

# On the Ground

Issue 17; May-June-2012

## Contributors

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## UNDP helps strengthen the Sri Lanka position ahead of Rio+20

The landmark United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, commonly known as Rio+20, concluded on 22nd June 2012, with Heads of State and Government and other high level representatives renewing their commitment to sustainable development, greener economies and the eradication of poverty.

Ensuring that development takes place in a sustainable manner has been a key focus of the Government of Sri Lanka. As such, several initiatives have been launched aimed at integrating environmental aspects in to the economic development process. In preparing for Rio+20, the Sri Lankan Government, as well as civil society and the country's youth, took steps to review the development activities of the past 20 years, while also sharing ideas and opinions on 'the future we want'.

UNDP helped strengthen Sri Lanka's position ahead of the conference by providing financial and technical assistance to the Government, civil society and the youth in formulating three key documents: the Government of Sri Lanka's National Situation Report, the People's Report and the Youth Position Paper.

Technical assistance was provided to the Ministry of Environment to prepare the National Situation Report, which summarizes the development contributions of different sectors, challenges and way forward for Sri Lanka following the Rio+20 conference.

In addition, through the Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Programme (GEF/SGP), UNDP supported the Sri Lanka Nature Forum to formulate the People's Report, which presents the opinion and the development expe-

riences of the public over the past 20 years. Titled, 'People's Report on Sustainable Development: Sri Lanka 2012', the reports looks at the country's natural resources, development concerns, opportunities and the impact of development.

UNDP, together with UNV, also supported the Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka (YGSL) platform, which comprises of over 30 youth organizations, to develop the Youth Position Paper for Rio+20. The Youth Position Paper focuses on the role of youth in creating a sustainable future. It also highlights the need for youth participation at all levels of decision making for the 'future we want', the lack of green jobs for youth, and the need for education and skill development opportunities, especially in enabling youth to contribute to green growth.

These three documents were presented to the Minister of Environment, Hon. Anura Priyadarshana Yapa and the Rio+20 Country Focal Point, Secretary to the Ministry, Mr. Basnayake on 8th of June 2012 at an event organized by the Ministry of Environment in preparation for Rio+20 in Colombo.

Elaborating on these efforts, Ms. Razina Bilgrami, Deputy Country Director of UNDP Sri Lanka, who was present during the occasion when the three reports were handed-over to the Minister, stated, "At UNDP, we are committed to working with our partners to support the country as it moves towards a more sustainable future. Having supported in the preparation process and also helped strengthen the capacity of the Sri Lanka delegation to Rio+20, UNDP will continue to support the various stakeholder groups to implement Rio+20 outcomes following the Conference."

Looking beyond the Conference, UNDP Sri Lanka will facilitate post Rio+20 discussions to implement the outcomes and map out future action.

*Minister of Environment,  
Hon. Anura Priyadarshana  
Yapa reads through the  
Youth Position Paper*



*Read the People's Report*

**Learn more...**

**Read the Youth Position Paper here**

## Encouraging students to share ideas on a sustainable future



*Awarding certificates to one of the winners of the essay competition*

Encouraging students to share ideas on achieving a sustainable future, UNDP, through the Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Programme (GEF/SGP) supported the Ministry of Environment and the Sri Lanka Working Group on Rio+20 to host the Student and Youth Sustainable Development Summit, "Thurunu Sobasara" on June 12, 2012. The event was held in collaboration with the Green Movement of Sri Lanka, the Young Biologists' Association and the Vidusara Newspaper.

Part of efforts by the Government and civil society to engage children and youth in future development activities, a highlight of the event was the awarding of certificates and prizes to winners of the essay competition themed of 'a sustainable development'. Prior to the event, students and youth from across the country were invited to share innovative thoughts, ideas and suggestions on how development can take place in a sustainable manner while Sri Lanka advances as a middle income country. To ensure that the voices of youth continue to be heard, steps will be taken to share these ideas captured through the student submissions with Government officials, the civil society and other policymakers.

Emphasizing the role of children and youth in contributing towards a sustainable future, Minister of Environment Anura Priyadarshana Yapa stated, "The concerns of youth and students will always be taken into account in development. Children can play a crucial role in development as they have new and innovative ideas. We need to connect those ideas in future development efforts as the children sitting in the audience today will be the leaders of tomorrow."

## Working at UNDP: Vinoka Hewage

Having joined UNDP as a Programme Associate of the Peace and Recovery cluster, Vinoka Hewage later became part of the Management Support Unit. She left UNDP in May this year after four years of working in the organization.

Of the experiences gained, Vinoka says that UNDP helped her learn a lot and progress in her career. "The best thing about working at UNDP is the people you meet and work with. Having come from another INGO, I was accustomed to working in a fast-paced, results-drive environment. But, the passion with which UNDP embraces the challenges they face is second to none. I have been constantly encouraged by the talent at UNDP," Vinoka says.

She is also grateful to her team. "I will never forget the Peace and Recovery team. I really appreciate working under Dilrukshi's leadership, especially the courage and determination she worked with," she adds.

There were some challenges for Vinoka and among them was familiarizing herself with ATLAS! But, Vinoka is quick to add, "thanks to my 'Guru', Ruban', I was able to learn fast." There is one other event which Vinoka will never forget – the day they won the championship of the UN cricket festival in 2011!



## Providing new opportunities for youth in the hospitality industry

Thirty youth who successfully completed the first component of their training in the hotel industry, conducted as part of a joint initiative between UNDP and Aitken Spence Hotels, received their certificates on 28 May 2012. The awarding of certificates took place at the Aitken Spence School of Hospitality in Ahungalle.

The three-month training programme by the Aitken Spence School of Hospitality, was aimed at enhancing the employment opportunities of these youth. The course module was designed as per ILO Certified Standards incorporated by Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management and registered with the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission. Equipped with this knowledge, the youth will have the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of working in the industry during the 9-month internship that follows the training.

Elaborating on their benefits from the training, Mr. Amal Nanayakkara, General Manager – Training of Aitken Spence Hotels stated, "An opportunity has been provided to a whole new generation of people. The hospitality industry is something that is going to be very important for the future in this country, and these students are going to be the foundation of that industry."

Expressing his thoughts on the significance of this training, Mr. Zihan Zarook, Programme Officer of UNDP's Transitional Recovery Programme, said, "When we worked in the North and East under the Communities for Programme project, we realized the need to develop human resources in these areas, in addition to providing livelihood and development support. We believe that the skills gained through this programme will help empower these young people to take the next steps in their career."

Y. G. Senarath walked away with the award for the Most Outstanding Student. He also bagged

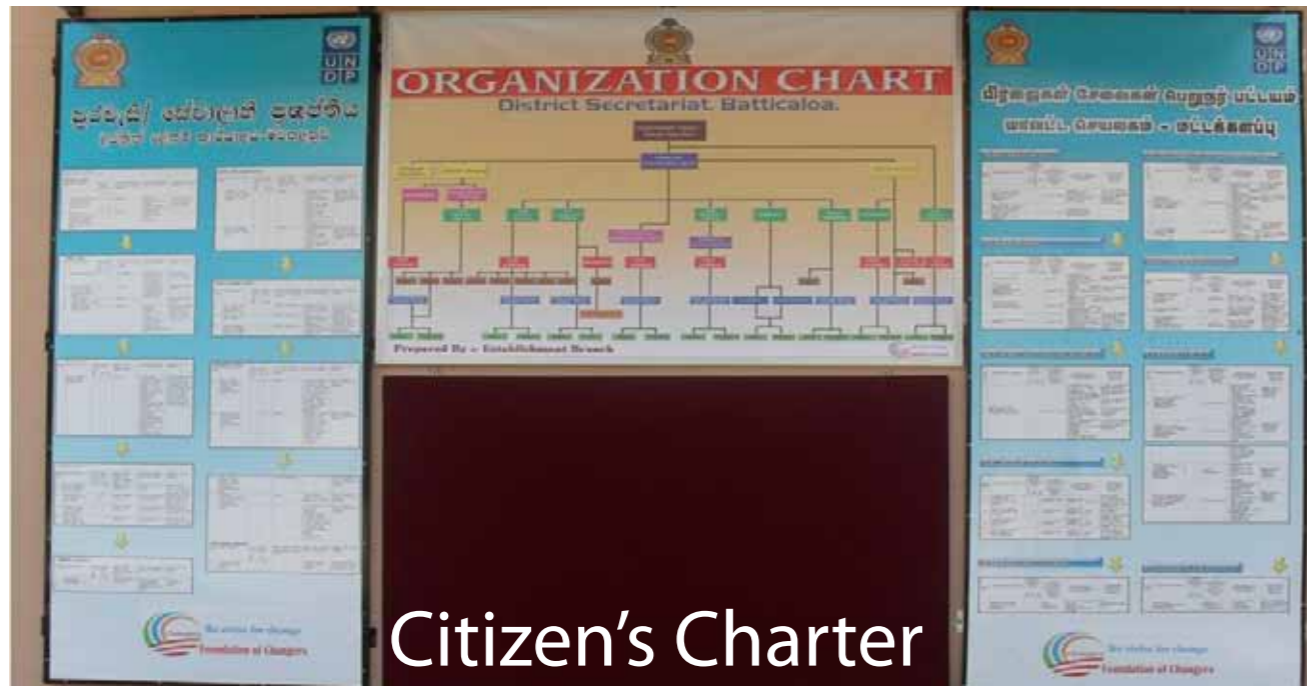


*The batch of students and their trainers*

the awards for the best student in Food and Beverage services (theory) and English Language, while G. Sasikaran received the awards for Food and Beverage services (Practical).

The experiences gained through the training will be useful both professionally and personally, noted Senarath, sharing his own. "This training helped us to learn about the different aspects of the industry. I am confident that with the knowledge gained through this training, and also the practical knowledge we will gain during our internship, I will be able to work in any 5-star hotel in the country," he said. He is also quick to add, "Prior to coming here, we hardly ever interacted with Tamil youth. We had our own perceptions about them. But, here, since we had to work a lot with one another, I've come to know them, and have made new friends."

A total of 70 youth will be part of this training, with intakes of two separate batches. This batch commenced training in February this year, while the next batch of students will begin training in August. The initiative will also prioritize female youth in the next batch, as a way of encouraging greater female participation in the tourism sector and helping them to break down obstacles that exclude women, especially rural women, from engaging in the sector.



## Citizen's Charter

### Improving local government service delivery

In 2009, UNDP, under its Local Governance Project (LoGoPro), stepped in to support the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs to further develop and promote the Citizen's Charter, a set of commitments by the Government towards the people on the standard of the services it provides, including the types of services, how these can be accessed at all levels, timeframe and officials responsible for delivering these services. A key policy instrument that also details the available grievance redress mechanisms, the Citizen's Charter promotes transparency and accountability in a government administration. Today, the Citizen's Charter has helped 14,022 Grama Niladhari offices across the island as well as 108 Divisional Secretariats and 8 District Secretariats in the Eastern, Southern and Uva provinces to achieve just this as they take a crucial step forward in improving public service delivery.

The Citizen's Charter was first introduced in 2007 by the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs. Ministry and department officials were required to adhere to these requirements by preparing their own Citizen's Charter. "However, in practice, the system was not being fully implemented," said Mr. J. Dadallage, Additional Secretary to the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs. As such, there was an urgent need to further develop and promote the system, while also ensuring that integrated methods are adopted to improve service delivery.

With LoGoPro's support, the system was re-engineered in 2009. The new system has aimed to incorporate tools such as citizens'/client feedback forms, suggestion boxes, news monitoring, call services and client surveys. Programmes have been conducted to improve the knowledge and capacity of the Government officials in the various components of the Citizen's Charter and its uses.

Furthermore, a database model has been developed, whereupon Divisional and District Secretariats are now required to closely study the services provided by them and the standard of service delivery, as well as the legal provisions related to that particular service. "This helped us develop the systems, the thinking and the procedures of introducing the Citizen's Charter. It was then up to the officials to expand on what they had so far developed," added Mr. Dadallage. This was crucial to ensure that the public officials were aware of their strengths and weaknesses, as well as their roles and responsibilities to the public. IT-based evaluation patterns have also been introduced to further enhance the efficiency of the public service. The Citizen's Charter initiative has also supported other service delivery providers, and as the next step in monitoring and further improving public service delivery, a performance monitoring system was developed and is being implemented at the district level.

In addition, LoGoPro has supported the Ministry of Public Administration to develop 20 Work Manuals for various public service positions. The Work Manuals streamlined and detailed the duties and functions of public officers in various sectors, thereby institutionalizing processes and systems. Some of the public service positions covered by the Work Manuals include human resources and institutional management, Samurdhi, planning and development, and financial management.

The Citizen's Charter is currently displayed in 14,022 Grama Niladhari offices island wide, 108 Divisional Secretariats and District Secretariats in Ampara, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Galle, Matara, Hambantota,

Badulla and Moneragela. Plans are currently underway to introduce the Citizen's Charter in eight districts across North Central, North West and Sabaragamuwa provinces.

UNDP's support has not only helped to promote the Citizen's Charter, but also has helped develop the necessary knowledge and capacity of Government officials, which, looking ahead, Mr. Dadallage notes will be a crucial factor in ensuring the sustainability and the future success of the system.

*Picture on the previous page: The Citizen's Charter being displayed at the District Secretariat in Batticaloa in the Eastern Province*

## Building climate resilience in communities

Planning and Samurdhi staff representing all 25 districts in the country participated in an innovative two day workshop on June 28th and 29th. The focus of the consultative workshop was to identify the climate hazards that may affect the key Government rural development initiatives including Divi Neguma and Gama Neguma and to formulate a four year project to build the institutional capacity of agencies to ensure that the climate change impacts on the rural development efforts are minimized.

This new project to building climate resilience through Divi Neguma and Gama Neguma is funded by the Special Climate Change Fund of the Global Environment Facility and implemented by Ministry of Economic Development through UNDP.

The district officials assisted by the officials of line agencies and experts on agriculture, building designs, disaster risk reduction and water management identified the activities to be conducted by different agencies and necessary training, awareness and institutional strengthening needed to achieve the objectives. Appreciating the timely effort by the staff of the Ministry and the agencies Hon. Basil Rajapaksha, Minister of Economic Development said that "addressing environment and sustainability issues are an important part of development to ensure the sustainability." As such "appropriate safe guards and best soil, air, energy and water management practices should be incorporated into the programmes." Further the Hon. Minister added that "increased awareness, education and understanding at all levels can make a better contribution towards sustainability as opposed to relying on rules and regulations."



*Hon. Basil Rajapaksa, Minister of Economic Development with Dr. Ananda Mallawatanthri of UNDP Sri Lanka, Mr. K.E Karunathilake, Advisor on Agriculture, Gemidiriya, Ministry of Economic Development and Mr. Jayathilake Herath, Director, Divi Neguma*

Mr. Kithsiri Ranawaka, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Development, Mr. Jayathilake Herath, Director, Divi Neguma and Mrs. C.M.A Dhammika, Director, Gama Neguma, Dr. Herath Manthirtilake, IWMI, Dr. B.V.R Punyawardane, Climatologist, Major General (Retd) Gamini Hettiarachchi, Director General, Disaster Management Centre provided technical inputs.

Dr. Ananda Mallawatantri, UNDP Sri Lanka, while introducing the concept of the project highlighted that this initiative has the potential to "initiate a paradigm shift in rural development by mainstreaming environment, energy, disaster risk reduction and other best practices."

The workshop was supported by more than 15 sector agencies such as the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Local Governments & Provincial Councils, Department of Meteorology, Natural Resources Management Centre, National Water Supply and Drainage Board, Department of Agrarian Development, International Water Management Institute, Coastal Conservation & Coastal Resources Management Department, National Aquatic Development Authority and Universities.

# Capacity Development: Strengthening institutions, changing lives

At UNDP, we often speak of “capacity development”. In fact, it constitutes a critical component of our work. Yet, what does this mean? How does it work? More importantly, how does developing capacity of institutions make a difference?

Dipa Singh Bagai, Capacity Development Advisor and Regional Coordinator of the Asia-Pacific Regional Centre, UNDP and Chitose Noguchi, Policy Specialist of the Bureau of Development Policy (BDP), who were recently on mission in Sri Lanka, spoke to us on some of these aspects.

## What does capacity development mean?

Dipa: In very simple terms, capacity development means that individuals, organizations and institutions have the capabilities and the skills to deliver on their mandate, and are able to do so effectively and efficiently.

## What is UNDP’s approach to capacity development?

Dipa: UNDP adopts a five-step process in capacity development. Firstly, we start by engaging our stakeholders on capacity development. Thereafter, we assess the current capacity assets as well as their needs. This is done through a process of assessment, by going through background documents, conducting key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Once this is complete, we need to put in place measures to improve the capacities. For this, we formulate a capacity development response strategy. That is the third step, and the fourth step in the process is where we implement the response. Thereafter, we regularly monitor and evaluate what we have achieved. From here on, it’s a cyclical process. Once we identify gaps through evaluation, we engage with our stakeholders once again to find out where we are, and the

whole process starts again. Capacity development is a dynamic process. At no stage would it be wise to say that we have completely and fully developed our capacities.

## What is the end result of capacity development?

Chitose: The aim of capacity development is for organizations, institutions, ministries or departments to achieve nationally owned and sustainable results. This is critical. We do not strengthen the capacities for the sake of doing it, we really want to make sure that the process and the results are nationally owned. That means, the partners themselves take it on, they achieve the results and they feel that these are their own results.

Dipa: Capacity development is not an end in itself. It contributes to results and those results are development results. Strengthening the capacities of institutions and organizations will result in institutions and systems performing more effectively and efficiently, in a more consistent and resilient manner. They will be able to deliver better services to the people. This will then lead to change in behavior and a better quality of life for people.

## How does capacity development evolve to meet the changing needs?

Chitose: Many tend to think of capacity development as training. But, it is not just about training individuals. It is really about strengthening individuals, institutions and organizations, and changing the policy frameworks and the enabling environment so that people and organizations can achieve results.

What this means for UNDP is that we need to move away from a strong focus on individual trainings, to more policy advisory work, providing assistance and support for our counterparts in developing their own plans and/or implementing them.

In addition, we want to ensure that capacity development is a key part of any project or programme that UNDP implements. We have been doing this in the past. But, we want to do it well; we want to do it more efficiently and systematically.

As UNDP moves towards becoming a knowledge organization, the way we share and disseminate knowledge will be important. Capacity development efforts will be clearly articulated in Sri Lanka’s new programme cycle, which starts next year. The Government of Sri Lanka has already shown a lot of interest and willingness in this area, there are a lot of national systems in place and UNDP will be committed to support their efforts as the country moves forward.



*Working with partners to strengthen their skills has been a key focus of UNDP Sri Lanka’s work. The above pictures show us engaging in such work.*