

# DISASTER IN SRI LANKA: SITUATION UPDATE

## **DISASTER MANAGEMENT & INFORMATION PROGRAMME**

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COLOMBO (DISASTER MANAGEMENT & INFORMATION PROGRAMME): The rush and the interest of the disaster in media are fading away. People in other parts of Sri Lanka do not receive information about the disaster anymore. According to the Emergency Operation Room of the National Disaster Management Centre there 178,886 families are displaced and 798 welfare centres are established around the Country. These numbers are apart from the people who are living with their relatives and friends. Damaged houses (completely and partially) are 116,000, though most houses that are completely washed away might not been calculated.

The Disaster management & Information Programme conducts following activities to deal with certain issues found in affected districts:

1. In the morning the District Focal Point of the Disaster Management & Information Programme in Galle District respond to the Prime Minister Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksha's request to clean the Galle city and conduct garbage management to minimize pollution and promote health and safety. There are 50 volunteers of the Green Movement of Sri Lanka and its member organizations in the District already. The Galle District Focal Point of the Disaster Management & Information Programme is closely working with the District Secretary to co-ordinate the process and manage the equipment and vehicles.



Garbage is a serious issue

Source: GMSL

2. The Batticaloa and Ampara District Focal Points of the Disaster Management & Information Programme is closely working with District Secretaries to provide relief in to areas where other agencies are not working. In Batticaloa and Ampara Districts the volunteers of the Disaster Management & Information Programme are co-ordinating water and sanitation and health issues of the displaced people. The largest welfare centre in Batticaloa – Thirukkowil is receiving medical support from four doctors and medicine supplies for affected communities, especially focusing on pregnant and lactating mothers, infants and children.



**Displaced people need to be treated with dignity and honour**

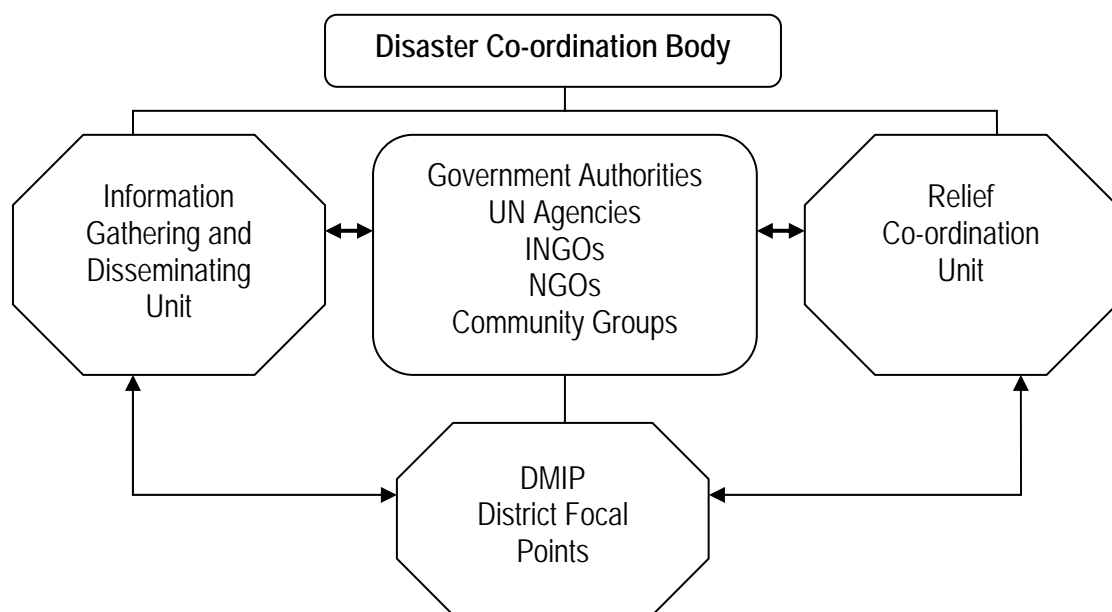
Source: GMSL

3. Based on the information from the Disaster Management & Information Programme, the Green Movement of Sri Lanka is advocating for people in areas such as Hambantota District where there are so much relief items that is not being co-ordinated properly. The staffs of the Disaster Management & Information Programme are sending this information to the Disaster Management Unit of the President's Office and other stake holders.

The Rapid Assessment Report of the Disaster Management & Information Programme was shared with the United Nations, OCHA Team and International Donor Community at a special meeting for assessments teams at 10.00 am at the UN Compound today. The report was widely appreciated by the European Commission, UNICEF, UNDP and other donor agencies participated the meeting.

The Disaster Management & Information Programme will conduct a workshop for all the team leaders of the District Focal Points on January 04, 2005 on continuing rapid and micro information gathering, networking at different levels, practical issues around the Sphere guidelines, dealing with community trauma and frustration and concepts of care as well as accounting procedures in the field level.

The Disaster Management & Information Programme has created a disaster co-ordination body to implement its gap filling relief process. The aim of the gap filling relief process is to assist people who do not receive facilities from the national relief programme. The network partners of the Green Movement of Sri Lanka, the organizations that closely working with the Disaster Management & Information Programme and supporting organizations and individuals of the Green Movement of Sri Lanka are supporting this process.



### Disaster Co-ordination Body

This body is consistent of the Co-ordinator of the Disaster Management & Information Programme, Programme Manager of the Green Movement of Sri Lanka, Information Officer of the Green Movement of Sri Lanka, Research Associate of the Trauma & Development Component of the Disaster & Development Centre, part-time Accountant of the Green Movement of Sri Lanka and volunteers of the Disaster Management & Information Programme are at the Disaster Co-ordinating Body. The Chief Organizer of the Green Movement of Sri

Lanka is monitoring the process by frequent visits to the field and supporting the main staffs that are involved at the Co-ordination Body.

The Disaster Co-ordination Body has two Units: Information Gathering and Disseminating Unit and the Relief Co-ordinating Unit.

1. Information Gathering and Dissemination Unit: The Information Gathering and Dissemination Unit is gathering information about the destruction, response mechanisms and co-ordination, environmental damage, needs of affected communities, cultural destruction and other issues around the disaster in Sri Lanka. Based on this information the Information Gathering and Dissemination Unit share updates with the government authorities, UN system, INGOs, communities, universities, local NGOs and interested individuals. The Unit also analyze information to develop reports, relief response plans, research activities, networking with other stake holders and fund raising.
2. Relief Co-ordination Unit: This Unit is working on gathering and buying relief items, distribution at district levels through District Focal Points, networking at field level and co-ordinating with gap filling response with the national relief response programme. The Relief Co-ordination Unit is closely sharing information and assists the Information Gathering and Dissemination Unit for a focus disaster response co-ordination for a national level gap filling relief process.
3. District Focal Points: The District Focal Points are closely working with the Information Gathering and Dissemination Unit and the Relief Co-ordination Unit to implement an effective gap filling relief response process to help the people who do not receive enough and proper relief. Also, these District Focal points are closely networking andn co-ordinating with the district level government agencies, INGOs, civil society groups and communities to share information for quality response.

The Disaster Co-ordination Body is base on the same three principles that the Green Movement of Sri Lanka is following – the principle of good governance:

1. Accountability for donors and receivers
2. Transparency of finance and relief response activities
3. Participation of people at affected community level

The team of the Disaster Management & Information Programme is strictly following these ethical principles and make decisions and implement them as a collective group.



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Source: GMSL

Disaster Management & Information Programme (DMIP) is a joint collaboration between the Green Movement of Sri Lanka and the Trauma & Development Component of the Disaster & Development Centre at Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom.

DMIP aims at establishing a national process of research, educational, mitigation and response to deal with natural and human made disasters in Sri Lanka.

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