

# Tsunami Simulation Exercise- Sri Lanka 2009

Faizal Nagar GN under the Kinniya Division, Trincomalee



*People are evacuating to the safe place after receiving of early warning of tsunami*



*Community people get together in the safe place after getting the early warning information.*

## Simulation Exercise Trincomalee, Sri Lanka

Faisal Nagar GN under the Kinniya division of Trincomalee district is highly vulnerable to tsunami and other hazards. In 2004, tsunami more than 300 people were killed in this area by the giant event. Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), Thailand together with Disaster Management Center (DMC) Sri Lanka and Sri Lankan Red Cross Society (SLRCS) conducted a full scale simulation exercise for tsunami warning and response system in Faisal Nagar to promote preparedness by testing SOPs at the national and district level, strength and weakness of the organizational structure for response and clarify roles and responsibilities of SLRCS's volunteers at the community level.

More than 1000 people from Faisal Nagar participated in the evacuation drill exercise on 24th February 2009. The exercise was heralded as a major success in terms of achieving high levels of participation, raising awareness, showcasing effective warning and response system, and identifying areas for improvement. The exercise represented the culmination of the UNESCAP tsunami trust fund support activity under ADPC to enhance end to end tsunami early warning system for Sri Lanka and rapidly issuing tsunami alerts.

This activity shows a great commitment by the Government of Sri Lanka to promote disaster preparedness though the country is passing a tension situation in the north eastern part currently.

## Pre- Planning

A series of orientation seminar and awareness meetings were conducted at the community level. A strong coordination at the district and divisional level was formed through the District Disaster Management Coordinator (DDMC) and his team. Orientation seminar conducted at the SLRC volunteers and community to well prepared for the exercise.

SLRCS developed the community mapping for risk areas of possible hazards, evacuation paths, safe places, etc in participation with local community. Demographic data of the villages were also collected.



The SLRCS volunteers activated their response functions to support the first response to the warning.



After Action Review by the simulation exercise evaluation by the team member

For more information on end to end early warning system for Sri Lanka

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Other emergency agencies in the community (i.e. Police, Divisional Secretary's Office, military camps, etc) also informed to participate in the simulation exercise by the DDMC.

### Simulation Evaluation

An After Action Review (AAR) was conducted to evaluate the simulation exercise right after the exercise with the organizer and SLRC volunteers. A one day workshop also conducted to evaluate the overall outcomes of the exercise and provide awareness on local level early warning system. The event was highly successful because of people's enthusiasm and cooperation to work together for disaster response.

It was identified that the multiple communications are essential in this area as mobile coverage not resistance all the time. Major livelihood in this community is fishermen. A robust communication system is required for the fishermen warning while fishing in the shoreline.

The linkage between GN and village DM committee is very weak from District as well as national level. Their roles and responsibilities also not clear by the community in disaster preparedness. More training and awareness on local level early warning and overall disaster management system is essential.

It is foreseen that there is a lacking of proper planning to conduct any simulation exercise and evaluation at the community level. At the same time awareness of local level early warning dissemination and response structure is weak. A standard planning process and capacity building on roles and responsibilities of major early warning players (i.e. DMC, DoM, DDMC, etc) at the community level will enhance the overall preparedness of the community to response any disaster.



Participants took part in the Simulation exercise evaluation workshop on 25 February 2009

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