



Adaptive Social Protection in Sri Lanka: Building Resilience to Disasters and Climate Change

High Level Conference – Colombo, Sri Lanka – September 25-26, 2018

Context

Sri Lanka is hit by increasingly frequent and severe shocks. At the start of 2017, the country suffered its worst drought in four decades. Floods followed in May, taking 219 lives and damaging nearly 80,000 homes. The Sri Lankan government has the capacity to address immediate needs of disaster-affected households through the distribution of food and shelter and insurance payouts, but programs for recovery and reintegration are more ad-hoc. The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment conducted after the floods noted that a lack of data on households in affected areas made it difficult to ascertain their needs, and identified a need for improved inter-ministerial coordination on disasters.

Improving disaster response is an urgent development priority for Sri Lanka, and one recognized by the government in its Vision 2025 strategy. Shocks like floods and droughts disproportionately affect the poorest and most vulnerable households, who are least able to cope with shocks. There is an emerging consensus on the need to build the resilience of vulnerable households before disasters occur, and to develop systems to more rapidly deliver assistance to affected households in their aftermath. To achieve this, Sri Lanka will need to ensure its cash transfer programs are scalable, and that livelihood programs are equipped to address the needs of disaster-affected households for recovery and reintegration.

There is currently a window of opportunity to improve the delivery of disaster assistance in Sri Lanka. The country is in the process of modernizing its social safety net system with support from the World Bank. A new social registry is being developed and will be made operational later this year. It is intended to handle the registration and selection of beneficiaries for all major welfare programs. An independent agency has been set up to select beneficiaries based on transparent and objective criteria and pay them using a more streamlined electronic payment system.

There is a strong interest in some parts of the government, and among development partners generally, to mainstream the delivery of disaster assistance through the new safety net system. Leveraging this new delivery system offers many potential benefits, including improved transparency, coverage and speed of payment. Much work has already been done to develop systems for disaster risk forecasting and early warning, disaster damage assessment and budgeting, disaster risk financing, and poverty mapping. It is an opportune time to discuss how to weave these strands together into a modern adaptive safety net.

However, it will be important to begin this dialogue soon, and to ensure it is carried out in a manner that is clear and inclusive. It will be important to emphasize that an adaptive social protection system depends on the interaction of data, systems, programs and institutional arrangements across many government departments and disciplines.

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Objectives

The objective of this high-level conference is to raise awareness among policy makers and stakeholders in the Sri Lanka development community about the concept of Adaptive Social Protection, and discuss how the current system of social protection and disaster response in Sri Lanka can be improved. While Sri Lanka is already taking action on many of the individual components of this system, the purpose of the conference is to look at the bigger picture and discuss in particular how the introduction of the new social registry can be leveraged to connect these components. Given the diversity of stakeholders involved, it is imperative to build a common understanding of the current disaster environment, social protection and disaster response policies, and identify the next steps to achieve a truly integrated adaptive social protection system.

There is a wealth of practical international experience on the subject that can be tapped to find the best solutions for Sri Lanka. The conference will take stock of the existing policies, programs and delivery systems in Sri Lanka and identify gaps. Practitioners from countries with well-functioning systems will be invited to present their country models and reform experiences, and participants will discuss what can be taken from these models and adapted to the Sri Lankan context.

Format

The conference will be hosted by Sri Lanka's Department of National Planning and financed by Agence Française de Développement and the World Bank. Approximately 100 participants, including senior officials from all stakeholder ministries, and representatives from think tanks, academia and development partners will attend. Senior officials from Ethiopia, Indonesia, Mexico and the Philippines will be invited to present on their respective programs and reform experiences.

The conference will consist of six sessions over two days, followed by three parallel workshops. The sessions will follow the World Bank's framework for Adaptive Social Protection, which has four themes: Adaptive Information, Adaptive Programs, Adaptive Finance and Institutional Coordination. Each session will cover one of these themes, featuring a presentation on the situation in Sri Lanka, presentations by two international practitioners on the achievements in their country, and a plenary discussion on potential innovations in Sri Lanka. A fourth roundtable session will discuss institutional coordination. There will also be one framing session and a global café session to enable officials to have more in-depth conversations with the visiting experts. After lunch on the second day, there will be three separate workshops focused on the safety net system, data for early warning systems, and disaster risk financing. These workshops will offer participants the chance to apply the learning from the first two days to the specific case of Sri Lanka, and develop reform action plans for each topic.

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Conference Agenda

Jubilee Ballroom - Galle Face Hotel - Colombo

Tuesday, 25 September 2018	
8:30-9:00	Registration
9:00-10:00	Opening Ceremony
10:00-10:30	Introduction and Framing: <i>What is Adaptive Social Protection?</i> Dr. Thomas Walker, Senior Economist, The World Bank
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break
11:00-12:40	<p>Topic 1: Adaptive Information Systems</p> <p><i>Sri Lanka's Disaster Response System</i> Mr. Chaminda Pathiraja, Director, National Disaster Relief Services Centre</p> <p><i>Sri Lanka's Social Registry</i> Mr. Sugath Ranugge, Chairman, Welfare Benefits Board</p> <p><i>Listahanan: The Philippine Social Registry</i> Mr. Noel Macalalad, Additional Secretary, Dept. of Social Welfare and Development, Philippines</p> <p><i>Indonesia's Unified Database (UDB)</i> Mr. Said Mirza Pahlevi, Head, Center for Social Welfare Data and Information, Ministry of Social Affairs, Indonesia</p> <p><i>Discussion</i></p>
12:40-14:00	Lunch
14:00-15:30	<p>Topic 2: Adaptive Programs</p> <p><i>Disasters and Social Safety Nets in Sri Lanka</i> Dr. Paula Bulancea, Deputy Representative, UNICEF</p> <p><i>Mexico's Prospera</i> Mr. Damián Rosales Manjarrez, Director of Statistical Analysis, PROSPERA, Mexico</p> <p><i>Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme</i> Mr. Tadesse Bekele Fanta, Senior DRM Advisor, National Disaster Risk Management Commission, Ethiopia</p> <p><i>Discussion</i></p>
15:30-17:00	<p>Global Café</p> <p><i>This session will provide an opportunity for participants to speak with presenters in an informal setting.</i></p>
17:00	Reception

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Wednesday, 26 September 2018	
9:00-9:10	Opening Recap of Day 1
9:10-10:30	Topic 3: Adaptive Financing <i>Fundamentals of Adaptive Financing</i> Mr. Olivier Mahul, Lead Financial Sector Economist, The World Bank <i>Sri Lanka's National Natural Disaster Insurance Scheme</i> Mr. Sanath de Silva, CEO, National Insurance Trust Fund <i>Mexico's FONDEN</i> Mr. Salvador Perez Maldonado, Former Associate Director General of Insurance, Ministry of Finance and Public Credit, Mexico <i>Discussion</i>
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break
11:00-12:00	Topic 4: Institutional Coordination <i>Panel Discussion:</i> Officials from Mexico, Philippines, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka
12:00-12:30	Closing Remarks
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:30-17:30	Thematic Workshops <i>Adaptive Social Safety Nets Working Group (by invitation)</i> Leads: Ms. Shiranthi Rathnayake (NPD), Mr. Steve Ashley (World Bank) <i>Disaster Risk Financing and Disaster Data Systems</i> Leads: Mr. Olivier Mahul (World Bank), Mr. Suranga Kahandawa (World Bank)

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