# REPORT ON THE STOCKHOLM+50 NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS IN SRI LANKA



**SUBMITTED: 30TH MAY 2022**

# Disclaimer

*Views expressed in this National Consultation Report are a compilation and synthesis of a wide range of stakeholder inputs gathered through a consultation process carried out by a team of consultants on behalf of the Ministry of Environment with the technical and financial support of UNDP in Sri Lanka in preparation for the Stockholm+50 conference. While acknowledging that the Government of Sri Lanka also took part in the consultations as one of the stakeholder groups, the synthesized views and recommendations presented in this report do not necessarily reflect the position of the Government of Sri Lanka or the United Nations Development Programme in Sri Lanka and they are to be considered as stakeholder views expressed in response to the three leadership dialogues for the Stockholm+50 national consultations in Sri Lanka.*

# Table of Contents

# 1.     National Consultation at a Glance

Please enter the basic information about the consultation.

**In-person or hybrid national consultation**

| | |
|---|---|
| Consultation dates (list the dates of all individual events if more than one event was conducted) | 24<sup>th</sup> March - Youth briefing<br><br>19<sup>th</sup> April - State sector consultation and launch of national consultation series<br><br>21<sup>st</sup> April - North Central Provincial Council level consultations and Civil Society Organizations consultations<br><br>25<sup>th</sup> April - Academia & Research Institutions consultations<br><br>26<sup>th</sup> April - Uva Provincial Council level consultations and Civil Society Organizations consultations<br><br>02<sup>nd</sup> May - Youth consultation<br><br>10<sup>th</sup> May - Professional Associations consultation<br><br>11<sup>th</sup> May - Private Sector consultation<br><br>13<sup>th</sup> May - Financial institutions consultation<br><br>23<sup>rd</sup> May – Green Development Task Team (Ministries, International Financial Institutes NGOs & CSOs/ United Nations)<br><br>24<sup>**th**</sup> May – Debriefing of Stockholm+50 Country Report to the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and President's Office |
| Lead national partner(s) / focal point(s): title and institution | Ministry of Environment |
| Type(s) of consultation (in-person, virtual, hybrid) | • 6 in-person consultations (Youth briefing, State Sector Consultation, North Central Provincial Consultations, Uva Provincial Consultations)<br>• 6 consultations held over Zoom<br>• 1 Google Survey Questionnaire (Link: https://forms.gle/BgBTqoTKxgv2zrzF9)<br>• 1 Debriefing Workshop held in-person & virtual |
| Geographic focus (national, provincial, local) | National, provincial & local |

| | |
|---|---|
| Total number of hours in live sessions (provide one cumulative number in case of several events) | 37 hours (cumulative) |
| Live streaming (Yes/No) | Yes |
| Link to the recording(s) | S +50 State Sector Consultations: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZaCOEGYP7nM

S +50 North Central Province Consultations: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZdd0b_ms_w

S +50 Academia and Research Institutions: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8uLDzXrVuhA

S +50 Uva Province Consultations: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20u9sp4hHNE

S +50 Youth Consultation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kXX-gl7Y2w

S+50 Professional Associations Consultation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnqql2xjd1s&ab_channel=UNDPSriLanka

S +50 Private Sector Consultation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcBpFu5g2XY&ab_channel=UNDPSriLanka

S +50 Financial Institutions Consultation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kIsW_GHwMwo&ab_channel=UNDPSriLanka

S +50 Green Development Task Team Consultation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yh7u1mMtz1c |

| Total number of participants | 513 |
|---|---|

| Number of participants by age range[1] | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0-18 | | 19-30 | | 31-50 | | 51-65 | | 66-80 | | 80+ | |

| Number of participants by gender | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 255 | Female | 257 | Other/prefer not to say | | 1 |

| Number of participants from each stakeholder group | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Government – National | 54 | Science, Academia | 32 |
| Government - Local | 68 | Foundation, philanthropy | |
| United Nations | 22 | Women and Women Groups | 149 & 2 |
| International Financial Institution | 4 | Youth | 198 |
| Bilateral / Foreign Governments | 3 | Local Community[2] | 46 |
| NGO – International | 5 | Faith-based groups | |
| NGO / CSO[3] – national | 10/54 | Indigenous Peoples | |
| Private sector (large)[4] | 45 | People with disabilities | 1 |
| Small and Medium Business | 3 | Other | 23 |
| Consumer Group | | | |

| Number of participants from each sector | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agriculture & Food | 29 | Forestry | 2 | Media | 4 |
| Cities | 4 | Government | 34 | Tourism | 8 |
| Education | 62 | Green energy | 2 | Traditional Energy | 12 |
| Environment | 51 | ICT | 1 | Trade & Commerce | 9 |
| Extractives | | Industry | 11 | Transport | 4 |

---

[1] Participants did not provide their age category

[2] Local community is largely represented by CBOs

[3] CSOs are largely represented by CBOs

[4] Private Sector Financial Institutions are also represented in this category

| Finance & Investment | 37 | Infrastructure | 11 | Utilities | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fisheries & Aquaculture | 2 | Health | 16 | Other | 79 |

| Government participation | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Office of President / Prime Minister | 1 | Ministry of Planning / Economy / Finance | | 13 | |
| Parliament | | Ministry of Environ-t / Nature Resources | | 27 | |
| Cabinet of Ministers | | Ministry of Energy | | 5 | |
| Ministry of Foreign Affairs | 2 | Ministry of Agriculture & Food | | 5 | |
| Local Governments | 53 | Line Ministries (other) | | 14 | |

## SparkBlue On-line Consultations

| Launch date | 20/03/2022 |
|---|---|
| Consultation length (total number of weeks) | 6 weeks |
| Total number of participants | 10 members (17 members inclusive of moderators) |
| Number of thematic discussions supported | 3 leadership dialogue discussions |
| Total number of comments in the online discussion | 15[5] |
| Link to consultation page | https://www.sparkblue.org/stockholm50/consultation-sri-lanka |

---

[5] This includes 14 online Google survey respondents. There was only an incomplete response received through SparkBlue. Therefore, a Google survey was conducted to collect online responses.

## 2.    Consultation Process including Gender Responsiveness and Inclusivity

*Please provide a description of the consultation process and timeline that reflects the whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach used including:*

- *What preparatory meetings were organized over what time period and when was the main consultation; were they in-person, virtual or a combination, where did they take place?*
- *Who were the main national and international stakeholders and speakers invited and what sectors/themes/institutions were represented?*
- *What other national and sector policy consultation processes were involved or referenced including NDCs, NBSAPs, INFFs, SDG Strategies, Green/Blue Economy and Green Recovery Plans, etc.?*
- *How was the consultation promoted in advance, during and afterward through communications and media?*

The National consultation process was designed and planned by UNDP together with the Ministry of Environment. **STOCKHOLM+50 MEETING**: guidelines for national stakeholder consultations, the questions of the three leadership dialogues and detailed technical guidance on S+50 communications were shared with the Stockholm+50 National Consultation Team, along with other relevant documentation were reviewed and a draft methodology and stakeholder mapping was prepared by 5$^{th}$ April 2022.

An inception meeting (physical) was held on the 18$^{th}$ April 2022, chaired by Dr. Anil Jasinghe, the Secretary to the Ministry of Environment (MoE) to discuss and reach a consensus on preparations of the consultation methodology and the schedule for endorsement.

Twelve consultation sessions were held (physically and virtually) to ensure a whole-of-society and whole-of-government inclusive approach. The stakeholder groups consulted were: 1. State sector (national-level decision-makers, representation from SD Council, persons engaged in SDGs localization, NDCs revisions, and National Environment Action Plan (NEAP) preparation), 2. Sub-national level (higher officials and other officers of provincial councils and local authorities), 3. Youth groups, 4. CSOs/NGOs, Local community (represented by CBOs), 5. Academia & Research, 6. The private sector, 7. Professional Associations representing the major disciplines, 8. Financial agencies, and 9. Development partners.

The national and state sector consultation was launched by the Secretary of the MoE and Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP attending as keynote speakers. All consultations were facilitated by the MoE & UNDP welcoming participants, providing context, and presenting the scope of Stockholm+50. The technical session was preceded by brief presentations covering: the reporting process, the evolution of the sustainability concept, the context of Stockholm+50 (SDGs, NEAP, NDCs, and Green Recovery), and an explanation of the leadership dialog (LD) questions. Participants were divided into three groups for discussion and a member from each group was selected to lead the deliberation, while rapporteur-ing and required guidance were provided. Specific attention was given to encourage active participation and space for women to contribute in the consultations. The group sessions were followed with a

plenary, where the outcomes of each group were presented for further feedback/contributions of other two groups. The technical sessions were conducted in the language of their preference (Sinhala/Tamil/English).

The Secretary to the MoE formally invited stakeholders. This letter was disseminated and followed up by UNDP: sharing details via WhatsApp to youth networks, livestreaming of consultations via YouTube and SparkBlue page, publishing a press release, Twitter posts, and publishing pictures, outcomes from consultations on SparkBlue. The logistical arrangements for the consultation sessions were made by UNDP.

The draft Country Consultation Report was presented to the Task Team [6] and to the Government stakeholders (MoE, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Presidential Secretariat) for information and feedback. The final Report was made publicly available for the information of stakeholders on the National Consultation Page on SparkBlue and other platforms.

*Please summarize how various stakeholder groups that are not traditionally involved in these processes and may be under vulnerable conditions or marginalized, including women, youth, indigenous peoples, local communities, people with disabilities, and others, were engaged in and contributed to the consultation.*

*What efforts were made to invite, engage, and ensure effective participation of various marginalized stakeholder groups in the national consultation process (i.e., meetings/settings, materials in local languages, accommodation for people with disabilities, childcare, safe and affordable transportation, connectivity, targeted communications, etc.).*

The local community, mainly those from remote areas, and the youth are often missed out in national-level consultations. Opportunities for sub-national level stakeholders to participate in national-level consultations are also limited. The stakeholder selection process carefully addressed the aforesaid shortcomings and took them on board for the consultations.

Further, to ensure effective participation and contribution without being subjected to language barriers for communications, all three official languages (Sinhala, Tamil, and English) were used appropriately in consultations. Four out of twelve sessions were held physically at the sub-national level to facilitate the participation of sub-national level officials, local communities, and vulnerable groups.

Physical consultation meetings with the sub-national level representatives as well as with the civil societies were conducted in the North-Central and the Uva provinces in local languages (Sinhala & Tamil) as required. These two provinces were selected based on the presence of high percentage of rural population, poverty, and the presence of estate sector (tea plantation) workers and indigenous people. The rural farmers and estate sector community are considered

---

[6] Colombo Development Dialogue on Green Development, comprised of key ministries of the government, Development Partners, Private Sector, Financial Sector

marginalized groups with high economic vulnerability. While civil society organizations are directly involved with the wellbeing of various marginalized groups, provincial councils and local authorities are mandated to safeguard the rights and interests of the marginalized and vulnerable groups at different levels.

These consultations were held in locations in provincial town centers enabling easy access through either public or private transportation. Also, an allowance was provided to cover the cost of transport. All the venues were accessible to persons with disabilities. Men and women who were unable to delegate childcare responsibilities were allowed to bring their children to the consultation.

All the participants were very actively engaged in the discussions and presented the outcomes of group discussions with great enthusiasm. The enthusiasm and engagement of participants was evident from the presentations in the plenary sessions. Every presenter made presentations substantiating how closely they were engaged with the consultation process.

School children from the Northern province and university students from across the country were invited for the youth consultations. The session with school children was conducted entirely in Tamil (the local language) in-person in their locality. The consultation with university students was done virtually to enable participation across the country. Altogether, there were 198 youth with 130 females and 69 males actively engaging in consultations. While English was used as the main language for the university student group, the other two official languages (Sinhala & Tamil) were also used as required. Materials provided to stakeholders were in all three official languages.

## 3.    Main Consultation Inputs, Insights and Innovations

*This is the core of the report, which summarizes the main takeaways of the consultation.*

*An overview of the main themes, challenges, opportunities, solutions and recommendations*

*This is a summary of Section 3. Please respond to this question after addressing the other questions under this section.*

**Key themes and sectors discussed**

Broad themes discussed and the stakeholder groups participated were as follows:

*Themes*:
- Green transformation
- Digital transformation
- Food security
- Healthy living
- Healthy ecosystems
- Capacity building
- Social inclusion
- Inclusive partnerships
- Good governance

*Stakeholder Groups*:
- State sector
- Sub-national and local authority
- Civil society, including vulnerable groups and women's groups
- Academia & research
- Youth
- Professional associations
- Private sector
- Finance & banking (government and private)
- Development partners

**Challenges discussed**

Diverse sector-specific challenges discussed could be grouped as follows: (a) lack of affordability, accessibility, availability, and know-how of technology; low ICT literacy, (b) gaps in education, training, skills, and attitudes, (c) limited access to finance, (d) resource scarcity (land, materials, and equipment), (e) gaps in policy, law, and regulatory frameworks, (f) lack of participation in decision-making and transparency in governance, (g) lack of infrastructure facilities, (h) poor waste management, and (i) inadequacy of opportunities for PPP.

**Opportunities discussed**

Diverse opportunities identified are as follows: (a) renewable energy (RE) generation, (b) circular economy (CE) and waste management, (c) ecosystem restoration, (d) eco-tourism, (e) information and communication technology (ICT), (f) e-commerce, e-banking, and e-governance, (g) education, (h) indigenous agriculture, precision agriculture, global value chain integration, and agriculture modernization, (h) home-gardening, (i) eco-friendly products and resource-efficient cleaner production (RECP), (j) SCP, (k) green cities and green technologies, (l) sustainable transportation, (m) partnerships & collaborations, and (n) healthy living.

**Solutions discussed**

The solutions discussed to overcome challenges, while exploiting the opportunities, are as follows: (a) promoting RE, (b) promoting resource efficiency, (c) sustainable financing options, (d) transforming the education system at all levels, (e) adopting good agricultural practices (GAP), precision agriculture, and indigenous agricultural methods, (f) promoting home gardening and urban agriculture for contributing to food security, (g) adopting circular economy, (h) promoting healthy living, (i) holistic waste management, and (j) adopting SCP.

**Recommendations suggested**

Some of the selected key recommendations made by stakeholders are: (a) overarching national policy framework and aligned sectoral policies with key focus on environment, (b) inclusive approach for decision making, (c) green transformation, (d) digital transformation, (e) ICT infrastructure development, (f) streamline ecosystem restoration activities outside PAs, (g) social safety nets for vulnerable groups, (h) good governance and removal of regulatory barriers, (i) educational reforms to promote sustainability, (j) green financing, and (k) rational resource allocation.

**Summary of the discussions under each Stockholm+50 Leadership Dialogue theme and their guiding questions.**

*Leadership Dialogue 1. Reflecting on the urgent need for actions to achieve a healthy planet and prosperity of all*

*1.      How can we restore and regenerate a positive relationship with nature? List 2 or 3 good practices and pathways that your partners would like to see scaled up to enable a move to a healthy planet?*

1)  Promotion of RE through: (a) reviewing and revising the current feed-in tariff structure to make it more attractive to producers, (b) providing incentives for potential users and further expanding the currently available financing mechanisms (e.g., low-interest loan schemes provided through commercial banks), and (c) popularizing RE at the domestic level.

2)  Restoration and sustainable management of ecosystems through: (a) effective implementation of policies, (b) strengthen national-level mechanisms for restoration and sustainable management of critical/threatened ecosystems outside PAs, (c) establishment and promotion of sustainable extraction methods, and (d) prevention of indiscriminate use and misuse of agro-chemicals.

3)  Implementation of circular economy (CE) & Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) through: (a) providing support to convert biodegradable waste into compost and recycle the non-biodegradable waste, (b) promoting the use of construction materials with low embodied energy, (c) minimizing food waste, (d) education and awareness-based approach for attitudinal transformation towards sustainable  consumption, and (e) the application of polluter-pay principle and extended producer responsibility (EPR).

*2.      What are the actions that your country/partners would take to scale up the change towards a healthy planet? What policies/structures need to be in place for you to take such action?*

The following actions and the corresponding policies and structures to enable such actions were suggested by the stakeholders.
*Actions*:
1.  Identification and removal of barriers to increase the share of renewables in the energy mix (related to policy inconsistencies, regulatory, technological, and informational and financial barriers).
2.  Review and update activities and assigned targets with regular joint-monitoring of the performance of mandated agencies.
3.  Ensure the enforcement of environmental laws (rules and regulations).
4.  Promoting and incentivizing home gardening to contribute to food security.

5. Minimizing food waste.
6. Introduction of activity-based learning on nature, particularly in early childhood and primary education.
7. Promotion of nature-based solutions.
8. Establish effective public-private partnerships (PPPs) for solid waste management.

*Policies/Structures*:

1. Development of guidelines, rules & regulations and circulars for policy implementation related to RE, ecosystem restoration and sustainable management, CE and SCP.
2. Regular policy reviews and updates.
3. Mobilization of stakeholders and building partnerships.
4. Strengthen and redefine the roles of regulatory bodies.
5. Rationalised assignment of subjects for ministries.
6. Explore the possibility of establishing high-level mechanism for policy planning and implementation.
7. Incentive schemes for ecological agriculture and other nature-based solutions.

*3.    How could marginalized and vulnerable groups benefit from policies and initiatives designed to restore a more sustainable and resilient relationship with nature (that mitigates nature risks)?*

1. Providing targeted subsidies & social safety nets

   Providing subsidies and/or grants for economically vulnerable groups (target groups) enabling them to engage in renewable energy generation, such as solar power to increase their income level. There are people who live in ecologically sensitive areas either continuing to live in newly declared areas for conservation or encroaching in reservations. In the process of restoration, these communities should be provided with alternative lands and/or alternative livelihoods.  Communities who depend on the waste sector (recycling) are to be provided with alternate related livelihoods suited to their skills (e.g. eco-friendly products in place of polythene).

2. Partnerships to share benefits

   They can be made partners in restoration and sustainable ecosystem management initiatives with appropriate benefits-sharing mechanisms. Providing a marketplace for excess home-grown products through appropriate partnerships benefits vulnerable groups. Through appropriate regulatory transformations in grid-connected solar systems, people can be allowed to rent their rooftops to set up solar systems by others while the renter can be benefited through free electricity in return.

3. They can actively participate in policy formulation, planning, and implementing processes to reflect their requirements and needs.

4. They can be provided with sustainable livelihood opportunities and other resource-use rights in resolving related conflicts.

*4. How can we safeguard the rights of people and nature, including among others, indigenous peoples and local communities, environmental defenders, women, youth, future generations?*

Stakeholders suggested the following actions:

1. Ensure social and environmental safeguards in development projects.

   Through the participation of all stakeholders in decision making, the sensitive areas for people and nature can be avoided in development projects. In situations where such avoidance is not possible and relocation of people becomes mandatory, extended support should be provided to the affected people to take part in the sustainable development process including sustainable livelihoods. Also, create new partnerships to safeguard communities affected by development projects (e.g. renewable energy).

2. Provide appropriate compensations to affected parties due to development projects.

3. Provide targeted benefits to affected parties/cash transfers, where appropriate.

4. Establish a grievance redress mechanism to address issues of those affected.

5. Eliminate mushrooming policies and procedures.

6. Establish baseline conditions in consideration of social and environmental perspectives in development projects.

7. Make people aware of their rights and provide affordable access to remedies (e.g. legal actions/support).

8. Create "whistle-blowers" and ensure their protection.

9. Promote the 3R concept across society to minimize the consumption of natural resources as a long-term strategy to safeguard the environment.

*5.    What are the new or prioritized set of metrics and indicators needed for tracking our progress towards a healthier and more prosperous planet?*

Stakeholders proposed following metrics and indicators:

| Metrics | Indicators |
|---|---|
| RE generation in kWh | Percentage contribution of renewables in energy mix (End-use: electricity & thermal, Supply: types of RE) |
| Waste generation in tones | Per capita waste generation |
| Forest cover in hectares | Recycling as a percentage of recyclable waste generation |
| Number of legal actions taken (against waste and habitat related violations) | Post-harvest food losses (food loss index) |
| Number of institutions ban polythene / shopping bags | Percentage change in forest cover |
| | Carbon and water footprint |
| | Change in conservation status of species (red list) |
| | Air quality index and water quality |
| | Percentage of organic waste converted to compost |
| | Product recycling percentage of the country |
| | Percentage change in people affected by natural disasters |

## Leadership Dialogue 2. Achieving a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic

*1. What are the most promising sustainable and inclusive recovery practices currently being applied by public, private and civil society groups at individual, community, city, regional, country level? And how could we scale them up?*

Stakeholders proposed following recovery practices:

(a) Digital transformation: A wider adoption of digital transformation was seen in the education sector with schools and universities conducted their academic programs via online platforms like Zoom, Microsoft Team, and even WhatsApp. E-governance and conducting virtual meetings, workshops, and seminars were among the new recovery practices having a positive impact. There was a notable increase in e-banking and cashless transactions as well.

(b) People of all cross-sections of the society adopted healthy living practices and sustainable lifestyles such as the use of preventive healthcare, enhancing immunity at the individual and community level, reliance on indigenous medicines, consuming healthy food, and behavioral changes.

(c) Changing working culture: work from home, flexible work hours, and hybrid working mode (partly from home and office).

(d) Changing education culture: teaching methodologies, learning domains and habits.

(e) Emergence of new business opportunities: mobile vending, online businesses, etc.

Recovery practices could be scaled up through: (a) development of ICT infrastructure, (b) policy and regulatory interventions, (c) institutionalizing and promotion of best practices via awareness, education, capacity building, and attitudinal changes, (d) national and international protocols to provide a legal background for identified best practices, and (e) promoting healthy living and indigenous medicine.

*2. What recovery and pre-existing practices need to be changed to ensure an inclusive and sustainable recovery?*

Stakeholders indicated following practices to be changed:

(a) With the COVID19 pandemic, people tend to use private/individual transport modes in place of public transportation. This practice should revert to use public transportation while abiding by health & safety protocols.

(b) There is a reluctance to adhere to health and safety protocols in public transports.

(c) Some of the unhealthy practices such as abuse of prescriptive medicine, negligence of personal hygiene, and haphazard disposal of waste should be changed.

(d) Use of ICT for ineffective and non-productive purposes such as addiction to social media has increased.

(e) Inadequacy of knowledge and attitudinal issues of some individuals/authorities and cumbersome institutional procedures for e-transactions and procurement were some hindering factors holding back successful digital transformation.

*3.      How do we ensure that all countries/communities can benefit from opportunities stemming from a sustainable and just transition?*

In stakeholder discussions, the following mechanisms came into light:

(a) Develop dedicated programs for public awareness and public education to make all societies aware of the opportunities stemming from sustainable and just transition.

(b) Create a platform for learning and sharing best practices across societies and countries.

(c) Develop social protection systems such as social safety nets for daily wage earners and micro-enterprises to safeguard them from economic shocks.

(d) Interruption to supply chains was a major challenge faced by enterprises during the COVID19 pandemic. Therefore, a reliable and service-oriented supply chain backed by the government is required to support enterprises.

(e) There should be academic research to survey and appraise best practices across different countries/communities and the outcomes of such research should be published for wider dissemination.

(f) Supporting technology transfer (within communities and across countries).

(g) Adopting the fast-growing technological solutions, such as Google Translate, to eliminate language barriers while contributing to improve their accuracy by making correct vocabulary suggestions.

*4.      How can we create better performing industries and supply chains for a just transition to more sustainable economies? Which sectors are most critical?*

Better performing industries could be created through: (a) digital transformation, (b) adopting CE concepts (effective resource use and holistic waste management), (c) use of RE to the maximum possible extent, (d) adoption of good agricultural practices (GAP), (e) investing in people and effective management of human resources, (f) imparting appropriate changes to labor laws and operating practices to make them conducive for digital transformation (e.g. flexible working hours and working from home), (g) responding to global "demand conditions" for industry growth (e.g. EU Green Deal) and rationalizing import controls/restrictions, (h) creating linkages between large industries and MSMEs, and (i) ensuring social safeguards through decent and safe work environments.

Better performing supply chains could be created through: (a) sourcing from, and trading with, regional countries, (b) adopting ICT based supply chains, with information sharing systems and online platforms for networking, (c) decentralizing supply chain (value addition for local resources such as food), (d) flexible supply chains, and (e) integrating with global supply chains by removing regulatory and trade barriers.

The most critical sectors are: (a) tourism, (b) ICT, (c) garment and apparel, (d) pharmaceutical, (e) agro-processing, (f) renewable energy, (g) plantation industries (tea and rubber) and sugar industry, (h) construction, and (i) healthcare.

*5.      What are some of the commitments and "responsible" principles that need to be made by key industry sectors and by finance and investment institutions?*

The tourism sector should commit to become a leading ecotourism destination whereas the garment and apparel industry should commit to achieve carbon neutrality within a realistic time frame. Agriculture, agro-processing, and plantation industries have several commitments which include achieving self-sufficiency in food supply, adopting good agricultural practices (GAP), a gradual transition to organic agriculture, regaining the status of the world's best tea, increasing the agriculture-based value addition, and development of a more equitable supply-chain to ensure everyone's food needs are met. The healthcare industry should be committed to minimizing the prevalence of noncommunicable diseases.

Although commitments are sector-specific, responsibilities can span over multiple sectors including: (a) adoption of circular economy concepts (efficient use of resources and waste management), (b) adoption of GAP by the agriculture and plantation industries, (c) use of local resources and value chain development, (d) develop infrastructure facilities in rural areas, (e) adoption of SCP, (f) uplifting the ICT literacy among rural communities, and (g) making convenient access to capital for businesses with affordable payment terms.

*6.      What are the decent green jobs of the future? What are the new skills needed, what is needed from business? from the government? from academia?*

The stakeholders proposed the following green jobs and enabling skills:

Emerging decent new green jobs are identified in the following sectors: (a) eco-tourism, (b) holistic waste management, (c) RE, (d) green technologies, green products, and pollution control, (e) ICT, (f) garment industry (new jobs for personal protective equipment), (g) mobile vending for food items (processed foods, bakery items, fruits and vegetables, fish and poultry, etc.), (h) precision agriculture technology development, and (i) industrial automation with Industry 4.0 (4IR).

The key new skills needed include: (a) ICT, IoT (internet of things), and IIoT (industry internet of things), (b) skills in sustainable production, (c) skills related to eco-tourism such as managerial, operational, and interpretational skills, (d) technical skills on pre and post-harvest loss reduction, (e) soft skills, (f) project and business management skills, (g) critical thinking and synthesizing skills, (h) financial literacy, and (i) entrepreneurial skills.

## Leadership Dialogue 3. Accelerating the implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development

*1.      What are the biggest challenges we are facing in implementing the commitments to the 2030 Agenda and other environmental commitments (MEAs)? How do we create an enabling environment for delivery on the ground?*

1. Limited knowledge, skills, and attitudes, particularly at sub-national levels, on SD, together with language barriers are major challenges. An enabling environment could be created through: (a) non-formal and informal education and awareness creation using local languages, (b) integrating SD concepts into formal education curricula including early-childhood development, and (c) capacity building programs at the sub-national level.

2. Inconsistent, incoherent, and politically inclined short-term agendas are challenges that can be overcome through the establishment of a long-term overarching national framework for policy and planning.

3. Inexistence of an approved national policy on SD hindering mainstreaming and integrating of SDGs into national and sub national institutions, which can be addressed by expedited approval of the draft National Policy and Strategies for SD.

4. Inadequate stakeholder representation in policy formulation, particularly at the sub-national level, is a challenge identified. Following an inclusive approach for policymaking through broader stakeholder engagement creates an enabling environment.

5. Placing more emphasis on economic aspects over the environment and society in development programs is another barrier to overcome through: (a) using sustainability criteria and appraisal mechanisms for allocating financial resources for projects, (b) localization of SDG targets to use in projects appraisals, and (c) promoting an integrated approach for development programs.

*2.      What are the good practices and pathways that you would like to see scaled up to accelerate the implementation of the environmental dimension of Sustainable Development in the context, of the Decade of Action?*

1. Promoting the existing indigenous sustainable practices for self-sufficiency of food at local levels (e.g. traditional agriculture) and water security (e.g. water conservation) through: (a) proper planning and execution of relevant programs at local levels and (b) establishing mechanisms to share and promote indigenous knowledge and best practices among local communities.

2. Availability of commendable 3R initiatives in certain localities (such as healthcare facilities, LAs, and industries) is a best practice that can be scaled up through the introduction and enforcement of regulatory and monitoring mechanisms and appraisal systems.

3. Strengthening of the available regulatory schemes for sustainable management (EPL for industries, IEE/EIA for new projects) through: (a) proper monitoring, (b) recognition for

achievements, and (c) enforcement of penalties for violations.

4. Eco-/energy-labeling for appliances and promoting green products are currently available can be scaled up through the introduction of voluntary and mandatory schemes and monitoring of compliances.

5. Promoting existing multi-stakeholder green initiatives such as targeted environmental programs (tree plantation, wetland conservation, river, forest and wildlife protection, environmentally sensitive areas management), green cities, green building initiatives, and sustainability reporting systems in the corporate sector (e.g., National green reporting system of MoE).

6. Promoting community-based micro industries based on ecosystem services and sustainable concepts.

*3.     How to transform governance and legal systems that maintain long-term economic stability and ecological and social wellbeing for all?*

The following transformations were proposed for the governing and legal system:

The governance system should be transformed through: (a) restructuring of institutional mandates and arrangements to eliminate overlaps and better alignment, (b) strengthening the institutions (including e-governance), (c) ensuring a participatory and inclusive approach, especially the participation of women and youth in decision-making, (d) formulation of long-term national policy and strategic planning framework to ensure coherence across all sectors and agencies, (e) increasing transparency and accountability of the governing system, (f) strengthening the "environment police" system, (g)  proper utilization of human and other resources in the government sector with effective time management/scheduling, and (h) assess the possibility of forming a high level mechanism for policy planning and implementation.

The legal system should be transformed through: (a) review/revision of existing laws/ regulations, (b) development of new laws/regulations and their enforcement including bylaws of local authorities, (c) elimination of cumbersome legal procedures that hinders the participation of relevant officers and the public as witnesses, (d) ensuring the rule of law in environmental management, and (e) public awareness creation on environmental laws and their empowerment.

*4.     What measures are needed to align public, private and development finance with existing commitments and priorities?*

The following measures are proposed to align public, private, and development finance:
  a. Establishment of a legal framework to facilitate and promote PPPs (e.g., policies, regulations, and guidelines).

b. Development and promotion of innovative stakeholder engagement platforms to facilitate the identification of opportunities for partnerships.

c. Engagement of the private sector and CSOs in sub-national level decision-making such as in District Coordination Committee-DCC and District Development Council – DDC.

d. Creating awareness and capacity-building programs on the importance and the scope of partnerships and the role and responsibilities of different parties.

e. Application of PPP models for sustainable agriculture with appropriate guidance and legal support for stakeholders.

f. Improving good governance in the public sector.

g. Disseminating information on the availability of specific financial and other resources for projects/partnerships.

h. Taking initiatives from the government-front to create an enabling environment for PPP.

*5.      What type of partnerships from the UN and beyond are needed to accelerate a green and sustainable economic transformation that leaves no one behind?*

In stakeholder discussions, multiple ways that the UN can support through appropriate partnerships were identified, as listed below.

a. Financial assistance for national and sub-national level programs that focused on sustainable economic transformations and access to climate/green financing.

b. Facilitation of technology transfer and capacity building.

c. Facilitation and creation of appropriate platforms for sharing expertise, knowledge, and information with other relevant countries.

d. Programs and partnerships to support self-employment of marginalized and vulnerable groups (e.g. women and disabled groups).

e. Maximization of benefits to the local economy/society through the implementation of development projects to suit the local priorities and circumstances as identified through local participation.

f. Networking opportunities with regional and international parties (through seminars, workshops, conventions, etc.) for non-governmental stakeholders including the private sector.

g. Establishment of partnerships of local and international universities on sustainability research, education, and training programs.

h. Support the introduction of policies and regulations that promote or facilitate PPP.

i. Support initiatives to improve good governance in the public sector.

6. *What capacities and technologies are needed to improve human wellbeing in harmony with nature, including digital technologies?*

Capacities:
a. Lack of data is a significant country-wide problem that hinders data-driven decision-making for SD. Therefore, an effective information management system is an essential technological capacity needed to strengthen all dimensions of SD.
b. Accredited laboratories for monitoring and testing are presently confined to the national level. Therefore, the implementation of accredited laboratories at the sub-national level is an essential capacity at the sub-national level.
c. Human capital requirements: (i) knowledge and skills in ICT to effectively use the added capacity elaborated in element (a) above, (ii) absorption capacity (knowledge and skills) for technology transfer and green recovery, (iii) skills for developing ecosystem services by utilizing & safeguarding natural resources, and (iv) capacity for localization of SDGs, targets, and indicators, and monitoring reporting and verification (MRV).

Technologies:
a. Advanced and appropriate technologies for monitoring environmental parameters (air, water, and soil).
b. Environmentally sound technologies adapted to the country context (e.g. technologies for waste management such as hazardous waste, e-waste, and 3R)
c. Appropriate technologies to support micro/small enterprises/industries, and indigenous businesses.
d. Technologies to promote E-mobility: charging infrastructure and electric vehicles.
e. Technologies for precision agriculture.
f. Sustainable materials for infrastructure development.

## Country-specific agenda of the national consultation

*A summary of the discussions relevant to country-specific themes including links to NDCs, NAPS, NBSAPS, and other national/sectoral frameworks: challenges, opportunities, solutions, recommendations.*

---

The responses provided by the stakeholders are centered around environment-related challenges in the broader context of SD through different sectors of the economy and society. These issues are elaborated/considered in national-level overarching frameworks namely SDGs and NEAP, which cover the key thematic areas of importance to the subjects such as climate actions (NDCs), biodiversity (NBSAP), and combating land degradation (NAP – land degradation). These frameworks are formulated to cover the period until 2030.

The thematic areas and cross-cutting themes expressed by stakeholders have been prioritized and presented under the following categories. However, it should be noted that these themes are interconnected and complementary.

- Green transformation
- Digital transformation
- Food security
- Healthy living
- Healthy ecosystems
- Capacity building
- Social inclusion
- Inclusive partnerships
- Good governance.

### 1. Green Transformation

This theme covers the areas of renewable energy, circular economy, SCP, holistic waste management, greening industries, sustainable agriculture, and green cities and infrastructure.

*Promotion of Renewable Energy (RE):*

This theme emerged as a good practice that can be scaled up in achieving a healthy planet and prosperity of all, as well as accelerating the implementation of the environmental dimensions of the SDGs. RE is one of the key areas of interventions identified in national-level policies and development plans, as reflected in the localized SDGs, NDCs, and NEAP with specific activities and time-bound targets.

The major areas of challenges for the promotion of RE include: (a) technical, (b) financial, (c) land resources, (d) information, (e) regulatory, (f) tariff structure, and (g) competency.

However, there are opportunities for the development of RE with the priorities of the government aligned with SDGs and NDC targets, particularly, meeting 70% RE in

22

electricity generation by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050. Further, there is a very high exploitable potential, particularly, in solar and wind energy. Another significant benefit is the creation of decent and green job opportunities, particularly for the local communities.

The solutions and recommendations suggested by the stakeholders to overcome the challenges are revising the current feed-in tariff, providing incentives for potential users such as concessionary loan schemes, and popularizing RE at the domestic level.

*Circular Economy, Holistic Waste Management, and SCP:*

Circular economy (CE), holistic waste management, and SCP are interconnected green transformation concepts that emerged as mechanisms to restore a positive relationship with nature. These concepts are emphasized in the localized SDGs, NEAP, and NDCs (mitigation), which reflect the prominence given in national policies and global/ national commitments.

Challenges for mainstreaming CE and SCP concepts are: (a) attitudinal and behavioral gaps arising from the existing education system (formal, non-formal, and informal), (b) lack of new skills required, (c) non-availability of alternative green raw materials/ inputs, products/services, and (d) lack of enabling instruments.

The opportunities for CE and SCP have emerged with policy interventions (e.g. national policy on SCP and the national policy on waste management) and recovery from the present economic crisis (the removal of perverse incentives and introduction of cost-reflective pricing). Further, these concepts will facilitate the creation of better-performing industries including eco-tourism and supply chains. This, in turn, helps in creating decent and green job opportunities and ensuring a better environment (local and global), while providing opportunities for vulnerable and marginalized groups.

The solutions and recommendations suggested by the stakeholders to overcome the challenges are awareness creation, knowledge, and capacity building, promoting eco-friendly and alternative products, waste minimization (including food waste) at all levels, enforcing extended producer responsibility (EPR) principle and the polluter pay principle, use of sustainable/RE sources, and promoting resource efficiency.

2. Digital Transformation

This theme covers the applications of ICT and other advanced technologies in various sectors in achieving a healthy planet and prosperity of all, as well as inclusive and green recovery from the pandemic and accelerating the implementation of the environmental dimensions of the SDGs.

Digital transformation is an important element in the effective achievement of many SDGs. Some of the key sectors are agriculture, industry, commerce, energy, transport,

health, education, and banking and finance. Digital transformation, including the use of ICT, is reflected in several themes in the NEAP and NDCs.

With the COVID19 pandemic, there has been an impetus in adopting ICT in diverse areas for green recovery and in accelerating progress on SDGs. Opportunities are created in the following areas: communication, work-from-home, virtual meetings, e-learning, e-banking, cashless transactions, e-governance, e-commerce, virtual medical consultations, etc. As a result, new business opportunities have been created and there have been many decent and green job opportunities, especially for vulnerable and marginalized groups. Also, changes in working culture such as work-from-home, flexible working hours, and hybrid working modes (partly from home and office) were enabled by the digital transformation which has positively contributed to social wellbeing and ecological safeguarding.

Despite the opportunities, there have been challenges in reaching out to all communities aggravating the "digital divide" due to poor digital infrastructure, lack of know-how (ICT literacy), affordability of required devices and operating expenses, regulatory barriers, and protocol issues.

The stakeholders have proposed the following solutions and recommendations to overcome the aforesaid challenges: (a) development of ICT infrastructure, (b) policy and regulatory interventions and protocols, and (c) institutionalizing best practices and promotion of best practices via awareness, education, capacity building, and attitudinal transformation.

## 3. Food Security

Food security is a vital element in sustainability that assures sufficiency, safety, and nourishment, which are covered in this section.

Food security has multiple implications that have a strong linkage with SDGs. This is further addressed in several themes of NEAP and NDCs (mitigation and adaptation).

Achieving food security creates many opportunities as agriculture is one of the main livelihoods in the country providing employment. Accordingly, it provides a pathway to accelerate progress on SDGs through value creation, modernization, innovation, and mechanization creating additional and green jobs. Further, there are business opportunities in global value chain integration and agro-tourism.

Agriculture being highly climate-sensitive, food security is significantly challenged by climate change impacts. Further, the agriculture sector is constrained by labor shortages, limited availability of arable lands, low productivity and high cost of production, scarcity, lack of locally available seeds and fertilizer, excessive pre-, and post-harvest losses, and inadequate extension services.

The stakeholders have suggested the following solutions and recommendations to address the gaps highlighted above: (a) adopting GAP, (b) promoting precision agriculture, (c) gradual transition to organic agriculture, (d) value addition, (e) pre-and post-harvest loss reduction, (f) use of local resources and value chain development, (g) develop infrastructure facilities for rural areas, (h) adoption of CE concepts (efficient use of resources and waste management), (i) preserving and promoting indigenous sustainable agricultural best practices for self-sufficiency, (j) water resource management, (k) proper cultivation planning and execution, and (l) promotion of home gardening and urban agriculture.

## 4. Healthy Living

Healthy living is crucial for sustainability and social and mental wellbeing which ensures the productivity of the workforce. Healthy living gained a significant emphasis during the pandemic. Opportunities, challenges, solutions, and recommendations suggested by stakeholders include enhance personal hygiene, use of indigenous medicines, preventive healthcare, coping with mental stress, and immunity enhancement medicines which were the key re-emerged aspects during the pandemic. Healthy living reflects the expected outcome of most of the development programs, thus, reflected in national policies and global/national commitments.

## 5. Healthy Ecosystems

The present status substantiates that the environment-related SDGs have had the least progress, thus, it needs more consideration in the decade of action to restore and sustainably manage the ecosystems. Accordingly, restoration of both identified aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and their sustainable management emerged as one of the priority areas discussed during the stakeholder consultations.

Restoration and sustainable management of ecosystems are addressed in localized SDGs, NEAP, and NDC adaptations, NBSAP.

In relation to restoration and sustainable management of ecosystems, the opportunities, challenges, solutions, and recommendations suggested by the stakeholders cover: (a) effective implementation of policies for ecosystem restoration, (b) sustainable resource extraction, (c) critical ecosystems, (d) eco-tourism, (e) home gardening including urban home gardens and urban forestry programmes, (f) agro-chemicals, and (g) waste management.

## 6. Capacity Building

Awareness creation, education, and capacity building are a cross-cutting area underpinning the success of all other sectors. This is targeted for enhancing awareness, knowledge, and competencies of individuals (responsible staff) as well as capacities of institutions (learning organizations), which leads to a knowledgeable society that can

contribute to SD. Thus, the gaps and needs in this area were highlighted in the stakeholder consultations.

This aspect is addressed in localized SDGs, NEAP, NDCs, and NBSAP as a basic requirement to implement the related activities.

In relation to capacity building, challenges, solutions, and recommendations suggested by stakeholders cover a wide range, including: (a) ICT skills, (b) information management, (c) absorption capacity of new technologies to suit the local context/ circumstances, (d) implementation skills, (e) capacity for testing and monitoring, (f) knowledge and skills on advance technologies, (g) knowledge and skills on new strategies and green recovery, (h) skills on ecosystem services, (i) disaster management, (j) eco-consciousness for sustainable lifestyles, (k) leadership and communication skills, (l) climate negotiation skills, (m) skills in sustainable production, (n) skills related to ecotourism, and (o) technical skills on pre and post-harvest loss reduction.

## 7. Social Inclusion

As society is one of the three dimensions of SD, social inclusion provides the basis for prosperity for all and inclusive recovery. Social inclusion is an essential element of localized SDGs, NEAP, and NDC (adaptation), which reflects the prominence given to national policies and global/national commitments. Social inclusion aspects that emerged in the stakeholder discussion include the broader areas of public education, a participatory approach to decision-making, social safety nets, local languages for communication, rights of people, and marginalized and vulnerable groups.

Following are the areas through which the stakeholders provided their views on challenges, opportunities, and solutions with recommendations:

- Participation in policy formulation, planning, and implementing processes.
- Provision of sustainable livelihood opportunities and other rights in resolving resource-use conflicts.
- Sustainable livelihoods through targeted subsidies, grants, and social safety nets such as: (a) facilitate marginalized and vulnerable groups to engage in development programs as a source of income, (b) provide alternative sustainable options for those who depend on ecosystem services for living, (c) in waste minimization programs :(i) vulnerable groups living in the proximity to dumping sites can be benefited, (ii) people who engage in waste recycling can be benefited through the provision of technical, financial, and marketing support to switch into alternative businesses such as eco-friendly products.
- Facilitating people to partner with economic activities such as: (a) restoration and sustainable ecosystem management for social wellbeing, (b) creating a marketplace for

excess home-grown products, and (c) roof renting for solar power generation with benefit sharing.

- Ensure social and environmental safeguards in development projects, including compensations for affected parties.
- Establishment of a platform for effective mobilization (consultation, empowerment, and engagement) of stakeholders.

## 8. Inclusive Partnerships

Multi-stakeholder engagement and partnerships are a guiding principle of SDGs, in particular, effective PPPs could unlock barriers to the implementation of interventions. Therefore, the opportunities and challenges of partnerships and the way forward were discussed in detail during the consultations. Accordingly, the following are proposed:

- Establishment of policies, laws, regulations, and guidelines for PPPs.
- Awareness and capacity building on PPPs.
- Division of duties and responsibilities among partners.
- Effective stakeholder engagement platform with clear roles, responsibilities, and benefits.
- Disseminate information on the availability of specific financial and other resources for projects/partnerships.
- Develop innovative frameworks and business models.

## 9. Good Governance

This is a prerequisite for all the other aspects of SD and green recovery. In the stakeholder consultations, the participants brought valuable inputs for improvements of the present governance and the legal systems contributing to sustainable development needs with emphasis on environmental aspects.

- Development and enforcement of cohesive and futuristic laws/regulations.
- Reform of existing laws to suit the present circumstances.
- Empowerment of citizens in the enforcement of laws.
- Restructuring of institutional mandates and arrangements to eliminate overlaps and better alignments.
- Long-term, coherent, and consistent national policies.
- Enhance the transparency and accountability of the governing system at all levels.
- Integrated approach for policy implementation.
- Engagement and empowerment of all the stakeholders including the youth, women, CSOs, CBOs, and the public in the decision-making process.
- Proper usage of human and other resources in the government sector.

*What were the priorities, needs, key messages and solutions raised by women, youth, indigenous peoples, local communities, people with disabilities, and other stakeholder groups under vulnerable conditions or marginalized?*

The entire consultation process was gender and age unbiased except for the specific consultations which targeted youth. Thus, there was active participation by women and youth in all sessions. Further, we conducted two consultation sessions with representatives from civil society organizations in the North Central and Uva provinces. As elaborated in Chapter 2, these two provinces are home to a larger cross-section of the country's vulnerable community. Thus, the voice of marginalized communities was well heard in the consultation process.

The most prominent need of the youth, as expressed either directly or indirectly in the consultation process, falls in the broad domains of education and wellbeing. The youth expressed the need for mental wellbeing as an enabler for many aspects of achieving SDGs. Opportunities to inculcate good attitudes towards nature is another important aspect highlighted as a pathway to accelerate the progress towards SD. Transformation of the education system at all levels (from early childhood to vocational and university) and to the learning culture in all forms (formal, non-formal, and informal) was identified as a priority and a solution to fill the diverse capacity gaps that hinder development such as leadership skills, knowledge gaps in SDGs and green initiatives, and capacity to respond to environmental/natural disasters. The need for the education system to focus more on the psychomotor domain ("learning-to-do") and affective domain ("learning-to-be") was emphasized as a key transformational tool for youth to become more productive partners in development pathways. The youth delivered a key message that they are willing to contribute to national development through a greener route if opportunities exist.

The lack of opportunities to access required capital and capacity building for the vulnerable communities is a key obstacle that hinders the transformation of their lives for betterment through self-employment or business creation. Necessary financial support, training, and capacity building (particularly related to green technologies) emerged as key priorities that can empower energetic yet vulnerable communities to transform themselves into more productive citizens who can actively support the journey towards SD.

Although there are potential opportunities for the vulnerable communities to get engaged in decent green jobs that even enable the country to embrace green development through green initiatives such as circular economy, sustainable consumption and production, ecosystem restoration, etc., the technology, infrastructure, these initiatives by the authorities are not readily available to those who are in dire need with sheer interest to engage.

Some farmers are engaged in organic agriculture very successfully for years. Some have built farmer communities around them to propagate the indigenous agricultural practices that have brought them success. However, lack of support from the responsible parties, especially, the government organizations, hinders their efforts to spread these methods across the country,

which would benefit many. Thus, government level initiatives to help promote these traditional agri-practices were identified as a priority as a solution to the economic problems faced by other vulnerable communities at the rural level.

Interest from economically marginalized groups towards sustainable energy sources such as solar and biogas was identified. However, the affordability of such technologies as well as regulatory barriers prevent them from contributing to renewable energy generation. Thus, financial assistance such as grants and loan schemes with convenient re-payment plans are a key requirement. Also, the removal of regulatory barriers that prevent them from sharing the benefits of solar power such as roof renting came out as a priority as well as, a solution to uplift the living standards of vulnerable and marginalized groups.

*How did various stakeholder groups in your country express their expectations from the Stockholm+50 international meeting? What changes do they expect in the international environmental cooperation, policies, and investment frameworks as a follow up to the Stockholm+50? How do they think that Stockholm+50 can help your country better position itself for advancing integrated solutions across national climate, biodiversity, green recovery, sectoral, and SDG policy frameworks?*

The key changes expected by the stakeholders as a follow-up to Stockholm+50

At present, sustainability commitments and activities are primarily voluntary in nature, thus, they gain less priority and focus. This results in a lack of progress towards the achievement of SDGs. Accordingly, one of the recommendations is to formulate an appropriate international treaty to have effective cooperation between countries to share resources and expertise to build individual and institutional capacities to contribute to sustainability interventions. The second recommendation is to establish a platform to share information and best practices, particularly related to environmental management. The other recommendation is to formulate legally binding commitments to control the critical pollutants and harmful practices at the global level (e.g. Minamata convention for mercury, Stockholm convention for POPs).

Assistance from Stockholm+50 to the country in advancing integrated solutions

Following are among the key assistance expected by the stakeholders:
- Technology transfer
  The lack of resource-efficient and environmentally sound technologies is one of the key challenges that hinders the implementation of environment-related interventions (e.g. common environmental issues, e-waste, precision agriculture, etc.).

- Knowledge transfer, capacity building, and sharing of best practices
  Inadequate knowledge and other competencies, particularly related to new and emerging solutions to critical environmental issues, needs to be addressed.

- Guidelines to prioritize and refine a set of localized SD targets and indicators
  Though the localization of SD targets and indicators has been attempted, so far, the local indicator framework includes only about 100 out of 230+ indicators, which also are at the national level.

- Support to enhance local capacity for appraisal and evaluation (e.g. carbon footprint, carbon credits)
  The institutions, particularly the private sector, are keen on disclosing their carbon footprints and participating in carbon credit schemes. However, they face challenges due to the limited availability of local expertise and evaluation methodologies.

- A mechanism for progress monitoring and evaluation of sustainable development activities with a feedback system
  The country has limited resources and experience in Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems.

- Financial assistance
  Lack of access to green finance as well as innovative financing models too are barriers.

- A scheme to share weather and climate information
  Sri Lanka is highly vulnerable to climate change; weather forecasting and other climate information are required to enhance resilience and emergency response.

- Act as a liaison body to facilitate partnerships and collaborations
  With the ongoing activities and linkages initiated, Stockholm+50 is in an ideal position to facilitate global and regional partnerships for accelerating environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

## Highlights from the on-line SparkBlue Consultations

*Summarize the key types of comments, recommendations and findings relevant to the Stockholm+50 Leadership Dialogues themes.*

**Leadership Dialogue 1. Reflecting on the urgent need for actions to achieve a healthy planet and prosperity of all**

Views expressed by the respondents, on ways to restore and regenerate a positive relationship with the nature, include: (a) minimizing the resource utilization, (b) adopting green technologies, (c) promoting RE, (c) improving the public transportation, (d) reducing consumption (SCP), (e) enhance the knowledge about the nature, ecosystems, pollution pathways, and (f) sustainable use and restoration of ecosystems.

The actions identified by the participants toward a healthy planet include: (a) promoting green technologies and eco-farming, (b) reforestation, and (c) using solar power at the domestic level. In addition to these individual-level actions, a range of policy interventions were proposed, that include: (a) equitable and fair access to natural resources as one prominent way to help vulnerable groups and (b) the promotion of potential livelihoods.

Pathways proposed by participants to protect the rights of people and nature include: (a) enforcement of rules, regulations, and laws on environment protection, (b) strict adoption of sustainable principles by all, (c) creation of awareness about the rights of people, rules, and regulations, and (d) good governance.

Followings were identified as new indicators and metrics: (a) land, energy, and water footprint, and chemical use per capita, (b) economic internal rate of return (EIRR), (c) number of people having access to clean resources, (d) extent of green zones, (e) SENDAI framework metrics, (f) extent of social demarcation of protected areas to overcome the land tenure issues in those areas, and (g) extent of protected areas demarcated and maintained within Municipal Council and Urban local authority areas.

The following recommendations could be identified: (a) promoting renewable energy (e.g. solar, biogas and mini-hydro), (b) use of green materials in government constructions, (c) improving energy efficiency to reduce energy consumption, (d) formulating national water resources policy and a water resources secretariat to implement the policy, (e) strict guidelines for local authorities for a healthier planet, and (f) promoting inclusive policies and strategies that benefit the marginalized and vulnerable groups.

The importance of education in the attainment of sustainable development has been valued by many. Fair and equitable access to natural resources was also well respected and valued by the participants.

**Leadership Dialogue 2. Achieving a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic**

The most promising sustainable and inclusive recovery practices include: (a) applying green technologies, (b) offering more facilities for recycling and supply chain management, (c) promoting the 3R concept, (d) reducing the use of the harmful substance (e.g. polythene), (e) e-mobility, (f) improving energy efficiency, (g) use of solar PV at domestic level, (h) using renewable energy, and (i) ecosystem restoration.

Practices that need to be changed include: (a) staying away from all unhealthy practices, (b) political interference, favoritism, and (c) providing skills to people rather than giving them free money.

Countries and communities could be benefited through: (a) effective use of efficient agroforestry practices, (b) efficient use of resources, (c) reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and (d) introduction of market mechanisms where people can share benefits.

Better performing industries and supply chains could be created through: (a) strategic planning, (b) following EU generated greening principles that include LCA, PES, EPR, etc., (c) using renewable energy, and (d) waste management. The most critical sectors include: (a) energy, (b) fertilizer, (c) agriculture and plantation, (d) mining and construction, and (e) the government sector.

The key commitments and responsibilities in the industry include: (a) making support available only for sustainable initiatives, (b) acquiring green technologies, (c) promoting green products, (d) promoting 3R, (e) benefit sharing related to use of ecosystem services, and (f) extended producer responsibility (EPR).

Green jobs and required skills include: (a) R&D in eco-farming and green technologies, (b) sustainable auditing and recycling engineering, (c) green energy, (d) ICT, (e) automation, (f) traditional agriculture practices, (g) waste management, and (h) 3R.

The following recommendations have been made: (a) effectively implement existing environmental laws, (b) enforce transparency at all levels, (c) introduce a legal framework for good practices, (d) mandatory implementation of green actions with targets, and (e) government must encourage a clean economy rather than non-clean or non-green economies.

The role of technology and education was prominent in the views expressed for green recovery.

**Leadership Dialogue 3. Accelerating the implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development**

The biggest challenges in the attainment of sustainable development include: (a) inconsistent policy, (b) expansion of middle-class consumers and urbanization, (c) current economic recession, (d) lack of finance, (e) lack of technology, (f) gaps in knowledge, (g) lack of commitment by responsible parties, and (h) de-forestation.

Good practices identified include: (a) use of renewable energy, (b) use of green technologies, (c) public-private partnerships, (f) climate-smart agriculture, (g) recharge of groundwater using rainwater, and (h) water reclamation through the implementation of 3R principle.

Proposed transformations needed for governance and legal system are: (a) introducing transparency, (b) aligning government activities with SDGs, (c) implementing monitoring activities, (d) rigid laws and policies with periodic reviews, (e) application of step-wise transformation, (f) maintaining law and order, (g) promote PPP, and (h) awareness creation.

Measures need to align PPP include: (a) focus on PPP for sustainable agriculture, (b) implementing regulatory measures, (c) government's active involvement in regulating the activities, and (d) effective and inclusive policies and strategies.

Expected partnerships from UN and beyond include: (a) technology transfer, (b) funding for technology acquisition, (c) technically and financially supporting green entrepreneurs, (d) guidance for the agriculture sector for it to become more productive, and (e) development of larger projects for transformational development.

Capacities and technologies required are: (a) entrepreneurial skills, (b) low-energy consuming technologies, and (c) green technologies.

# 4. Consultation Follow-up, Next Steps and Links to National Policies

*Possible follow-up and next steps including the design and implementation of socially inclusive and gender-responsive national and sectoral polices, NDCs, NBSAPs, INFFs, SDG Strategies, Green/Blue Economy and Green Recovery Plans, etc..*

Among the potential areas for follow-up and next steps, the key area of intervention is the establishment of a conducive policy environment at macro level and institutional framework to facilitate national priorities and global commitments as articulated in SDGs, NEAP, NDCs, NBSAP, and other national/sectoral policies. These can be categorized under the following areas:

1. Overarching, long-term, consistent, cohesive, national development policy framework with due consideration of environmental and social safeguards.
2. Sectoral policies aligned with overarching policy and national commitments and priorities as reflected in SDGs, NEAP, NDCs, and NBSAP.
3. Rational resource allocation and mobilization to ensure implementation of plans and programs by respective mandated organizations using viable and innovative financing mechanisms.
4. Inclusive and participatory approach for policy making with the engagement of all stakeholders: youth, women, local communities, private sector, etc.
5. Identify the possibility of setting up a high-level mechanism for review of existing policies, oversee formulation of new policies, implementation monitoring, and feedback.
6. Review and re-define implementation agency mandates aligned with the assigned subjects under respective policies, avoiding overlaps and duplications.
7. Introduce a system to ensure responsibility & accountability of heads of institutions.
8. In policy formulation and planning, assign high priorities for green transformation, digital transformation, food security, healthy living, healthy ecosystems, capacity building, social inclusion, and inclusive partnerships.

Further, the following sectoral interventions, as prioritized by the stakeholders, are required in operationalizing the relevant policies and implementing the strategic plans.

1. Green transformation in economic sectors is fundamental to achieving SDGs by implementing environmental dimensions. One of the key areas of interventions in green transformation is RE; accelerated uptake which requires the following barriers to be addressed: technical, financial, land resources, information, regulatory, tariff structure, and competency. Other prioritized areas include circular economy, holistic waste management, and SCP.
2. Digital transformation is required for inclusive and green recovery. Some of the key sectors are agriculture, industry, commerce, energy, transport, health, education, and banking and finance. For the effective utilization of digital technologies, the following barriers need to be addressed: poor digital infrastructure, low ICT literacy, affordability of required devices and the operating expenses, regulatory barriers, and protocol issues.

3. Restoration and sustainable management of ecosystems is crucial for ensuring a healthy planet and prosperity for all. Stakeholders have prioritized the following interventions: national policy and strategy for ecosystem restoration, sustainable resource extraction, critical ecosystems, eco-tourism, home gardening, appropriate use of agro-chemicals, and waste management.

*How has coordination with other national/subnational processes benefited/been improved?*

1. Engagement of state-sector stakeholders at the sub-national level (provincial council and local authorities): whole-of-government approach.
2. Engagement of all stakeholders including NGOs, CBOs, CSOs, youth, and vulnerable groups: whole-of-society approach.
3. A window of opportunity for the private sector and financial institutions to get engaged in national-level dialogues.
4. Provision of unique opportunities for local communities to effectively express their ideas and concerns to relevant authorities and decision-makers.
5. Unique consultative process adopted enabled the participants to actively engage in the dialogue. Additionally, this ensured the ownership of the ideas expressed, as witnessed through the presentations made by the groups during the plenary sessions. Another positive attribute of the consultation was the environment created for effective peer-to-peer exchange of ideas by the homogeneous grouping of stakeholders.
6. Maximum participation at sub-national level consultation sessions with appropriate logistic arrangements based on the needs of participants.

*How will stakeholder dialogue on these topics be maintained and continued? What platforms or mechanisms are in place for stakeholders to provide their feedback and follow up recommendations, including the use of virtual dialogues and digital technologies?*

1. The Ministry of Environment will make provisions to maintain and continue the stakeholder dialogues through an effective engagement platform for the environmental dimensions of SDGs.

2. The present national plans and global commitments have already identified the need of a stakeholder engagement platform and some of which have already been initiated. In particular, localization and mainstreaming of SDGs supported by the Sustainable Development Council, coordination of NDC implementation by the Climate Change Secretariat of the Ministry of Environment, and plan of implementation for the NEAP by the Ministry of Environment. In particular, the implementation of NEAP is being planned with stakeholder engagement and coordination at the national and sub-national levels through coordinating committees at the divisional, district, provincial, and national levels.

3. The learnings from the Stockholm+50 consultations highlighted earlier will be adopted to improve the above stakeholder engagement platforms and mechanisms which in turn will support maintaining and continuing stakeholder dialogues effectively.

*What other initiatives have been triggered/inspired/informed by the National Consultation?*

Inspired participants of the national consultation proposed the following:
- Private sector & finance sector
  State sector recognition of the private sector's capacity to contribute to development initiatives.
- CSOs & local communities
  Expressed the willingness to contribute to sustainable development through local knowledge and actions for which they expect a mechanism to engage, access to information, knowledge sharing, and effective communication through local languages.
- State sector sub-national
  Expressed the willingness to contribute to the effort of the national government in environmental planning initiatives and localization of SDGs at the sub-national level, provided that the opportunity for meaningful engagement prevails.
- Youth
  Expressed eagerness to engage in a holistic approach in integrating environmental attributes with economic, social, cultural, and political aspects.

Participants were informed on the following national-level initiatives:
- Evolution of sustainable development concept.
- localization and mainstreaming of SDGs by the Sustainable Development Council.
- NDC implementation by the Climate Change Secretariat of the Ministry of Environment.
- Introduction to NEAP by the Ministry of Environment.
- UN Decade of Action.
- Green recovery.

## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| CBO | Community Based Organizations |
| CE | Circular Economy |
| EIA | Environmental Impact Assessment |
| EIRR | Economic Internal Rate of Return |
| EPL | Environment Protection License |
| EPR | Extended Producer Responsibility |
| ER | Ecosystem Restoration |
| EV | Electric Vehicle |
| GAP | Good Agricultural Practices |
| GHG | Greenhouse Gas |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| IEE | Initial Environmental Examinations |
| IIoT | Industry Internet of Things |
| IoT | Internet of Things |
| LA | Local Authority |
| LCA | Life-cycle Assessment |
| MoE | Ministry of Environment |
| MRV | Monitoring, Reporting and Verification |
| MSME | Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises |
| NAP | National Adaptation plan (for climate change impacts in Sri Lanka) |
| NBS | Nature Based Solutions |
| NBSAP | National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan |
| NDCs | Nationally Determined Contributions |
| NEAP | National Environment Action Plan |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| PES | Payment for Ecosystem Services |
| PPP | Public-Private Partnerships |
| RE | Renewable Energy |
| SCP | Sustainable Consumption and Production |
| SD | Sustainable Development |

## Annexes

The following annexes are provided in a separate volume.

1. Responses provided by stakeholders in the consultation sessions.

2. Minutes of consultations along with details of participants.

3. Agendas of consultations.

4. PowerPoint presentations delivered by the consultant team.

5. Communication products for consultation.

6. Overview of participation.