

# Sri Lanka Water Partnership

## January – June 2011

**Names of individuals conducting assessment.** Ranjith Ratnayake. Kusum Athukorala

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### **Goal I: Promote Water as Key Part of Sustainable Development**

**Activity 1.** Water Related Disasters- Landslides, Impact on Human Settlements. SLWP and NBRO organized a workshop on the above on 1<sup>st</sup> March to review policies, processes and operational rules in place to respond to increase frequency of landslides. The new clearance processes for settlement planning in landslide prone regions that have been identified with new regulations in place and role of the National Building Research Organization (NBRO) as the regulator and clearance authority was discussed. While regulatory processes were now clear there was still need for coordination among many state organizations such as the Road Development Authority (RDA) as vertical cuts on hillsides in landslide prone areas when roads were developed or improved were subject to road slips and danger to road users and adjacent infrastructure. Overall national physical planning and allocation and use of land for agriculture, settlement and urban needs had to be integrated to consider the fragile nature of some areas of the central highlands

**Output/ Outcome.** There is now improved communication among state agencies and local authorities in land use practices in landslide prone areas. Increasing population and urbanization was resulting in marginally safe lands being put to use. There was need to raise both social and political consciousness on need for mitigation and prevention rather than disaster coping which had high social and economic cost. Media needed to be brought on board as a partner for extended outreach and this is planned for as the next activity.

**Activity .2** Sri Lanka was one of 3 countries in South Asia identified for Survey for Rio+20. Level 1 Survey on Policy issues with respect to Water Resources was undertaken by the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources while the Level 2 Survey was undertaken by SLWP through a Consultant. Level 1 and Level 2 Survey Reports are complete and have been shared with GWPO and UN Water.

**Output/ Outcome.** Lack of a umbrella overarching comprehensive policy on water resources stalemated by lack of political commitment and objections by some has resulted in some sub sectors determining policies that impinge on water resources management in an integrated manner . For example there are separate Drinking and Rainwater policies and increasingly environmental policies and laws are attempting to regulate areas of water resources concern through environmental control regulation in the absence of a clear Water policy. And this has some negative effects and resulted in more controls and protection and control regulation rather than management and conservation for sustainability with development.

Nevertheless the World Bank assisted Dam Safety and Water Resources Planning project has attempted to set sector priorities (drinking water) and set up institutional arrangements for sub sector coordination, mitigating to some extent the lack of an overarching policy for water.

**Activity 3.** SACOSAN Activity. South Asia Regional Conference on Sanitation had both policy/institutional and capacity Building elements. The National Water Supply and Drainage Board (NWSDB) and SLWP worked closely on this activity which culminated with the regional workshop in early April. SLWP served on the Steering Committee for this event. SLWP undertook 2 School Sanitation Surveys in Southern and Central Provinces to secure data for its evidenced based Advocacy programme to influence school sanitation and institutional arrangements for health sanitation. This activity was preceded by a provincial SACOSAN awareness programme in February in the Central Province organized jointly by SLWP and NWSDB.

**Output/ Outcome.** SLWP survey findings have helped in identifying policy changes with regard to school sanitation now being taken up with the education authorities. This is also being considered by the NWSDB in its health sanitation development programme. SLWP work on this aspect was specifically included in the Hon Ministers address to the conference participants. (Also Goal 3)

## **Goal II: Coping with Critical Water Challenges through Partnerships to Secure Mutual Goals**

**Activity 1.** SLWP and Network of Women Water Professionals (NetWwater) took the lead role in organizing the Regional Conference on Water Security and Climate Change- Challenge for South Asia Women in Colombo in February. It was a collaborative effort of SLWP, NetWwater, SaciWATERs and IWMI. The First lady was the chief guest at this event at which over 60 participants attended

**Output/ Outcome.** The workshop highlighted the importance of the role of women in CCA. It enabled Sri Lankan and regional water professionals to interact and share experiences and understandings on the role of women in relation to water security and climate change.

**Activity 2.** SLWP actively supported the GWP TEC/IWMI and GWP SAS Workshop on Climate Change, Food and Water Security that was held in Colombo in February at which over Regional and global participant including many CC Experts and Donors participated. Chair SLWP the Country Coordinator and Dr Ranjith Premalal De Silva from the Post Graduate Institute of Agriculture and a co author of a Drought Management Policy for Sri Lanka participated.

**Output/ Outcome.** SLWP has been in the forefront of organizing many disaster related and CCA focused workshops both at provincial and national level and have also targeted specific groups such as women and school children.

A series of preceding collaborative efforts with the Department of Meteorology, Disaster Management Centre and the Ministry of Disaster Management in 2010 and the holding of the Regional Integrated Drought Management (RIDM) Workshop in Colombo on in July 2010 has helped in many ways to clarify approaches to climate change and adaptation issues. The Drought Management Policy now in its final stages is likely to consider and incorporate many of the deliberations and suggestions that were made at these forums. This workshop has specifically identified the setting up of a Virtual Platform on CCA for SAS that will enable knowledge to be shared and issues discussed. SLWP and other CWP in the region would be able to link on these issues and best practices once established.

**Activity 3.** Maha Oya and Menik Ganga AWP organized a series of activities to promote IWRM in their respective Basins. In Maha oya a programme for identifying/establishing a medicinal plant nursery and bank restoration programme through replanting was undertaken in March and April/May. One activity was linked to world water day and the others were follow up programmes. Replanting both of reservations and vulnerable banks in the source area and down stream, including setting up of areas for planting of medicinal plants, will be undertaken as continuing activity. River pollution by commercial and industrial establishments in the town ship as an issue will be undertaken in the next phase as a part of the river improvement programme in collaboration with the local chambers, In Menik ganga the AWP is actively involved in ensuing through the divisional and district committees established that the water supply to Kataragama (town) and for agricultural needs are safeguarded from over exploitation by those upstream.

**Output/ Outcome.** Regular interventions by the AWP ensure Community awareness and commitment to safeguarding river resources and in pollution mitigation activities. There is now a closer interaction between the agencies ,local authority and CBO in which the AWP play a major role. In Deduru Oya a vist was organized by the AWP to have school children visit an area of the river that was subject to severe illicit sand mining ,now being gradually restored due to public interest and commitment catalyzed by the AWP as an example to be followed in other sections needing rehabilitation and restoration.

**Activity 4** Water quality and health issues were the subject of a workshop organized by MASL/ DSWRP and SLWP at Kalawewa in the NCP, a province where issue of water both surface(waterways) and ground was contaminated with agro chemicals and heavy metals were taking a heavy toll of the local population. The Workshop held on 9<sup>th</sup> June had 49 participants from agencies, NGO/CBO , volunteer groups and interested public. Issues of point source and non point source pollution, safeguards and management practices were discussed. This is a follw up activity to ones held for schools earlier in the NCP.

**Output/ Outcome.** The community is gradually being made aware that poor environmental behavior is resulting in major health hazards. This programme needs to be mounted on a wider scale to highlight the issues involved and changes to behavior needed to avoid and mitigate this severe health hazard.

### **Goal III: Reinforce Knowledge Sharing and Communications, Capacity Building**

**Activity 1** World Water Day celebrations centered on sanitation in view of SACOSAN due to be held in Sri Lanka in Aril. Two surveys were undertaken to study status of school sanitation in two districts in the Southern and Central Provinces by SLWP. The SLWP Schools Programme *Sisu Jala Hamuwa* was held in Matara and Kandy to coincide with WWD.

The programme in Kandy at the Nugawela Balika Vidyalaya which included support by way of a rain water harvesting tank for toilet maintenance and for vegetable gardening activities as a pilot was very successful and was the site selected for the field visit by SACOSAN participants to Sri Lanka

**Output/ Outcome.** The School and its Parent Teacher Association contributed to this activity. A toilet and sanitation culture was instilled and a maintenance regime to be operated and monitored by the school has resulted in a well maintained toilet system and a flourishing vegetable/flower garden.

**Activity 2.** Media Training for SACOSAN. SLWP and the South Asian Women in Media 9 SAWM) carried out a pre SACOSAN media training on Reporting Water and Sanitation Matters for 25 Media Persons in March. NWSDB and UNICEF supported this activity through resource persons. A field visit was arranged to a underserved urban community where upgraded sewerage systems are being installed through cost sharing by the community. An O&M fee will be levied under the programme for supporting maintenance cost.

**Output/ Outcome** Media play an important role in carrying messages to the community. This orientation was to enable them to report effectively not only on SACOSAN but on water/ sanitation/health issues. It also offered exposure to a community supported sewerage programme where costs were partly being met by the local community as seen in many community water supply projects that benefited a change from the usual dependence on the state for such services.

**Activity 3.** A school sanitation booklet sponsored by a partner Brandix Limited and a poster was printed in Sinhala for distribution to the schools where the survey was undertaken and for use in the SLWP Schools Programme. Printing of the boo let in Tamil with support from CAPNET Lanka and NWSDB is expected to increase outreach. SLWP had a stall at the SACOSAN Exhibition in Colombo which highlighted= its work both on IWRM and health/sanitation.

Printed material including booklets and posters and the exhibition has helped SLWP to reach and influence a larger audience than it would have through small group capacity building and awareness programmes. Significant changes with respect to health sanitation issues both in the school children, teachers and education authorities is noted. School sanitation which had low priority and little investment by the authorities are now being given adequate priority and is on the high concern agenda both of the education authorities and local politicians.

**Activity 4.** Street Drama Training. SLWP and the Maha Oya AWP arranged a Street Drama Training Programme for youth and school children from Mawanella and 2 schools In Kandy. 30 participants were trained in street drama structure, design and techniques by a well known dramatist and choreographer Prof Prasanna Mahagama. Focus of training was to convey messages on health/sanitation to local communities. A short video of the training has been developed for use for TOT later.

**Output/ Outcome** Street Drama is an effective message carrier through which sensitive and even culturally frowned on topics can be discussed/portrayed without embarrassment. SLWP had effective experience earlier with RSM and school sanitation in Western Province SLWP will shortly have one or two trained groups for carrying out its programme with expansion to other areas later.

#### **Goal IV: Build a More Effective Network**

**Activity1** One Steering Committee Meeting and 5 Programme Committee Meetings have been held up to June this year. AWP established are being strengthened, but no new ones will be established due to funding and follow up capacity issues. A further 3 New Partners- the Girl Guides Association, Environmental Foundation and Ministry of Disaster Management joined as Partners.

**Output/ Outcome** SLWP Programme on track. Unable yet to move on Comprehensive Water Policy due to apathy by state on this. Operating to impact by working on “hot topics” such as floods, droughts, landslides, climate change, river sand mining, pollution etc. Major activity with Schools, AWP and collaborating partners.