

LANDSLIDES - NEED FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

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Sri Lanka, from time to time, experiences the adverse effects of natural disasters, such as floods, droughts, cyclones, landslides etc. However, attention is generally focussed on the Organisation of Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation with little or no co-ordinate efforts towards prevention, mitigation, effective warning, planning and reconstruction in respect of natural disasters. Due to lack of natural disaster preparedness, the usual tendency is to respond to disasters as they occur with hastily arranged but very costly ad-hoc programmes. Moreover, there does not exist special legislation with respect of natural disasters. Proper implementation of suitable legislation and proper pre-disaster planning could certainly be a high cost effective form of insurance.

The recent landslides during the past two years have caused much loss to lives and damage to property, moreover depriving thousands of their homes and jobs. This paper discusses the necessity for preparedness towards landslide disasters, and possible legislation that could be formulated for prevention and a programme for pre-disaster planning.