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school disaster safety” an investment on sustainable developmentWeweldenige Asitha Weweldeniya¹

Frequency and Severity of disaster events in Sri Lanka have shown an increasing trend during last two decades. Natural hazards such as Floods, Cyclones, Drought, Landslides, and Coastal Erosion have negatively impacted the wellbeing of many communities. In addition, lightning strikes, land subsidence, health hazards, communicable diseases, wild animal attacks and environmental pollution events could also be considered as regular disaster events in Sri Lanka.

Natural hazards result in serious economic and social impacts and compromise the development and poverty reduction priorities of Sri Lanka. Disasters often affect essential infrastructure such as houses, schools, hospitals, government buildings, roads, bridges and livelihood assets such as agricultural crops, small industries, and fisheries. Therefore scarce government resources that are allocated for development are diverted for relief and rehabilitation efforts.

Education is one of the most important and sensitive sector which has direct relationship to disaster impacts in the country. Children are one of the most vulnerable groups to disasters as well as day today hazards in the environment. Frequent disasters disrupt the education of children and create long term implications to carrier of the children as well as to the nation.

Children are recognized as one of the vulnerable groups to disasters and climate change impacts and children which is known as the human resource force of the country. It also, children are identified as change agents of future and they influence directions towards sustainable development. Thousands of children around the world are affected by disasters and the trend is increasing in the context of disaster and climate change.

Investment on loss and damages and taking long time for back normal. Major disasters damage education infrastructure and interrupt the education system. Government resources that are allocated for development has to divert for reconstruction or rehabilitate of infrastructure development and additional money for system recovery. Deprivation and psycho-social loss (away from familiar environment, friends etc.). in such disastrous situation, children expose to deprivation and psycho social impact to them and it is very high.

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