



# Natural Resource Management

## SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES FROM PREVIOUS UPR CYCLES

In the first cycle in 2008, Sri Lanka accepted the recommendation made by Algeria to “Continue to work with the international community on protection of human rights, environment, disaster risk management, HIV-AIDS and capacity building.”

## NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Central Environmental Authority was established under the provision of the National Environmental Act No:47 of 1980. The Ministry of Environment has the overall responsibility in the affairs of the Central Environmental Authority with the objective of integrating environmental considerations into the development process of the country. The Central Environmental Authority was given wider regulatory powers under the National Environment (Amendment) Acts No:56 of 1988 and No:53 of 2000. The Authority is vested with power to carry out Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for assessing impact of development projects on the environment.

According to the Fauna and Flora (Amended) Act No. 49 of 1993, any development activity proposed to be established within one mile from the boundary of any National Reserve, is required to be subject to EIA. Coast Conservation (Amendment) Act No. 57 of 1981 prescribes EIA for projects that come within the coastal Zone. EIA process is open to the general public to comment. Another process named Initial Environment Examination is also prescribed for certain projects. This process is not open for the public. The discretion to decide whether a project requires EIA or IEE is with the Central Environmental Authority.

Fauna & Flora Protection Ordinance and Forst Ordinance are in place for the protection of wildlife and forests.

## CHALLENGES

Impact on environment for large development projects.

## IMPACT

Though it is mandatory for larger development projects to have an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), it is more common to submit erroneous reports for initial environmental approval, and bypass proper environmental assessment. The Uma Oya development project, Port City development project, Mattala International Airport project, Moragahakanda and Kalu Ganga irrigation projects have all led to undesirable effects on the environment and wildlife due to lack of proper environmental assessment before implementation. A Wind Power project in Mannar has been launched on the basis of an Initial Environmental Examination though the project site sits on a path used by migratory birds. Settlement of people on forest lands in and around Wilpattu reserve caused a considerable destruction of forest.

**CHALLENGES**

**IMPACT**

Disregarding predictions of adverse environmental impact

Large development projects such as the Uma Oya water diversion scheme and the Colombo Port City projects continue to be pursued despite evidence of serious harm to the environment and livelihood. The construction of underground tunnels for Uma Oya project have drastically affected the water table and caused serious damages to houses and buildings in the area.

Loopholes in National Environment Act.

Under this Act the Environmental Authority is empowered to assess environmental impacts of development projects. However, as a result of failures of this mechanism to conduct proper assessment on environment, local communities has suffered. Initial Environment Examination reports (which do not require public consultations) could be submitted even for projects located in environmentally sensitive areas. The present procedure do not put emphasis on adverse socio-economic impacts on local community, by radical changes in environment due to development projects.

Disregarding commitments to international environmental instruments.

The Ramsar convention and the Bonn Convention on Migratory Species are often disregarded in planning development projects.

Lack of proper Solid waste management scheme.

Solid waste management in urban areas has become a key environmental issue. Lack of infrastructure and resources for garbage collection has led to uncontrolled scattering and dumping of garbage. There are no proper facilities for final disposal of most of the solid waste produced by households and industries. Waste that is improperly dumped blocks water-flow in drainage channels, and provides breeding places for mosquitoes. Dumping in natural areas cause pollution of ground and surface water. The collapse of the Meetotamulla garbage dump in April damaged 145 houses and displaced 625 people.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Make it mandatory for all projects located in environmental sensitive areas to have Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) before commencement of projects.
2. End the practice of Initial Environmental Examination reports for development projects located in environmental sensitive areas.
3. Ensure adherence to all signed and/or ratified international instruments and conventions on environment, in planning and granting permission to development projects.
4. Stop destruction of important forests reserves for development projects and colonization.



### RECOMMENDATIONS

5. End capturing and exporting endangered wild animals and marine life forms.
6. End inappropriate sand mining and gem mining, leading to nuisance to general public and causing damage to environment.
7. Take into account the adverse effect on environment in projects to introduce cash crops in areas where forest reserves and water catchment areas are located.
8. Introduce legal reforms to the National Environment Act to assess, mitigate and prevent adverse effects caused by development projects on environment, with emphasis on rights of local communities, their livelihood and local agricultural systems.
9. Introduce modern advanced technology for solid waste management.

