occur, the funds allocated for preparedness and response are not returned. Instead, they are used for the validation of the Anticipatory Action protocol and ongoing readiness. This ensures that the organization remains prepared for future events, even if the triggers do not manifest as expected.
- The concept of Anticipatory Action is not new, and organizations have prior experience in preparing for various hazard events, including both single and multi-hazard scenarios. However, the response does not specify the exact frequency of such events.
- There is a need to revise national disaster management plans in line with long-term development goals, considering various aspects like health and education. Additionally, the importance of reducing dependency, which may involve advocating for and promoting Anticipatory Action as part of a comprehensive disaster management strategy, was highlighted. This implies that Anticipatory Action is seen as a proactive approach to disaster management that aligns with broader development objectives.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE (DMC) - ROLE OF THE DMC IN AA



Mr. T.W.K.Indika Pushpakumara, Deputy Director (Emergency Operations) presented the policies and legislations, coordination mechanisms including the role of the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) implementing AA in the future. Key highlights of the presentation are as follows:

- Sri Lanka Disaster Management Act No. 13 of 2005: This act serves as the foundation for disaster management activities in Sri Lanka, outlining roles, responsibilities, and procedures related to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.
- Sri Lanka National Disaster Management (DM) Policy: National DM policy priorities set the strategic direction for disaster management efforts, guiding decision-making and resource allocation.

- National Coordination Mechanism: National coordination mechanism involves various government agencies and stakeholders working together to ensure a coordinated and efficient response to disasters.
- Disaster Management Committees at Different Levels: These committees, operating at various administrative levels, facilitate coordination, communication, and decision—making during disaster events.
- Multi-Hazard Early Warning Dissemination System: Multi-hazard early warning system ensures that timely and accurate information is disseminated to communities and relevant authorities.
- Overall Emergency Response Coordination Structure: This helps visualize how different agencies and stakeholders work together in the event of a disaster, streamlining response efforts.

Key functional areas of the DMC

- Analysis of Disaster Risks: Assessing and understanding disaster risks is fundamental to preparedness.
- >> Early Warning Systems: Ensuring that warning systems are in place to provide advance notice of impending disasters.
- >> Contingency Planning: Developing contingency plans that outline actions to be taken in various disaster scenarios.
- >> Stockpiling of Equipment and Supplies: Pre-positioning essential equipment and supplies for rapid response.
- >> Coordination Arrangements: Establishing coordination mechanisms to facilitate cooperation among various stakeholders.
- >> Training and Public Awareness: Ensuring that responders are trained and that the public is educated about disaster preparedness.
- >> Simulation Exercises: Conducting drills and exercises to test response plans.
- >> Evacuation Community Preparedness: Preparing communities for safe evacuation in the event of a disaster.

Question and answers

During the question and answer session, important aspects related to the future sustainability of disaster management initiatives were highlighted. Key points from the discussions included:





Sustainability of Disaster Management Initiatives

- The revision of the Disaster Management Act has been finalized and is ready for submission to the cabinet for approval.
- Ensuring the future sustainability of disaster management efforts involves establishing a platform for coordination, communication, and collaboration among stakeholders involved in disaster management.
- The Disaster Management policy and act mentioned earlier are considered sufficient as a legal foundation for disaster management activities. These legal instruments provide the framework for disaster management actions in the country.



NBRO has developed landslide vulnerable area mapping. With the local rainfall data collected and the three-day forecast from the Meteorology Department, high-risk communities are identified, and preparedness and mitigation measures are implemented. Red alerts are also issued based on this information.

Coordination and Collaboration

Collaboration between DMC and other forecast organizations should indeed take place. It is crucial to have robust coordination and collaboration among various stakeholders in disaster management.









ANTICIPATORY ACTION AND DISASTER LAW: ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

Presented by Ms. Finau Levni, IFRC
Regional Disaster Law Coordinator, this
session covered discussions on laws,
resolutions, policies, frameworks, and
government-National Society collaborations.
IFRC's actions in disaster law involve
providing technical assistance, capacity
building, research, and guidance on disaster
law topics, such as climate-smart disaster
risk reduction and public health
emergencies.



The session highlighted the need for a legal/policy framework for Anticipatory Actions and the importance of ensuring this framework is embedded in, or linked to, the national disaster risk management framework, that funding can be released early and that anticipatory actions and actors are coordinated.

The session also highlighted that the development of an anticipatory action framework should include all the various actors involved with Anticipatory Actions so that actions are streamlined, complimentary and not duplicated. Key considerations that arose during discussions included human rights law, national laws, environmental laws, data protection, donor regulations, ethical principles, customary practices, and cross-border operations. These considerations ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards while implementing Anticipatory Action.

ENTRY POINTS FOR ANTICIPATORY ACTION INTO NATIONAL DRM SYSTEM

The group discussion was conducted to brainstorm on the entry points for Anticipatory Action into national into the national Disaster Risk Management (DRM) system, coordination structures, forecasting, and financing mechanisms. Key highlights of the discussions are as follows:

Entry Points into the National DRM System

- Policy Integration: Advocate for the integration of Anticipatory Action into national DRM policies, potentially through the creation or revision of policies to explicitly address this concept.
- Training and Capacity Building: Implement programmes to educate DRM officials and agencies about Anticipatory Action principles and benefits.
- Data Sharing: Promote collaboration and data sharing between meteorological agencies, early warning systems, and DRM authorities to enhance the integration of forecasts into DRM operations.
- >> Simulation and Drills: Conduct exercises and simulations that involve forecast agencies and DRM authorities to test the effectiveness of Anticipatory Action plans.



Entry Points into Current Coordination Structures

- Task Forces: Create dedicated task forces or working groups within existing coordination structures, focused on Anticipatory Action, to provide a space for planning and discussions.
- Regular Meetings: Incorporate discussions on Anticipatory Action into routine coordination mechanisms like National Disaster Management Council meetings.
- Public-Private Partnerships: Collaborate with NGOs, private sector entities, and community-based organizations within coordination structures to augment resources and expertise available for Anticipatory Action.



Entry Points into Forecasting and Financing Mechanisms

- **Strengthen Forecasting Capabilities:** Invest in upgrading forecasting technologies and capabilities to enhance the accuracy and timeliness of early warning systems.
- Multi-Hazard Approaches: Ensure forecasting and early warning systems consider various hazards, encompassing meteorological, hydrological, and geological factors, to address a broader range of risks.
- Innovative Financing: Explore creative financing mechanisms such as contingency funds and risk financing instruments to secure funding for Anticipatory Action activities.
- Insurance and Risk Transfer: Consider utilizing insurance and risk transfer mechanisms to offset the financial burden of Anticipatory Action, releasing funds when specific triggers are met.
- >> Collaboration with Development Partners: Engage with international development agencies and partners to acquire technical expertise and financial support for Anticipatory Action initiatives.

Anticipation Hub & Asia Pacific Technical Working Groups: Global and regional resources

- The Anticipation Hub: With over 100 partners in two years and growing, offers a platform for learning, experiencing, exchanging knowledge, and advocating in the field of anticipation. It includes various resources, working groups, and networks that focus on triggers, financing, early action and monitoring.
- Technical Working Groups (TWG): There is an active national TWG in the Philippines with four sub groups focusing on Triggers, Financing, Early Actions and Monitoring. In Bangladesh, Forecast based Action (FbA) Working Group and Government Task Force on FbA have been established.
- Asia Pacific TWG: Established in late 2020 and co-led by IFRC and FAO

A VISION AND PLAN OF ACTION FOR AA IN SRI LANKA

Following action plan was developed through discussions and brainstorming

EARLY WARNING TRIGGERS					
NO	ACTIVITY	LEAD	TIME FRAME		
1	Develop trigger (Floods, Cyclone, Landslides, Droughts, Heat waves)	Disaster Management Centre (DMC) Department of Meteorology (DOM) Department of Irrigation Department of Agriculture National Building Research Organization (NBRO) & other (Fisheries sectorial Technical Agencies)	2023 - 2024		
2	Impact base Early warning (Process, structure, System resources) Eg. PRISN for droughts, AWARE Platform, RIMES, OSM	DMC World Food Programme (WFP) Technical Agencies	2024 - 2025		
3	Reactivate NDM, CS Sub group on early warning	DMC Emergency Operation Centre (EOC)	October 2023		
4	Early Warning Dissemination Mechanism to communities (Last mile inclusive)	Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) Sarvodaya	Three years		
5	Integrate Gender, Age, Disability Sensitivity to Early Warning Systems & triggers	Ministry of Child Affairs SLRCS United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) UNICEF			
	PREF	PAREDNESS			
NO	ACTIVITY	LEAD	TIME FRAME		
1	Public Awareness	DMC	1 Year		
2	Develop Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) for different Disaster Management	DMC Department of Irrigation NBRO	2 Years		
3	Conduct research to understand community respond to disaster community & anticipated behavioural changes	Universities	2 Years		
	ANTICIPA	ATORY ACTION			
NO	ACTIVITY	LEAD	TIME FRAME		
1	Anticipatory Action (AA) Protocols development, Simulation & validation regulation	DMC Department of Meteorology NBRO	l Year		
2	Institutionalization, Advocacy, Capacity building	WFP SLRCS IFRC & AATWG Asia Pacific UN DMC	2 Years		
3	Governance mechanism establishment	WFP SLRCS IFRC & AATWG Asia Pacific DMC			
4	M & E Framework + AA With reporting	UN			
5	Capacity Building & advocacy	SLRCS INGOs			
6	Research on the impacts (ROI) on AA	Academia			

FINANCING				
NO	ACTIVITY	LEAD	TIME FRAME	
1	Create a Budget line for Disaster Preparedness	Ministry of Finance	2024	
2	Introduce disaster preparedness Levy for the fund	NCDM	2024	
3	Mobilize START network to be establish in Sri Lanka	World Vision, Acted, Save the Children	2024	
4	Access external funding (eg. GCF, CERF, DREF)	National Designated Authority/ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNRC)	2024	
5	Risk Financing (E.g. Insurance)	DMC/CCC	2024	
6	Private financing	APAD	2024	
	cod	PRDINATION		
NO	ACTIVITY	LEAD	TIME FRAME	
1	Convening National Disaster Management Council chaired by president	Ministry of Disaster Management	2023 - 2024	
2	Marginal AA platform with different thematic areas linking up with existing coordination	DMC Humanitarian Country Cluster Team United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNRC)	2023 - 2024	
3	Establish Technical Working Group (TWG) for Anticipatory Action	DMC Humanitarian Country Cluster Team SLRCS	2024	
4	Sustainability of the coordination platform	DMC IFRC + SLRCS Humanitarian Country Cluster Team		

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

To effectively integrate Anticipatory Action into national Disaster Risk Management (DRM) systems, a set of strategic recommendations including next steps and responsibilities have been outlined:

RECOMMENDATIONS	OWNERSHIP	NEXT STEPS	
Establish a National Anticipatory Action Working Group	Government's DRM agency or relevant ministry	Create a dedicated working group comprising meteorological agencies, DRM authorities, and other stakeholders to oversee Anticipatory Action integration.	
Develop Anticipatory Action Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)	The National AA Working Group	Create comprehensive guidelines and SOPs for Anticipatory Action, ensuring accessibility and understanding.	
Advocate for Policy Integration	The National Anticipatory Action Working Group, with support from relevant government ministries.	Engage policymakers to integrate Anticipatory Action into national DRM policy frameworks, suggesting policy changes as needed.	
Capacity Building and Training	The National Anticipatory Action Working Group in partnership with educational institutions and international partners.	Develop and implement training programmes for DRM officials and meteorologists to foster a shared understanding of Anticipatory Action.	
Enhance Data Sharing and Forecast Integration	Meteorological Department, DRM authorities, and the National Anticipatory Action Working Group.	Facilitate data sharing and close collaboration between meteorological agencies and DRM authorities to seamlessly integrate forecasts into DRM operations.	
Conduct Simulation Exercises	The National Anticipatory Action Working Group in collaboration with relevant agencies.	Organize regular simulation exercises to test Anticipatory Action plans, identify gaps, and make necessary improvements.	

ANNEX 01- LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

	ORGANIZATION	NAME OF THE PARTICIPANT
1	Disaster Management Centre (DMC)	Indika Pushpakumara
2	Disaster Management Centre (DMC)	Udaya Kumara
3	National Building Research Organization (NBRO)	Laksiri Indrathilake
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25	University of Colombo	Prof. Nishara Fernando
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28	Janathakshan Guaranteed Limited	E.R.T.A.C.Kularathna
29	World Vision Lanka	W G Winson Gnanatheepan
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33	ACTED	Tharindu Abhayajeewa
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35	Dialog Axiata	Naveen Athukorala
36	USAID - Sri Lanka & Maldives	Nihani Riza
37	USAID - Sri Lanka & Maldives	Harini Nishshanka
38	USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance)	Dustin Shiau
39	Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC)	Sisira Madurapperuma
40	Daily Mirror	Kalani Kumarasinghe
41	International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	Amanda Tange
42	International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC)	Protima Singh
43	International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC)	Selvarajasinghem Umakanthan
44	International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC)	Finau Leveni
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