

# **Paper Presented at Conference on Developments in Forestry and Environment Management in Sri Lanka**

## **Current Trends in Forest and Environmental Policies in Sri Lanka**

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### **Introduction**

Sri Lanka like many other developing countries has to confront a wide range of environmental management challenges that are associated with its economic development. This was clearly evident especially during the last six decades during which time emphasis was given to achieve high economic growth rates and employment creation for poverty alleviation. Increase in population also exerted more pressures on the environment. All these have contributed to the rapid degradation of the environment which has resulted in additional economic and social costs and adding new issues to the agenda of the government. This situation should not be continued as it is harmful to any development and hence attempts need to be made to strike a harmonious balance between economic development and the environment.

Forestry is one major component of the environment that is crucial for the well-being of humanity. They provide foundations for life on earth through ecological functions, by regulating the climate and water resources, and by serving as habitats for plants and animals.

This paper attempts to review forest and environmental policies in Sri Lanka and to explore the current trends and future directions of these policies. It also makes some recommendations for better implementation of forest and environmental policies for sustainable development.

### **Forest, Environment and Sustainable Development**

Sustainable development is essential and first and foremost is the need for a long-term vision. The natural resources of this country are depleting and degrading at an alarming rate, which has severe implications on the environment. Like most developing countries, in Sri Lanka with its increase of population, deforestation is continuing very rapidly. The most serious consequences of deforestation and forest degradation are the loss of biodiversity, irregular water supply, shortened life span of irrigation channels and reservoirs, soil erosion and loss of soil fertility. It is therefore necessary to have a long-term vision for environmental management. In order to achieve this objective the Ministry of Forestry and Environment has identified its mission as *“to provide leadership to manage the environment to ensure national commitment for sustainable development for the benefit of the present and future generations.”* Along with this the Ministry has developed a policy framework, various strategies and action plans to achieve this target.

Another essential characteristic is that the policy must be socially acceptable if it is to contribute to sustainable development. The Sri Lankan people have co-existed with natural resources for centuries and have close cultural and sometimes even spiritual ties with them. These values need to be recognized and respected in the policy if it is to be sustainable.

People's participation in the policy formulation process and implementation is necessary to ensure effective implementation of policies and therefore this aspect needs to be taken into consideration at the time of policy formulation. Similarly development strategies envisaged by the policy must also be technically appropriate and economically viable if sustainability is to be achieved.

## **Conditions Required for Sustainable Development**

A strong political commitment is an essential condition for sustainable development, which would contribute greatly to better management of the environment. Environment is a multi-sectoral subject, which involves various Ministries, Departments, Agencies, the Private Sector and NGOs. The government has the responsibility of obtaining the consensus of these agencies on environmental policies to make them implementable and sustainable. This is not an easy task.

However, if the political will and commitment are there the task can be fulfilled to a great extent. A firm political commitment on safeguarding the environment was very clearly enshrined in the second Republican Constitution of Sri Lanka of 1978. The following two clauses could be considered as the foundation of national environmental management initiatives.

Article 27 (14)

“The state shall protect, preserve and improve the environment for the benefit of the community.”

Article 28 (f)

“It is the duty of every person in Sri Lanka to protect nature and conserve its riches.”

The availability of suitable legal and institutional structures to implement the formulated policies is extremely necessary as they are the instruments that translate policies into meaningful actions.

## **Evolution of Environmental and Forest Policies**

### **Period of Ancient Kings**

Sri Lanka has a well-developed ancient hydraulic civilization in the dry zone dating back to pre-Christian times and its history of natural resources management has few parallels even in the Old World countries. It was as early as 246 BC that Sri Lanka founded its first National Park – Mahamevna Uyana, during the reign of King Devanampiyatissa (Tissa). King Tissa had developed very strong religious and cultural relationships with his contemporary Emperor Ashoka of India. Buddhism was widely spread in Sri Lanka during this period. Emperor Ashoka promulgated through his famous Ashok Pillar Edicts (272 – 232 BC) the protection of plants and animals. This may be the earliest documented instance of the deliberate establishment of what we today call protected areas. The early introduction of the concepts of non-violence and the basic belief that one must respect the rights of other living organisms to live which is present among the Buddhists, resulted in the preservation of fauna and in the lesser incidences of exploitation of natural resources.

Historically, forest management considered the forest and wildlife with the principle objectives of a stable environment and the provision of forest products. The village forest was an integral part of the village that provided farmers with forest products without encroaching into natural forests. Irrigation through purana village tanks depending on micro-catchments was practiced through “cascading systems” which required careful watershed management to control siltation and maintaining catchment water yields.

These religious and other sentiments and the traditional value system of the people had guided the policy of the ancient Kings during long periods of history. Since the human settlements were largely confined to the dry zone critical watershed areas in the Hill Country remained virtually intact. However the collapse of the Rajarata civilization around the twelfth century had been attributed by some scholars to environmental factors, both natural and man-made.

The establishment of rules and regulations for the protection of the forest and the use of forest product can be dated back to the King Dutugamunu period of 161 to 137 B.C. (Maddugoda, 1991). The King was generally considered the rightful owner of the forest lands (Troup, 1940). The natural resources were managed under a common property regime with a complex system of norms and conventions to regulate individual rights (Kariyawasam, 2001).

### **Colonial Policy**

The advent of European colonial rule from the 16<sup>th</sup> century resulted in long lasting changes in the policies of the State, which were primarily guided by exploitative tendencies. At first the coastal areas were occupied and centers of population gradually shifted to the coastline. During the Portuguese period forests were exploited as an easy commodity. Forests were so extensive at the time that they saw no limits to extraction. The Dutch viewed forests as a valuable resource and introduced systematic exploitation with a certain degree of protection of forests for the first time. Due to the ever increasing conflict with the Portuguese and Dutch in the maritime provinces, the Kandyan Kingdom gradually became disorganized and the people of both Kandyan and maritime sectors exploited forests for their livelihood due to the absence of strong agricultural and economic controls under the King.

After the capture of the whole Island, the British stepped into the Kandyan territories where the virgin forests in the central hills and Wet Zone forests of this country were raped and a plantation economy was established. As a result of this “plantation monomania”, natural ecosystems of the wet zone and the hill country were brought under much stress. The State policy and the “attitude of mind” of the colonial governments were reflected in the legislative measures such as the Crown Lands Encroachment Ordinance of 1840, which brought almost 90% of the land of Sri Lanka directly under governmental control. The rapid rate of conversion of natural forests into coffee and tea plantations during the period resulted in high rates of soil erosion, siltation of rivers and reservoirs and increasing flood hazards.

Almost half of the forest cover was lost within a period of 150 years from 1815 onwards due to clearing and opening up of plantations. Timber felled indiscriminately under licenses before 1835 depleted valuable timber supplies especially ebony and satinwood.

A forest Ordinance was passed in 1885 to regulate shifting cultivation and forest reservations (Troup, 1940). The Department of Wildlife established 11 national parks (460,000ha), 5 nature reserves (64,000ha), and 50 sanctuaries (256,000ha) in 1885 (Gunasena, 1993). The first Conservator of Forests was appointed in 1887 and passed on administrative control over the country’s main forests in 1899 after creating the Forest Department (Troup, 1940). However, the Government Agent still administered a few less valuable “Provincial forests” until 1904. They had granted free collection rights to poor rural people both of fuel wood and minor forest produce within a three –mile radius of their villages if located near forest areas (Nanayakkara, 1981). By 1920, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), a country eminently suitable for the production of timber, was importing wood, mainly chests from Japan and teak from Burma (Troup, 1940).

The first National Forest Policy was introduced in 1929. The main objectives of the forest policy were,

- To make the island self supporting in timber, fuel wood, and other essential forest products, both by the systematic exploitation of existing natural resources and by the artificial reforestation of selected areas.
- To provide timber and forest products for export to the world market.
- To conserve water supply and prevent erosion and
- To coordinate forest operations with the requirement of the preservation of the indigenous fauna and flora.

The British established a regular timber trade after commencement of the coffee industry in 1930. The felling operations were controlled by local village headmen under the permit system issued by the Divisional Revenue Office under the Government Agent (Nanayakkara, 1981). In 1931, the Forest Department was placed under the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. The government decided in 1934 to take measures to make the best possible use of the country's forest for the benefit of the whole community (Troup, 1940). The forests were divided into two categories: as forest reserves and the other as crown forests, which could be exploited for commercial purposes (Nanayakkara, 1981).

The British colonial government in its latter phase was beginning to realize the impact of its land policies and some attempt had been made to preserve land at high elevations (above 5000 ft.) and those that were devastated by chena cultivation. Concerted efforts were also made to preserve soil fertility in the plantations by elaborate soil conservation measures. In 1938, the government decided that "all forest areas over 5000 ft. to be regarded as climatic and protective resource to be maintained in the interest of the nation and not as economic forests."

### **Post-Independence Period**

Policies related to environment especially forest policies were influenced to a great extent during this period by the declaration of the principle of forest policy at the FAO's Sixth Session of 1951. As a result, the forest policy of 1953, was redefined among other things;

- To maintain and create forests for the preservation and amelioration of the environment, soil and water resources, and for the protection of the local fauna and flora when they were required for aesthetic, scientific, historical and socio-economic reasons.
- To ensure and increase as far as possible the supply of small wood for agricultural requirements and fuel wood for domestic consumption
- To maintain a sustained yield of timber and other forest products for the general housing, industrial, communications and defence requirements of the country
- To work the forests to the highest possible economic advantage as is consistent with the above objectives.

The policies of the national governments, which came after Independence, especially during the first two decades after independence, had been to tackle different environmental issues separately through a plethora of State Agencies which were inherited from the colonial past. Each agency preferred to function clearly within its own mandate without "trespassing" into other areas. The policy of the Governments as in the colonial days had been largely geared to manage natural resources and protect the environment through legislative and administrative means. Environmental management was thus perceived primarily as an administrative task rather than as a specialist task. Specialists were brought in when attention had to be focused on critical issues through committees and commissions of inquiry which produced an array of extremely valuable reports such as the Soil Erosion (1931), Land Commission (1927, 1957 and Land Use (1967). The implementation of the recommendations of such committees was taken up by the government with the same enthusiasm as that which prevailed during the time of their appointment.

The implementation of government policies related to environment was often characterized by a lack of inter-agency co-ordination, poor public participation and weak political will. This was particularly evident in the areas such as forestry and wild life and coast conservation where institutional affiliations kept on changing. The post independence period had also witnessed a variety of national development plans with time horizons of three, five, six or even ten years. All of them were characterized by the inadequate attention paid to environmental concerns. The overriding concerns were mainly food production for self-sufficiency, creating employment and rapid economic growth. Although these were

common concerns in most developing countries their close interrelationships were overlooked or poorly understood by the economic development planners.

### **1970 to 1990**

During these two decades considerable changes were evident in the forestry sector. While conservation of forests was given high priority management of forest resources, establishment of forest plantations to meet the timber requirement was also recognised as important. For the first time the economic benefits of forest resources were addressed in the 1980 forest policy. This was a significant change in forest policy evolution of this country. It is also important to note that the environmental issues of the world were so important that the first ever international conference on human environment was held in Stockholm in 1972.

The forest policy of 1970 emphasized;

- To reserve and maintain adequate and suitable forest reserves for the amelioration of local climatic conditions, the conservation of soil and water resources and for aesthetic purposes
- To scientifically manage the forest resources so as to meet part of the timber requirement of the country
- To progressively build up the plantation forest estates to meet the future timber requirement of the country both for internal consumption as well as for export and also to contribute towards conservation of soil and water

The main objectives of the forest policy of 1980 were;

- To maintain, conserve and create forests for the preservation and amelioration of the environment, soil and water resources and for the protection of the local fauna and flora, when they are required for aesthetic, scientific, historical and socio-economic reasons
- To ensure and increase as far as possible the supplies of small wood for agricultural requirements and fuel wood for domestic consumption
- To maintain as far as possible a sustained yield of timber and other forest products for general housing, industrial, communication and defence requirements of the country
- To work the forests to the highest possible economic advantage as is consistent with the above objectives
- To involve the local community in the development of private woodlots and forestry farms through a programme of social forestry

The first Forestry Master Plan was drawn up in 1986. It was one of its kind in the region. This was the first meaningful step taken towards providing a coherent, comprehensive long term framework for the development of the sector. The plan made a valuable contribution in improving the database for planning and to a more systematic development of the forest resources. However, it was criticized for failing to deal adequately with the environmental aspects of forestry and having failed to involve all the stakeholders in the planning process.

A new upsurge of interest in environmental issues was witnessed in the early stage as a follow up or fall out of the Stockholm conference on Human Environment in 1972. The directive of the Prime Minister dated 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1972 had thus initiated a process, which finally resulted in the establishment of the Central Environmental Authority and subsequently a Ministry in charge of the subject of Environment. The directive with much foresight stated that, “although we do not have in our country the problems of highly industrialized countries, it would be prudent to act now and adopt such measures as are necessary to protect and improve the quality of our environment”.

In 1976 a UNEP advisor (J G Beale) visited Sri Lanka at the request of the Government. He made an in-depth analysis of problems related to environment and concluded that the current (1976) environmental protection and pollution policy was made up of several fragmented components. There was governmental recognition that a coordinated policy is needed but a way to achieve this had not yet been devised. He also observed that, planning circles seldom take account of the likely effects of development on the natural environment on man himself and on manmade environments. "There is no full understanding of the total environment and of the relationship between its components."

The Citizens' Task Force on Environment was set up in 1977 to "examine the environmental situation and report on the formulation and implementation of a National Environmental Policy ". It was from the thinking of this task force that the concept of a Central Environmental Authority was born. They also argued the case for a Ministry of Environmental Affairs. Their report further stated that "the Government has to be informed of the nature and seriousness of the environmental problems of Sri Lanka at the time".

In pursuance of the broad national policy the Central Environmental Authority was established in 1980 under the provisions of the National Environmental Act. The preamble of the Act states its objective as "to make provision for the protection and management and enhancement of the environment for the prevention, abatement and control of pollution". Among the many contributions of the Authority the formulation of the National Conservation Strategy stands out prominently. Its Action Plan, which came out more recently summarized and prioritized specific lines of action which, could be undertaken in the foreseeable future.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which is provided in the National Environmental Act as amended in 1988 is a vital environmental policy in Sri Lanka, introduced to integrate environment and development. Through this process the project proponents are encouraged to incorporate environmental dimensions at the formulation stage of the project. With regard to forestry area, all the forestry development projects became subject to environmental impact assessment prior to approval in order to safeguard against adverse environmental consequences. Considering the vital importance of protecting the environmental conditions in forests, a separate Environmental Management Division in the Forest Department was established in 1990 to implement the Forest Policy of 1989 (Bandarathilleke, 1991).

### **Since 1990 – To Date**

A new Ministry of Environment at the rank of a Cabinet Ministry was established in March 1990 to provide the highest prominence and greater commitment to the subject of environment in Sri Lanka. This was an important landmark in the field of forestry and environment. The new Ministry within a few months of its existence had formulated a National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) and the Country Report for the Earth Summit held in 1992. The NEAP was updated several times in 1992, 1993, 1995 and the latest time in 1998. The NEAP combines both policy formulation – in terms of defining broad objectives and priorities for environmental policies and programmes and environmental management – by providing a framework for coordination and monitoring its implementation with sectoral line Ministries and agencies. The NEAP is a "centre piece" of the Ministry of Forestry and Environment (MFR).

The Ministry of Forestry and Environment in 1999, to ensure that environmental concerns of sectoral agencies are incorporated into their sectoral policies, established a new institutional structure known as Committee on Environment Policy and Management (CEPOM). Eight CEPOMs were established as a pilot programme under the chairmanship of the Secretaries of sectoral ministries to consider environment and sustainable development issues relating to the respective sectors. CEPOM is the finest institutional mechanism created in recent times to achieve the environment/economic development integration process. The important feature in the CEPOM is that they are fully owned by the sectoral development agencies and chaired by Secretaries of the respective Ministries. Secretary in charge of Environment

serves as co-chairman. All major sectoral policy issues relating to environment and economic development are expected to be discussed at the CEPOMs.

Whatever environment and development issues that cannot be resolved at the CEPOMs will be referred to the Committee on Integrating Environment and Development Policy (CIEDP). The CIEDP comprises of Secretaries of development Ministries, Director General National Planning Department, and the Chairman National Development Council, Member of the Chambers and the NGOs. The CIEDP is chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Finance & Planning and co-chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Environment. It is expected that most issues relating to environment and economic development would be resolved at this forum.

With regard to forestry sector development in this country the year 1995 is a very significant one. National Forestry Policy and the Sri Lanka Forestry Sector Master Plan were developed during this year. It was found that there was no clear direction regarding the various demands on forests. Hence, clear directions were required for the reconciliation of the different, often conflicting demands that are placed on forests. An explicit widely accepted forestry policy was needed to guide the systematic development of the forestry sector of this country to serve the present and future generations.

Some of the realities that paved the way for national forestry policy formulation were as follows;

- The forest cover is continuing to decrease and the forests are degrading
- There are continuous conflicts between forestry and agricultural expansion
- Attempts to conserve and protect the forests had been ineffective
- Biodiversity has been reduced
- Soil erosion and siltation have increased
- Forest resources are not maintained efficiently and
- Benefits from forest resources are not equitably distributed.

The overall forestry policy objectives set out the desired results of what the forestry sector should look like in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The National Forestry Policy of 1995 is given as Annex 1.

The Forestry Sector Master Plan (FSMP) was developed in 1995. It is a comprehensive, biophysical, environmental, socio-political and economic projection of the forestry sector's optimal development, intended to guide decision making at national, regional and local levels. In 1990 the Government took a decision to revise the Forestry Master Plan of 1986. As there were several deficiencies in the 1986 plan and additional areas to be addressed it was felt that a new plan to cover the forestry sector was necessary. The following are the main reasons why a new plan was needed.

- The seriousness of the environmental threat from deforestation and forest degradation has become more apparent
- The previous plan was largely outdated with too narrow a scope and an inadequate policy framework
- Changes have taken place in government policies and in both the physical-biological and the socio-economic environment
- Wood scarcity was much more acute
- The complexity of the above issues and their inter-sectoral linkages were seen to need further consideration

The FSMP covers the period 1995 – 2020. Its main objective was to prepare a comprehensive long term development framework for the forestry sector, which will ensure that the valuable natural forests and other wildlife and biodiversity resources will be conserved, and at the same time the forests will provide environmental services and forests products to meet the needs of the people on a sustainable basis.

The FSMP emphasized particularly on conservation of the remaining natural forests, empowering people and rural communities to manage and protect multiple use forests, build partnerships in forestry development activities, develop home gardens and other agro-forestry systems and forest plantations to meet the people's forestry needs, develop policies and legal reforms and to develop and strengthen forestry institutions both government and non government.

It is interesting to note that the government has taken action to implement the FSMP and the necessary institutional changes have been effected. Forest Resources Management Project funded by the Asian Development Bank is supporting the implementation of FSMP. The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources has already taken action, in October 2008, to amend the existing Forest Ordinance for the successful implementation of the National Forestry Policy and the Forestry Sector Master Plan. There is a growing awareness in Sri Lanka that environmental considerations must be taken into account in all spheres of economic development, and the co-operation and involvement of all sectors is an essential factor to achieve sustainable environmental development. The name of the Ministry of Forestry and Environment had been changed to this Ministry of Environment and Natural resources in 2001 considering on natural resources of the country. The Ministry has formulated its National Environment Policy (NEP) in 2003 which is now being implemented. This policy acknowledges the duty of all persons living in Sri Lanka, as set out in the Constitution of Sri Lanka "to protect and conserve its riches".

The NEP renews the commitment of government in partnership with the people, to effectively manage the environment for the benefit of present and future generations. The aim of this policy is to ensure sound environmental management within a framework of sustainable development in Sri Lanka. The NEP emphasizes that caring for the environment is the bounden duty of any institution, government or non governmental organization and of any individual that uses or otherwise carries out an activity that has an impact on the resources of the environment. A copy of the NEP of 2003 is given in Annex 11.

The Ministry has also formulated an action plan titled "Caring for the environment (CFE) 2003-2007 path to sustainable development for the purpose of implementation of the National Environmental policy. During the course of implementation of the NEP and the CFE, the following environment related policies also have been formulated.

1. National policy on watershed management with a set of strategies and actions.
2. National policy on wetlands management with a set of strategies and actions.
3. National policy on cleaner production in relation to industrial development
4. National policy on Clean Development Mechanism
5. National policy on Eco-tourism.

### **The Way Forward**

The National Forest Policy (NFP) of 1995 and Forestry Sector Master Plan (FSMP) of 1995 have widely addressed all issues relating to the forestry sector of the country. Though the policy and strategies have strongly covered the forest sector development, implementation of policies is not up to the expected level. Had the institutions involved in the forestry sector performed effectively much more results would have been achieved. There is a need to further strengthen the forestry related institutions in the future. However, it is important to note that a sharp decrease of forest cover has been controlled due to the above mentioned policy and strategies. The Forest Department has played an important role in this regard.

With regard to legal aspects it is encouraging to note that the Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources has taken a meaningful step to amend the Forest Ordinance to implement the National Forest Policy and the Forestry sector Master Plan. Along with this the ministry must take action to strengthen



forestry related government and non-government agencies to ensure effective implementation of policies and plans.

The National Environment Policy (NFP) of 2003 and the Caring for the Environment (CPE) path to sustainable development of 2003 have also widely covered the areas of existing environmental issues. However, agencies responsible for implementation of such policies and programs have not effectively performed their roles and as a result environmental degradation is yet a serious problem in this country.

It is appreciated that the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources is taking correct actions in the legal and institutional sphere to ensure implementation of the above policies and action plans. Reactivation of the Committee on Environmental policy and Management (CEPOM), and Committee Integrating Environment and Development Policies (CIEDP) is very essential to ensure effective implementation of NFP and NEP.

A strong political commitment related to protecting the environment is one of the major requirements which is not adequate at present. Therefore there should be a strong public voice to obtain political commitment to protect the environment. It is extremely important that line ministries and agencies, NGOs, private sector and the general public also play their role as envisaged in these policies.

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## Annex I

### The National Forestry Policy of 1995

#### 1. Policy Objectives

- 1.1 To conserve forests for posterity, with particular regard to biodiversity, soils, water, and historical, cultural, religious and aesthetic values.

- 1.2 To increase the tree cover and productivity of the forests to meet the needs of present and future generations for forest products and services.
- 1.3 To enhance the contribution of forestry to the welfare of the rural population, and strengthen the national economy, with special attention paid to equity in economic development.

## **2. Policy on management of state forest resources**

- 2.1 All state forest resources will be brought under sustainable management both in terms of the continued existence of important ecosystems and the flow of forest products and services.
- 2.2 The traditional rights, cultural values, and religious beliefs of people living within or adjacent to forest areas will be recognized and respected.
- 2.3 The natural forests will be allocated firstly for conservation, and secondly for regulated multiple-use production forestry.
- 2.4 For the management and protection of the natural forests and forest plantations, the state will, where appropriate, form partnerships with local people, rural communities and other stakeholders, and introduce appropriate tenurial arrangements.
- 2.5 The establishment and management of industrial forest plantations on the state lands will be entrusted progressively to local people, rural communities industries and other private bodies, in pace with institutionalizing effective environmental safeguards.
- 2.6 Degraded forest land will be rehabilitated as forest for conservation and multiple-use production, where it is economically and technically feasible, mainly for the benefit of local people.
- 2.7 Planned conversion of forests into other land uses can take place only in accordance with procedures defined in legislation and with accepted conservation and scientific norms.

## **3. Policy on management of private forest and tree resources**

- 3.1 Tree growing on homesteads, and other agro forestry, will be promoted as a main strategy to supply wood and other forest products for meeting household and market needs.
- 3.2 The establishment, management, and harvesting of industrial forest plantations by local people, communities, industries, and others in the private sector will be promoted.
- 3.3 The state will promote tree growing by local people, rural communities, NGOs, and other non-state sector bodies for the protection of environmentally sensitive areas.

## **4. Policy on wood and non-wood forest products, industries and marketing**

- 4.1 Greater responsibility will be given to local people, organized groups, cooperatives, industries, and other private bodies, in commercial forest production, industrial manufacturing, and marketing.
- 4.2 Efficient forest products utilization, development of competitive forest industries based on sustainable wood sources, and manufacture of value-added forest products will be promoted.
- 4.3 The state will facilitate the harvesting and transport of forest products grown on private lands.
- 4.4. Effective measures to protect the forests and prevent illegal trade in wood, non-wood forest products and in endangered species of flora and fauna will be instituted.

## **5. Policy on institutional support for forestry development**

- 5.1 The National Forestry Policy will be kept up to date and implemented in a participatory and transparent manner.
- 5.2 Legislation will be amended or revised, as necessary, to support the implementation of the policy.
- 5.3 The state will provide full support to the various resource managers for sustainable forestry development, and its institutions will be reoriented and strengthened to enable them to accomplish their role.
- 5.4 The state will coordinate, carry out and promote research that pays attention to the requirements of beneficiaries and supports the implementation of the sectoral policy.

5.5 NGOs and community-based organizations will be supported in their forest-based rural development activities.

## **6. Policy on intersectoral linkages**

6.1 The National Forestry Policy and other sectoral policies will be kept consistent with each other.

6.2 Efficient use of scarce forest products and their substitution by other materials will be promoted.

6.3 Nature based tourism will be promoted to the extent that it does not damage the ecosystems and insofar as it provides benefits to the local population.

6.4 Urban forests and greenery will be developed and maintained.

6.5 The general public and industries will be educated about the importance of forestry, and of conserving biodiversity and protecting watersheds.

## **7. Policy on international forest-related convention**

7.1 The state will observe international forest-related conventions and principles that have been agreed to by Sri Lanka.

## *Annex II*

### **The National Environmental Policy of 2003**

#### **Objectives**

1. To promote the sound management of Sri Lanka's environment in its entirety without compromise, balancing the needs for social and economic development and environmental integrity, to the maximum extent possible while restricting inimical activities.
2. To manage the environment by linking together the activities, interests and perspectives of all groups, including the people, non-government organizations and government at both the central and the local levels.
3. To assure environmental accountability.

#### **Principles**

1. The guiding principles of environmental management will be "the polluter pays" and the need to reduce consumption, and recycle and reuse materials to the maximum extent possible.
2. When living natural resources are used, it will be ensured that such use is wise, sustainable, and consistent with the integrity of ecosystems and evolutionary processes.
3. When non-living resources are used, it will be ensured that such use is consistent with environmental best-practice, bearing in mind the need to provide also for future generations.
4. Traditional knowledge and practices will be respected in the development of environmental management systems.
5. Effective governance will be ensured through the decentralization of environmental management services to the maximum possible extent.

#### **Statements**

1. Resources such as land, water, air, minerals and biodiversity will be managed in a manner consistent with the viability of ecological processes.
2. Environmental management will be through participatory, transparent, predictable and accountable decision-making processes at all levels.
3. In addition to protecting the environment from abuse, management systems will take into account the need to restore environments damaged in the past.

4. Environmental management systems will be encouraged to be flexible so as to adapt to changing situations (e.g. climate change, invasive species and living genetically-modified organisms) and adopt the Precautionary Principle.
5. The economic value of environmental services will be recognized so as to assure the sustainability of such services for the benefit of the people.
6. The state of the environment will continuously be assessed and reported on through an appropriate institutionalized monitoring framework based on a comprehensive set of indicators.
7. The institutional framework for sound environmental management will be strengthened through capacity-building, legislative instruments and improved inter-institutional coordination and linkages.
8. "Life cycle" and 'cleaner production' principles will be applied to improve the efficiency of natural resource use and to improve environmental quality.
9. Responsible public-private and community partnerships and linkages will be promoted at all levels of environmental management and conservation.
10. Education at all levels, together with research, will be promoted in a manner designed to increase the level of awareness of all aspects of the environment and its care and management among all stakeholders.
11. Socially responsible behaviours will be encouraged and further developed through an effective framework of awareness building, incentives and enforcement.
12. International commitments will be honoured as part of our responsibility to the national and global communities.