



TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE BLUE GREEN STRATEGY IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable development is a way for people to use resources without the resources running out. It meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brunt land Commission). The development efforts of successive governments in Sri Lanka during the last several decades have led to growth in per capita incomes, increase in standard of living of the people and decrease in overall poverty levels. However, the country faces a host of environmental problems such as land degradation, pollution and poor management of water resources, loss of biological diversity, coastal erosion, increasing scarcity of water for agriculture, waste disposal in urban areas, and traffic congestion in the main cities. The impacts from global environmental issues such as climate change also causes a heavy toll in its economy as huge sums of money which could be used for economic development has to be diverted for improving resilience to climatic disasters. However, it is admirable to note that the country has shown determination to overcome these debacles through policy/strategy formulation. With the vision to achieve sustained economic growth that is socially equitable, ecologically sound with peace and stability, the country prepared the National Sustainable Development Strategy. As an extended effort to this with special attention to climate change adaptation and mitigation, the country through the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment recently promoted the Blue Green Development Strategy for the sustainable development. Its main focus is to make all aspects of economic development more sustainable through green approaches. Energy, Agriculture, Industry, Construction and all key sectors are to be transformed to become green. The program for chemical free food production through organic agriculture has gained momentum. The plan to develop 10,000 green villages and guidelines for green buildings are in the process. Transformation of Industry, transport and primary energy are difficult but they are being addressed to achieve green status earlier than 2030. The programs within blue economy will identify sustainable development strategies to manage the marine resources without causing environmental pollution. These strategies include oceanic fish resources, other marine biological resources, oceanic mineral resources, oceanic navigation and port facilities, development of tourism industry utilizing coastal and oceanic resources, promoting beach oceanic sports, maritime archeology and anthropology, center for the security of the ocean, oceanic energy, production of medicine using oceanic resources. It is hoped that through this approach a peaceful, inclusive and sustainable society will be achieved where everybody irrespective of diversity can enjoy a high quality of life within the carrying capacities of the finite natural resources.

Keywords: Sustainable development, Blue green, Sri Lanka