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The New Standard

For sustainable business and conservation in Sri Lanka



Convention on
Biological Diversity



BIODIVERSITY SRI LANKA

A Member of the Global Partnership on Business and Biodiversity of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
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MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY; SUSTAINING PEOPLE AND LIVELIHOODS

International Biodiversity Day (IBD)

The United Nations proclaimed International Biodiversity Day to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. IBD was an outcome of the 1992 "Earth Summit", held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and an important agreement reached during this 1992 Earth Summit was the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The CBD came into force on December 29, 1993, and each anniversary of this date was designated the International Day for Biological Diversity. From 2001 onwards the date of this celebration was moved to May 22 due to the number of holidays that fell in late

From the Editors

The 22nd of May each year is the UN declared day for the celebration of biodiversity world-over. Through this edition, we are happy to celebrate the International Biodiversity Day with you! As Sri Lanka aspires for the status of a higher middle-income country in the next few years, and looks towards an increased growth trajectory, balancing development needs in parallel with maintaining the delicate ecological balance of the country's natural environment remains crucial. Thus, this year's theme '**Mainstreaming Biodiversity; Sustaining People and Livelihoods**' is aptly relevant to the country's long term sustainable development agenda.

This issue of The New Standard (TNS) focusses on the importance of biodiversity in our island nation, ensuring the enrichment and sustainability of those that depend on it. We feature Dr Donald Macintosh, a leading global figure in this field in our Expert Q&A segment. Dr Macintosh was our invited keynote speaker at BSL's flagship event to celebrate the International Biodiversity Day which was held on 19th May 2016. Whilst giving you a glimpse at the projects carried out by our members on biodiversity and sustaining livelihoods, our special feature gives you a look into 'Kantala' - an ethical artisanal fashion brand which enriches livelihoods through the sustainable use of natural resources.

Expert Q&A

Dr Don Macintosh has more than 35 years of experiences working on mangrove ecosystem management and related coastal conservation and development, especially sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. Dr Macintosh was Danida Professor in Environment and Development at the University of Aarhus in Denmark, where he was also Director of the Centre for Tropical Ecosystems Research (cenTER Aarhus). Dr Macintosh currently serves as Senior Advisor to Mangroves for the Future MFF and has also provided advice to several other coastal development projects in Asia managed by IUCN.



1." Biodiversity is the foundation for life and for the essential services provided by ecosystems" Can you explain this statement for the benefit of our reader?

All the benefits we derive from nature are generated by eco system goods and services: whether they be direct products like fish from the sea or wood from the forests; or indirect services like purifying water or preventing soil erosion. Every species of plant, animal and microbe, however apparently insignificant, has a role in how ecosystems function. There are perhaps more than 10 million species globally, yet only around 1.5 million have been described; in other words at least 85% of all species still remain unknown.

We, hope you enjoy reading this edition and encourage you to let us know your thoughts/comments/questions by writing to us at info@biodiversitysri Lanka.org.

"I can't imagine anything more important than air, water, soil, energy and biodiversity. These are the things that keep us alive" -David Suzuki

Biodiversity Sri Lanka Secretariat

Shiranee Yasaratne
Sherani Ruberu

Suranthi Boange
A.M Rasheed

Expert Q & A contd....

2. It is also stated that biodiversity underpins peoples' livelihoods and sustainable development in all areas of activity be it agriculture, forestry, fisheries or tourism – Can you give us your experience.

About 40% of the global economy and 80% of the needs of the world's poorest people are provided by biological resources. Sustainable economic development is intrinsically dependent on maintaining ecosystem services, and biodiversity is essential for ecosystem health and stability. The conversion of forests to agriculture and over-fishing have seriously depleted biodiversity in many developing countries – with great detriment to the livelihoods of traditional forest and fishery communities. Conversely, there are examples where conserving the health and biodiversity of coral reefs and mangrove forests is generating significant new sources of income for such communities from nature-based tourism.

3. By halting biodiversity loss, we are investing in people, their lives and their well-being. Please give us some examples and your views on this

By safeguarding biodiversity we increase the opportunities to make new medical discoveries. For example, more than half of all cancer-fighting drugs have been derived from Nature. Tropical rainforests and coral reefs contain thousands of species that have yet to be screened for potentially valuable drugs or other chemicals. Biodiversity is also a great asset in our ability to adapt to climate change, since some species of plants and animals have greater adaptive capacities than other species. And as more and more of the world's human population become urban, so the value of biodiversity to human well-being is increasing. City-dwellers now increasingly seek out nature for recreation, tourism and aesthetic reasons to improve their quality of life.

4. In what way can the private sector contribute to mainstreaming biodiversity in their activities?

It is important that the private sector moves beyond CSR and actually integrates ecologically sound practices into their business models.

Habitat conservation is the prime requirement for protecting biodiversity and therefore the private sector can help to minimize habitat conversion or degradation. This can be achieved by better site selection for commercial infrastructure like factories and hotels. Businesses can also eliminate over-exploitation of living resources; and reduce pollution by better recycling of solid waste and treatment of wastewater. Such practices are not only good for the environment and biodiversity, but they can also make good business sense. Consumer demand for sustainably sourced forest and fishery products, and for organically produced foodstuffs (such as organic tea in Sri Lanka), are the outstanding examples of how the private sector is already mainstreaming biodiversity and the concept of "green growth".

5. How does Mangroves for the Future mainstream biodiversity in order to sustain people and their livelihoods and what support can be accorded to the private sector?

Recognizing that coastal ecosystems like coral reefs and mangrove forests support many unique plant and animal species, Mangroves for the Future (MFF) mainstreams biodiversity by adopting an ecosystem-based approach in all its projects. However, while mangrove restoration and coral reef protection are important activities in many MFF-financed projects, they are combined whenever possible with opportunities to develop alternative livelihoods for the people who are most dependent on coastal resources. In other words, an economic incentive is usually needed to underpin biodiversity conservation efforts at the local level. As an important partner in sustainable development in coastal areas, the private sector can access technical advice from MFF, especially guidance on making its business practices more environmentally sustainable.

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Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development

Bill Adams looks at development in the field of biodiversity conservation, an area where success stories are often rivalled with news of extinctions, but also an area where tackling isolated issues of protection has moved to an understanding of biodiversity's integral importance to sustainable development.

Following the World Parks Congress in Durban in 2003, the Director General of IUCN, Achim Steiner, spoke of the need to see protected areas not as 'islands of protection in an ocean of destruction', but as 'the building blocks of biodiversity in an ocean of sustainable human development, with their benefits extending far beyond their physical boundaries'[i]. That link between biodiversity and sustainability had long roots: indeed, sustainable development was put forward as a concept partly as a means of promoting nature conservation.

The rise of conservation concerns

The word 'biodiversity' is new, of course, coined in the 1980s, but under various labels, wildlife or nature conservation was an important element in environmentalism through the twentieth century.

For much of that time, the conservation of species was seen as something that required control of particular activities, such as hunting or fishing, by making regulations and setting aside land in protected areas. In the years after the second world war, as European colonial empires crumbled and were replaced by a world of aspiring developing countries, conservationists began to realise that such piecemeal was not enough.

Understanding conservation and development

By the 1960s understanding was growing that development itself had serious ecological impacts. The problem was discussed at a conference on 'the ecological aspects of international development', held in Virginia in 1968.

Its proceedings were published in 1973 as *The Careless Technology: ecology and international development*. In the same year, IUCN and the Conservation Foundation published guidelines for development planners, *Ecological Principles for Economic Development*.

Developing international conservation strategies

In 1975 IUCN joined UNEP, UNESCO, and FAO in an 'Ecosystem Conservation Group' to develop a strategy for nature conservation. Early drafts were quite tightly focused on wildlife conservation, but on publication in 1982, the World Conservation Strategy proved more broadly focused. It argued that development could be made 'a major means of achieving conservation, rather than an obstruction to it'. Three objectives for conservation were identified, the maintenance of 'essential ecological processes and life-support systems' (food production, health, and other aspects of human survival and sustainable development) and the ecosystems on which they depended, the preservation of genetic diversity (both in wild and domestic species) and the sustainable utilization of species and ecosystems (fisheries, harvested wild species, forests and grazing land).

Conserving nature, harnessing biotechnology and exploiting natural resources?

The main focus of wildlife conservationists at the Rio Conference in 1992 was the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Its roots went back long before preparations for the Rio Conference began – debate about the need for an international convention to preserve global biodiversity had been hot in IUCN, WWF, UNEP and other organisations since the mid-1980s.

Early drafts of the Convention reflected conservationist concerns about biodiversity loss. However, by 1992 the issues of bioprospecting and the exploitation of genetic resources through biotechnology had come to prominence, and the eventual Convention combined provisions for biodiversity conservation with the issue of benefit sharing from commercial exploitation of genetic resources. The Convention, signed by 156 countries at the Rio Conference, was therefore a slightly awkward marriage between conservation concerns and novel issues of biotechnology, held together by the new term 'biodiversity'. Signatory nations committed themselves to the development of strategies for conserving biological diversity, and for making its use sustainable.

Since 1992, the CBD has become the main forum for international debate about biodiversity and development. The news has mostly not been good. The 6th meeting of the CBD Conference of the Parties in April 2002 adopted a strategic plan committing Parties to achieve, by 2010, a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level. The 2010 meeting in Aichi noted that the '2010 targets' had not been met, and set new ones, variously extending to 2015 or 2020.

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You have human beings... you need to take one tsunami capsule daily, two 8.0 earthquake tablets, and all of this under a strict dry regimen...



<https://conservationbytes.com/>

Member Focus:



CJS solutions to Sri Lanka's Human- Elephant Conflict

The Wasgamuwa National Park famed for its Wild Asian Elephants, Elephants from the reserve at times access water and food from an irrigation tank located outside the reserve through an elephant corridor. Over the years this has resulted in crops and homes destroyed by elephants and violent retaliation by villagers resulting in significant reduction of the elephant population at the reserve. In

In December 2014, Colombo Jewellery Stores in partnership with the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society, began the 'Unforgettable' campaign aimed at saving elephants in the wild when CJS Brand Ambassador Jacqueline Fernandez, joined CJS Chairman Akram Cassim, Ravi Corea (SLWCS) and the villagers to walk the elephant corridor at the Pussellayaya and Weheragalagama villages in Wasgamuwa. These surrounds are home to about 350 elephants and CJS embarked on a passionate initiative to seek a sustainable solution that would moot a cohesive tolerance to encourage co-existence.

In March 2016 CJS along with the Sri Lanka Wild life Conservation Society presented a 24 seater ele-friendly bus for the use of the villagers of Wasgamuwa who live within the elephant corridor for their own safety and passage across the corridor devoid of the danger of elephants. The bus will buffer school children, farmers and pedestrians from elephants and vice versa, providing safe transportation on the busy rural roadway which transects one of the region's most important ancient elephant corridors."

CJS also supported and sponsored 'Sri Lankan Elephant 2016'- a trilingual travelling and awareness and education program that was exhibited around the island, organized by the Federation of Environmental Organization.



CJS and villagers walk along the Elephant Corridor

Member Focus:



Dilmah Conservation Promotes Cashew as a Sustainable Cash Crop for Batticaloa District

The Batticaloa district of Sri Lanka, has seen a major reduction in forest cover over the last century. The devastation left behind by a cyclone in 1978 and the Asian Tsunami in 2004, have resulted in considerable damage to the district's socio-economic fabric, ecosystems and vegetation. Unsustainable deforestation practices have served to exacerbate this damage and contributes to the extreme weather conditions experienced locally such as floods, droughts and excessive heat. Consequently, the local economy which is dependent on agriculture and fishing has floundered.

Pioneering towards improving green cover, mitigating detrimental impacts of deforestation, resolving harsh climatic conditions and interlinked livelihood difficulties, and economically empowering local communities in Batticaloa, Dilmah Conservation (DC) undertook the annual planting of 50,000 cashew plants within the district. The cashew plant is an attractive cash crop and can be used as a substantial source of income by rural communities. Land owners are also encouraged to plant other cash crops such as manioc and green bean in order to generate income during off-seasons.

With Technical support from the Sri Lanka Cashew Corporation as well as the Sri Lanka Army, who distribute plants and maintain nurseries, DC has planted 250,000 cashew plants over the period of 2010-2015 and plans to plant 500,000 trees by the end of 2016.



A project beneficiary tending his thriving cashew plants



DC funded cashew nursery at Wakarai Army Camp

Member Focus:



Tokyo Cement revitalizing mangroves in Trincomalee

Tokyo Cement along with the Sri Lanka Navy has launched the Mangrove Project which is revitalizing the coastline of Sri Lanka. The project has currently seen the planting of 25000 saplings since its inception in 2012.

Due to the destruction of mangroves by both natural and manmade causes, the project aimed to replenish this within one year. A mangrove sapling nursery in Trincomalee which is managed by Tokyo Cement is replanted in the east coast by the Sri Lanka Navy with the help of the greater community that has worked to make this a resounding success. This has also been monitored by a doctoral student of marine biology from the University of Peradeniya. With the successful replanting of 20 acres, SL navy continues to plant mangroves along the east coast which are produced in the Tokyo Cement mangrove nursery.

Mangroves are essentially the lifeblood of the coast, creating a safe haven for not only 400 species of marine life and endemic animals but also the island itself by trapping the sediment which would otherwise be washed out to sea. Effective buffers against erosion, the mangroves are a hive of activity from crustaceans and baby fish to migratory birds living amidst the brackish water that signals the merger of land and sea.

The replanting of the mangroves has been a boon to the fishing community who rely on it as a source of income. As a natural nursery to most species of fish, they ensure that the ocean and the surrounding waterways teem with life. Research shows that there is 25 percent more marine life within mangroves compared to areas that are bare. Apart from the fisheries industry, local communities use trees in various crafts as well as boosting ecotourism which is now sought after by more and more travelers. Tokyo cement not only undertook the task of rebuilding these fragile bio-networks but also in bringing together the community and the next generation in understanding their role in conservation.

Tokyo Cement along with the unstinted support from the Sri Lanka Navy hopes that this is just the start of the conservation of our precious coastal treasures and will continue to create and protect Sri Lanka's mangroves.



Navy Officer at Work Planting Mangroves

Member Focus:



HSBC helping to conserve and restore the Knuckles Conservation Forest

In 2015, HSBC, together with Biodiversity Sri Lanka and IUCN undertook a three- year project aimed at conserving and restoring the Knuckles Conservation Forest and the mini-watershed of Puwakpitiya Oya.

The Knuckles Conservation Forest makes up one third of the Central Highland World Heritage site. Declared a conservation forest by the Forest Department in 2000 and an Environmental Protection Area under the National Environmental Act in 2007, the Knuckles area constitutes 30 per cent of the watershed forest of the Mahaweli catchment - a major source of water for the agricultural sector of the country. The forest provides vital watershed services and important socio-economic development in downstream areas.

The area records a very high and distinct biodiversity. This includes over 1033 species of plants with 15% of them being endemic. Apart from the flora, the region holds a staggering 247 species of vertebrates of which more than a quarter of them are endemic to Sri Lanka with a similar proportion being considered as threatened. However, some of its vital areas have undergone degradation, mainly due to anthropogenic activity. These include encroachment, illegal logging, clearing, tea planting and cardamom cultivation. Apart from these activities, natural causes have also played their role.

This project aims to restore the Puwakpitiya mini watershed in the Knuckles region to conserve biodiversity, maintain watershed services and increase its resilience to climate change for the benefit of local communities, agriculture and local economy. In order to do so, much of the project involves awareness events targeting communities, officials and children on biodiversity conservation, ecological agriculture and sanitation, introducing economically and ecologically important crops into home gardens in the area and introducing value addition and market linkages for village products among other activities. By doing so, the project aims to not only restore the watershed and enhance ecosystem services but also reducing dependency of local communities on the forest and promote tourism as a vital conservation tool and sustainable livelihood for local communities.



HSBC-Volunteers at work

Member Focus:



Commercial Bank in Coral Replanting Project at Hikkaduwa National Marine Park

Coral reefs are an important resource for the people of Sri Lanka, offering a number of economic and environmental benefits. The Hikkaduwa Coral reef is a typical shallow fringing reef with an average depth of 5 meters, forming a natural breakwater which helps reduce the coastal erosion. These types of fringing reefs are believed to be the first kind of reefs to form around a landmass.

The live Coral cover at Hikkaduwa is said to have decreased from 47% to 13% since the Coral bleaching event in 1998. The reef suffered another blow in 2004 due to the Tsunami, mostly due to terrestrial debris being deposited on the reefs.

In effort to address this problem, Commercial Bank commenced a project with the Department of Wildlife Conservation to replant the damaged Corals in the scenic Hikkaduwa beach. Commercial Bank's vision for the project is to grow and sustain the Hikkaduwa coral reef.

Project activities entail; Sourcing of concrete blocks suitable for transplanting Corals, Preparation of the base for transplanting, Collection of healthy Coral fragments, Preparing a nursery by connecting healthy Coral fragments to the Coral base, Demarcating and cordoning off the area of the Coral nursery, capturing the entire process by using an under-water camera.



Collecting healthy coral fragments

In the spotlight

Hana plant accessories by 'Kantala'

Kantala is a Sri Lankan inspired ethical fashion and lifestyle accessory brand that supports traditional artisans. The brand – which produces high quality handbags, purses, wallets and travel accessories – leverages on a 300 year old traditional handcraft which is indigenous to one village outside of Kandy, Sri Lanka.

The artisans residing in this rural village produce a handwoven mat, which is made using the fibre harvested from the regrowing plant, hana (Agave cantala). The plant grows in the dry and rocky regions of the country and its leaves continue to regrow until the plant naturally expires. The brand's commitment to the use of such natural materials resonates in its name – Kantala – which is derived from the Sanskrit name of the hana plant.

Kantala is actively experimenting natural dyeing and preservation techniques. While the processes and techniques are being adapted for large scale production, the brand also uses Oeko Tex 100 and ISO 9001:2008 certified reactive dyes – which are both environmental and human friendly dyes.

The rural artisans who carry on this 300 year old handcraft tradition represents part of Sri Lanka's history and cultural identity. Unfortunately, due to economic challenges and lack of market knowledge these artisans are finding it difficult to continue their industry. Kantala is committed to provide these artisans a fair and respectable wage for their work and thereby both secure their immediate financial conditions and also to encourage others to take up this industry.

Achieving World Fair Trade Organisation guarantee and also establishing rural artisan co-operatives which are governed under the principles of the World Fair Trade Organisation are among our top strategic priorities.

Our vision at Kantala is to become "the global fashion house for ethical artisan fashion and lifestyle accessories" and that means staying true to our heritage and protecting our environment through the use of sustainable materials and business practises.

Retail outlets – Trunk Cinnamon Grand, Trunk Ramada Colombo and Selyn Handlooms

Contact:

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Why Sri Lanka is a Biodiversity Hotspot?

Even though Sri Lanka is a small island, its biodiversity is significantly important both in a regional and global scale. Sri Lanka has the highest species density (number of species present per 10,000 sq.km) of flowering plants, amphibians, reptiles and mammals in the Asian region. Furthermore, the wet zone of Sri Lanka along with Western Ghats of India has been declared as one of the 25 "biodiversity hotspots" of the world.

Sri Lanka has been identified as a "biodiversity hotspot" because of two reasons. First, it has very high endemism - a vast majority of plants and animals found in the island are endemic to Sri Lanka. For instance, 100% of the fresh water crabs, 83% of the amphibians, 80% of the land snails, 56% of the reptiles and 55% of the freshwater fish found in Sri Lanka cannot be found anywhere else in the world. A majority of these endemics are restricted to the wet zone of Sri Lanka, where there is very high human density. Pressure on natural ecosystems has pushed many of these species to extinction or to the brink of extinction which is the second reason why Sri Lanka's wet zone has been identified as a "hot spot".

- 122 amphibian species have become extinct in the world during the last 25 years. In Asia alone 38 species have been classified as Extinct in the most recent Red List of which 21 species are endemic to Sri Lanka.

- According to the last Red List, 1 out of 2 frogs, 1 out of 2 mammals, 1 out of 3 fishes, 1 out of 3 reptiles and 1 out of 5 birds are running the risk of extinction in Sri Lanka.

Therefore, the time has come for us to take collective action to preserve our unique natural heritage!

Prof. Devaka Weerakoon- Biodiversity Coordinator- IUCN Sri Lanka

Biodiversity Sri Lanka celebrates International Biodiversity Day

In partnership with the Hatton National Bank and Dilmah Conservation, Biodiversity Sri Lanka celebrated the International Biodiversity Day (IBD) on the 19th of May 2016 at the HNB Auditorium, HNB Towers, Colombo 10, Sri Lanka with a keynote address by Dr. Donald Macintosh on the UN designated theme for 2016 'Mainstreaming Biodiversity; Sustaining People and their Livelihoods'.

Mr. Dilhan Fernando, Chairman of Biodiversity Sri Lanka and Director, Ceylon Tea Services PLC., explaining the significance of the day stated that mainstreaming biodiversity into the core of business is crucial for long term sustainability of business. In the long term this is a lot less expensive than the alternative disastrous consequences that could arise resulting from biodiversity loss and environmental degradation. Therefore early mitigation attempts are crucial, and the role of the private sector cannot be over-emphasized stated Mr. Fernando.

Dr. Donald Macintosh in his keynote address stated that people have to realize the link between biodiversity and eco-systems. By losing habitats we lose biodiversity. Speaking on the importance of forests he stated that, 90% of the world's poorest depend largely on forests for their livelihoods. Emphasizing on the importance of biodiversity towards medicine, he stated that less than 1% of the plants in the world's tropical rainforests have been tested for their medicinal properties, however the tragedy is that more than 100 rainforest species both plants and animals become extinct every single day.

Highlighting the importance of mangrove eco-systems, Dr. Macintosh stated that the loss of even one mangrove species has serious long term implications for the delicate ecological balance of mangroves. This has serious impacts on livelihoods such as fishing and aggravates coastal erosion. Globally mangroves cover 15.2 million hectares and has the richest biological diversity among all eco-systems.

Speaking on the importance of coastal and marine biodiversity Dr. Macintosh stated that, coral reefs and sea grass beds provide primary production and habitat needs of countless marine animal species. Conserving this fragile ecosystem is thus very challenging. This is due to factors such as high levels of exploitation of aquatic species by coastal fishing communities and commercial fisheries and the needs to urbanize and industrialize coastal zones. Consequently, private sector involvement to mitigate these effects are paramount stated Dr. Macintosh.

Dr. Macintosh also spoke on the Eco -System Approach defined as 'a strategy for integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way'. He provided examples on a successful ecosystem approach utilized - the Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) by highlighted several successful PES projects being implemented in Vietnam. Vietnam has a national decree specifying that payment for forest services should apply to the use of water by hydro-electricity companies, tourist services companies bringing tourists to protected areas, and aquaculture businesses. Through this approach schemes such as providing coastal fisherman with market-based incentives to produce organic shrimp and clams on conditions that certain mangrove areas are maintained, providing payments to villagers living adjacent to forests areas for conservation and protection of forests by hydro-power companies etc., have been adopted. In Vietnam with the PES payment system, income from forest protection accounted for 74% of the household income for poor rural families stated Dr. Macintosh.



Dr. Macintosh delivering the key note address

Doubling food production and beating climate change: Restoration of Puliyankulama Tank

IUCN Sri Lanka News Story

The Puliyankulama tank is one of the 22 tanks of the Kapiyiggama tank cascade system in the Rambewa Divisional Secretariat Division of Anuradhapura district in Sri Lanka. It has the capacity to hold 120 Acre-Feet of water and the primary use is to cultivate paddy lands covering 35 acres (14 hectares) supporting over 35 families, approximately 140 community members. Since 2004, the lower bund of the tank helping to hold water had a continuous leak causing a loss of about 50% of its water. The farmers were reluctantly compelled to abandon the Yala season cultivation (starting in April) due to lack of adequate water, adding to the existing poverty level of the families.

IUCN Sri Lanka Country Office with funds from the HSBC Water Programme recognized this during its community consultations. The project; Ecological restoration of Kapiyiggama cascade system of tanks implemented during January 2013 to March 2016 was able to identify and correct the leak in the Puliyankulama Tank as part of its restoration of 18 tanks.

The project mobilized the "Ekamuthu (United) Farmer Organization" of Puliyankulama to take the lead in the restoration of the Puliyankulama tank. Restoration commenced in August 2015 and within three months all the leaks in the tank bund were repaired scientifically enabling the tank to hold water to 100% capacity. IUCN and the Department of Agrarian Development provided technical assistance for this work throughout the process. Representatives of the Farmer Organization were also trained on the efficient use of tank water by IUCN as part of the project.

- Access best practices/case studies in biodiversity conservation within the corporate sector.
- Access national and international conservation priorities.
- Access technical expertise on biodiversity conservation and environmental management.
- Get discounted participation opportunities at subject-related capacity building and awareness programmes.
- Receive collaborative support to organize corporate training on mainstreaming biodiversity considerations in business.
- Access a project bank which can be utilized to achieve core business and CSR objectives of the company.
- Access participation opportunities in pilot and ongoing certification and awards schemes.

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In March 2016, when the restored tank was officially handed over to the community, 14 hectares of paddy cultivated during the Maha season (starting in August) is nearing harvesting. After 12 years, the farmers are confident of cultivating during the upcoming Yala season (starting in April/May 2016) thus doubling the total food production capacity in the community. Expressing his gratitude, Mr K. A. Thilakarathna, President, Ekamuthu Farmer Organization said that in the past 12 years, during the dry season, the community had to travel to other tanks for bathing and washing clothes. Thanks to the repair, they are now able to save about one hour each day spent on travelling to the nearest tank or over 16,000 man hours per month of additional travel time by community members and utilize this time to productive work or to add quality to the family life.

Taking this argument further, if there is one female member in the family, the time saved by female members would be minimum of 4,000 hours per month.

This development support will also help the Puliyankulama community to meet the climate induced droughts that increasingly impacting the area.

Extracted from:

http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/asia/asia_where_work/srilanka/?22697/Doubling-food-production-and-beating-climate-change-

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Biodiversity conservation and poverty

The most interesting issue in debates about sustainability and biodiversity since Rio has been the relationships between conservation and poverty. To this end, biodiversity conservation was linked to the Millennium Development Goals in September 2000: two of the 48 indicators (relevant to Goal 7 'ensure environmental sustainability') are the proportion of land area covered by forest and the amount of land in protected areas. In September 2005, the Secretariats of the five biodiversity conventions argued that biodiversity underpinned all MDGs. Biodiversity could, they suggested, help alleviate hunger and poverty, promote good human health and 'be the basis for ensuring freedom and equity for all. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment argued that ecosystem services underpinning welfare and livelihoods, particularly (although not exclusively) of the poor. Historically, wildlife conservation had an important role in the development of ideas about sustainable development. It has an inextricable element of debate about the future of the biosphere and humanity.

Extracted from: <http://richardsandbrooksplace.org/bill-adams/biodiversity-conservation-and-sustainable-development>