

“COMMUNITY BASED HAZARD MAP DEVELOPMENT”

Chennai, 20 -21 December 2007



Excerpts from the Address by Prof. N. Vinod Chandra Menon, Member, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Government of India.

Welcoming His Excellency Shri Surjit Singh Barnala, the Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, Dr Koji Suzuki, Executive Director, ADRC, Kobe, Japan; Dr D Vishwanathan, Distinguished Vice Chancellor of Anna University, Chennai, Representatives of Inter-

national Humanitarian Organisations and Civil Society Organisations, Senior Government Officials, Representatives of the Media he emphasized the importance of popular participatory hazard risk and vulnerability assessment tools such as “Town Watching” to reduce risk at the level of communities.

UN ISDR has estimated that the number of people at risk has been growing by 70 to 80 million per year and more than 90% of vulnerable population is in the developing world. In his introduction to the Secretary General's Annual Report on the Work of the Organisation of the United Nations in 1999, Kofi Annan commented:

- More effective prevention strategies would save not only tens of billions of dollars, but save tens of thousands of lives.
- Funds currently spent on intervention and relief could be devoted to enhancing equitable and sustainable development. This will reduce the risks of friction amongst various countries.
- Building a culture of prevention is not easy. While the costs of prevention have to be paid in the present, its benefits lie in distant future.
- Moreover, the benefits are not visible; they are the disasters that did NOT happen; “that’s why the sluggishness to follow them up with vigour.

“Climate Change adaptation is emerging as one of the most serious challenges before policy makers and development practitioners. Pro active, people-friendly climate change adaptation strategies strongly rooted within the local grassroots reality of the coastal communities and their concerns for safety of lives, livelihoods and security needs measures is the urgent need of the hour shifting the emphasis from technological imperatives proposed by the protagonists of the dominant paradigm of reducing the carbon emission targets.”

“In India, the National Disaster Management Authority was set up as a statutory body through the Disaster Management Act, 2005 to provide the enabling environment for the institutional mechanisms for mainstreaming the paradigm shift from the post-disaster relief to pre-disaster preparedness, mitigation and disaster risk reduction. In close cooperation with the Planning Commission, we have addressed the strategy for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in developmental planning.”

“On the eve of the third anniversary marking the tsunami devastation, we are deeply aware that 400 million people constitute our coastal communities and their lives, livelihoods and security depends on our humane understanding, insights and application of mind.”



“In essence, this will call for people-friendly development with a human face and more humane climate change adaptation strategies. I am sure that this will receive the priority and attention it deserves at every level.”