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CCI PROVIDES EXPERTISE:

Empowering people in post conflict areas vital

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A disaster is an opportunity to build back better but it is very important to prepare a long term plan using sufficient community information, Prof. Dilanthi Amaratunga of the School of the Built Environment, Salford University UK told Daily News Business.

Prof. Amaratunga along with Program Director, Disaster Mitigation and Reconstruction, Dr. Richard Haigh Salford University arrived in Sri Lanka early this week to support Sri Lanka through the Chamber of Construction Industry (CCI) Sri Lanka.

They will support mainly in capacity building in the reconstruction process. The CCI entered into a partnership with the University of Salford, UK to provide expertise in the field of Disaster Management and to provide humanitarian aid to those who have been entrapped for nearly three decades.

Prof. Amaratunga said that once a disaster has taken place, the first concern is effective recovery, helping all those affected to recover from the immediate effects of the disaster. Reconstruction involves helping to restore the basic infrastructure and services that people need so that they can return to the pattern of life which they had enjoyed before the disaster.

Therefore, building houses, creating job opportunities and economic stability is vital in terms of empowering people in conflict affected areas.

Capacity building at different levels has been a major issue and the CCI has been a complementary partner to identify local needs in this process, she said.

Elaborating on the construction role in disaster mitigation and recovery, Dr. Haigh said that there is growing recognition that the construction industry has an important role in helping communities to anticipate, assess, prevent, prepare, respond and recover from disasters of all types.

This process is commonly visualized as a two - phase cycle, with post disaster recovery informing pre-disaster risk reduction and vice versa. This illustrates the ongoing process by which Governments, businesses and civil society plan for and reduce the impact of disasters and react during and immediately after a disaster and take steps to recover.

This concept has the ability to promote the holistic approach as well as to demonstrate the relationship between disasters and development, he said.

The University of Salford's Centre for Disaster Resilience recognized as the international centre for research in the built and human environment work with communities around the world to increase their resilience to the threat posed by

natural and human induced hazards.

An international Conference titled "Building Education and Research" (BEAR) chaired by Prof. Amaratunga and Dr. Haigh was held last year at the Kandalama Hotel. It was organized by the local partner, the Universities of Moratuwa and Ruhuna.

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