

Roles of policymakers, regulators, private sector and civil society

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LIRNEasia

Learning Initiatives on Reforms for Network Economies

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Agenda

- Organizational problems must be solved if the potential of early warning technologies is to be fully realized
- Overall division of labor
 - Issuance of warning –Government
 - Transmission of warning –Telecom operators
 - Evacuation and response –First responders (govt and other)
 - Community preparedness –Community organizations
- Identification of specific tasks and responsibilities
- Comments on government role



Telecom and e-media are important, but are only part of the solution

- Ability to move information at the speed of light can increase time to act to reduce risks of disasters
- Many organizational problems must be solved
 - At level of community
 - At level of first responders
 - At national early warning center
 - Among the carriers of alerts and warnings
- Effective warning must be complemented by preparedness plans, evacuation capabilities, etc.
- If we are to save livelihoods and property, in addition to lives, a lot more has to be done on risk reduction



Early warning: who should do what?

- Early warning is a classic public good → **Government must supply**
- Early warning is based on incomplete, probabilistic information and judgment → **Government must take the responsibility of issuing warning/alert**
 - 75% of tsunami warnings in the Pacific are false; false warnings can be dangerous
 - Government gets hazard information from external or internal sources
 - Regional warning cannot be simply transmitted
 - Judgment must be applied before national warnings/alerts are issued for specific areas

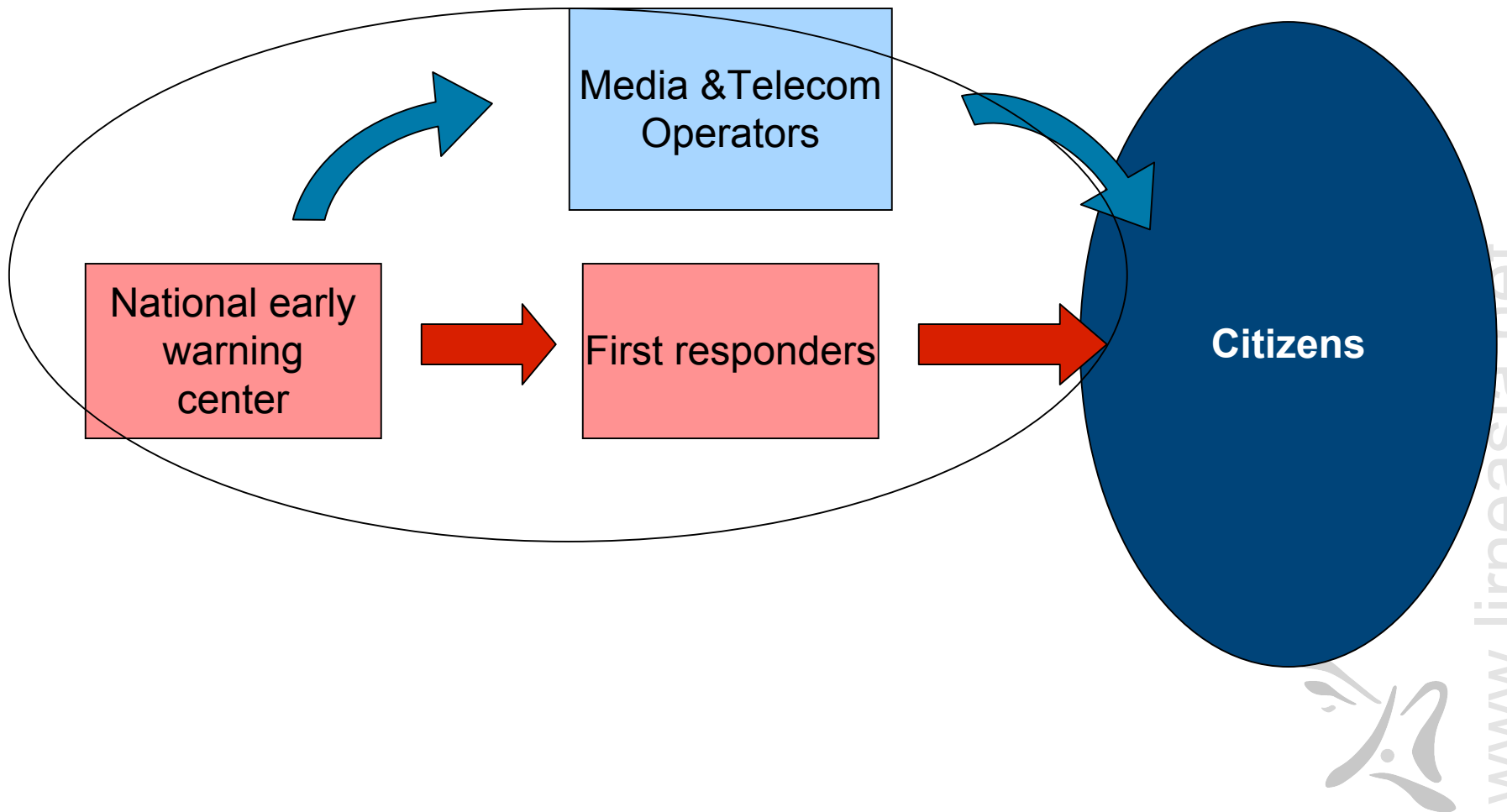


Early warning: who should do what?

- **Operators of telecom networks and electronic media (public-sector and private-sector)** must transmit the message to first responders and citizens
- **Ground-level first responders** must play the key role in evacuations and response
- Community preparedness is important if warnings are to save lives → **community-based organizations (e.g., Sarvodaya) are best at this**
 - Includes improving the ability of communities to **receive** warnings and alerts



Responsibilities at warning center and in communication to media, etc.



Early Warning Center → Media & Telcos

- Protocols for fast decision making re issuance of warnings/alerts [**Internal to government**]
- Procedure for issuing large number of warnings/alerts quickly and reliably using multiple media, including acknowledgements and redundancy [**Decision is government's; but best to use Common Alerting Protocol based single-input, multi-output, multi-language software solution**]



Media, telcos, first responders to public

- ❑ Procedures for verification and acknowledgement [jointly worked out with government]
- ❑ Standard formats, including rules on what is communicated in what form [jointly worked out with government]
- ❑ Rules for use of cell broadcasts [jointly worked out with government]
- ❑ Government first responders to public [procedures appropriate for different settings decided locally]
- ❑ Other first responders (e.g., Sarvodaya, hotels) to public [procedures appropriate for different settings decided locally]

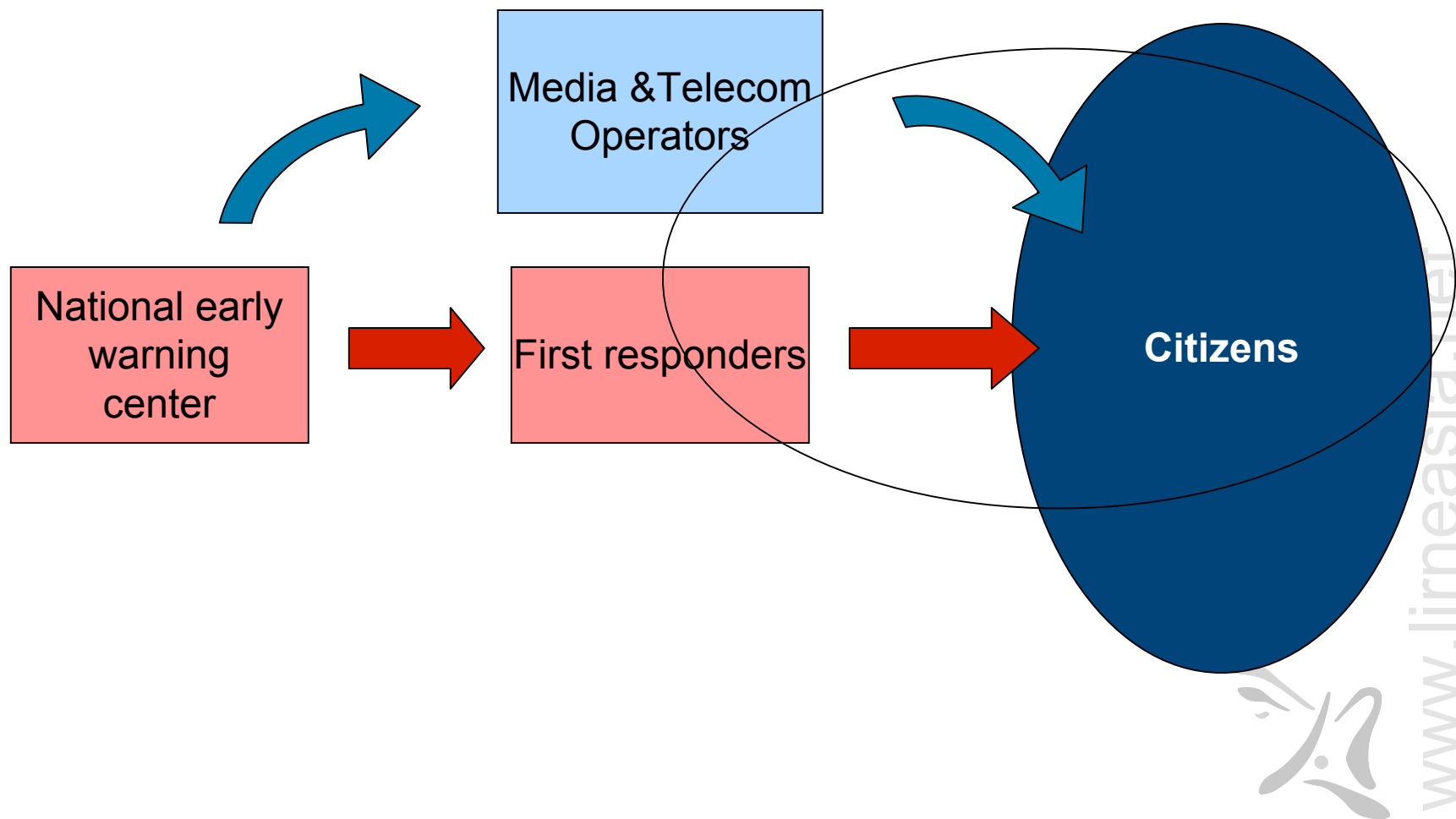


Prior planning essential

- Wide variety of procedures to be decided
- Important that they be formulated and tried out prior to a disaster
 - Improvisation in the midst of a crisis is inappropriate
 - Updating of procedures at regular intervals
 - Drills and training of critical actors, also at regular intervals



Lessons for the last mile



Community preparedness

- ❑ Each community is unique → emergency response plans cannot be the same
- ❑ Importance of emergency response plans
 - Plan without simulation is no plan
 - Simulation without plan cannot be done
- ❑ Plans need to be updated regularly
- ❑ Training and awareness raising needed
- ❑ Primarily for communities, though government may exercise oversight if it has adequate expertise and resources
- ❑ Communities can learn from each other if the environment is created



A mild critique of government priorities

- Too often, government looks at the problem in terms of
 - Laws and regulations, instead of ground-level action (that is then codified into practical legal frameworks)
 - Sri Lanka Disaster Management Act passed after the tsunami has grandiose schemes of committees reporting to committees reporting to councils
 - But the Act does not include provisions for funding from the Consolidated Fund → unable to do much without external help



A mild critique of government priorities

- Too often government units get entangled in turf battles and lose sight of what the overall object is
- Disasters cross administrative boundaries
 - In Sri Lanka, geological expertise is at Geological Survey and Mines Bureau; tsunami hazard information authority is Met Department; tide gauges are under National Aquatic Resources Authority; warning authority is Disaster Management Center; telecom operators are governed by Telecom Regulatory Commission; media are under Media Ministry
- Essential to develop non-territorial approaches to manage unavoidable turf issues
 - Disasters are too big for one government department, let alone government as a whole → need to work with everyone to save lives, livelihoods and property



A mild critique of government priorities

- There is too much emphasis on the international and not enough on the community level
 - Community level work is hard; much harder than attending international workshops
 - But that is the key to risk reduction



Take aways

- Disasters are too big for any one entity → the problem is large enough for everyone to contribute
 - Government must take the lead in creating the right environment for productive cooperation by all
 - Responsibilities must be assigned based on core competencies
- Plans are not plans absent simulation
 - We need to look at what works, not what is on paper





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Telecom sector contributes to LK economic growth, while prices decline 5 edit

Published by samarajiva April 12th, 2007 in General.

The Central Bank of Sri Lanka's **2006 Annual Report** states that: "The GDP deflator, which measures the price changes of all goods, produced in the economy, increased by 10.3 per cent in 2006 compared with the rate of 9.9 per cent in 2005. High price increases were recorded in most sub-sectors except in mining and telecommunications, where prices were lower compared with the previous year. Higher fuel and material costs together with the depreciation of the Sri Lankan rupee during the year led to the increase in prices of most finished goods and services."

This is quite different from the spurious growth shown by government-owned enterprises driven by the higher rupee value of the output of the Petroleum Corporation which contributed to 90 per cent of the entire output of government-owned enterprises.

LIRNEasia researcher invited to ITU meeting on disasters in Alexandria, Egypt 0 edit

Published by samarajiva April 12th, 2007 in Disaster.

Nuwan Waidvanatha, the Project Manager of the Last-mile HazInfo Project, has been

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