

## Roles of policymakers, regulators, private sector and civil society

Rohan Samarajiva

Presentation at Workshop on Sharing Knowledge  
5 March 2008, Jakarta



www.lirneasia.net

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## 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



www.lirneasia.net

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## 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



www.lirneasia.net

---

---

---

---

---

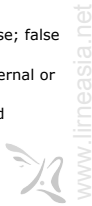
---

---

---

## 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



---

---

---

---

---

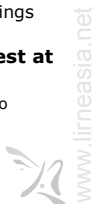
---

---

---

## 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



---

---

---

---

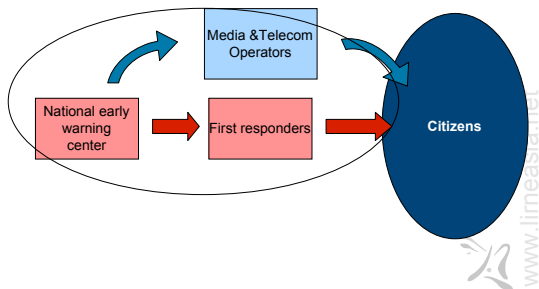
---

---

---

---

## 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]



www.lirneasia.net

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## 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]



www.lirneasia.net

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## 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



www.lirneasia.net

---

---

---

---

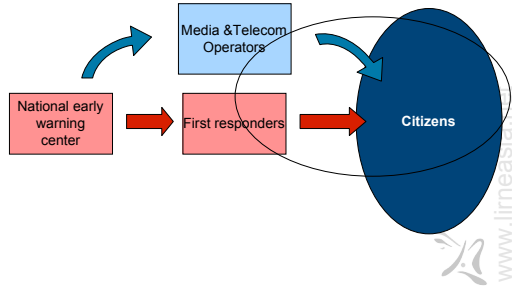
---

---

---

---

## Lessons for the last mile



---

---

---

---

---

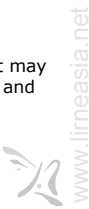
---

---

---

## 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



---

---

---

---

---

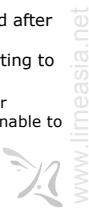
---

---

---

## 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



www.iirmeasia.net

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## 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



www.iirmeasia.net

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## 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



www.iirmeasia.net

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---