

Matara is getting ready!

Matara, Sri Lanka

Population: 76,254

Type of Hazard(s): Floods and Tsunamis



Matara is a city located on the Southern coastal line of Sri Lanka. With the Nilawala River flowing through it, the city has become a rapidly developing urban commercial centre. During the monsoon seasons, the river carries flood waters from the up country hills and freely flows over flat lands often causing severe damage to crops, agricultural lands as well as the urban areas of the city. Due to the flow of the Nilawala River, floods are common in Matara. In 2003, flooding, as a result of breached protection dykes, destroyed 1,607 houses and affected 43,750 people.

Further, the Tsunami in 2004 was the worst disaster ever faced by the city in its history. The entire coastal area, a place famous as a tourist attraction was washed away leaving 462 dead, injuring 1,862, damaging 2,205 houses and affecting another 2,2943 people.

Disaster Risk Reduction activities

Due to increased occurrences of floods, authorities have taken steps to transform the city to be more disaster resilient. With the committed leadership and active community participation, a number of activities are presently ongoing. A risk assessment process commenced during the end of 2009. Workshops with stakeholders and communities in the afflicted areas were conducted with the aim of generating hazard, vulnerability and risk assessments as well as the development of a City hazard map. As a pre-requisite to these workshops, a study was conducted to collect the secondary information relating to hazard history and prepared basic ward maps. Additionally, the Federation of Sri Lankan Local

Government Authorities (FSLGA) is already engaged as a legal consultant for the Southern Provincial Council to study and reform its existing Local Authority By-laws, and incorporate disaster reduction dimensions into Matara's Municipal By-laws.