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Inside this issue:

HDR Launch | Second National Partners Retreat | Distributing Citizenship Certificates |

Improving skills of CBOs

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The Uruthirapura East Women's Rural Development Society regains confidence to move forward



A key aspect of UNDP Sri Lanka's work is involving Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in implementing and managing projects. Such activities have not only helped members of CBOs gain knowledge in terms of project management and implementation, but have also been significant in strengthening relationships, trust and understanding between UNDP and the community.

Uruthirapuram East, a village situated in the Karaichchi Division Secretariat Division in Kilinochchi District, was heavily affected by the conflict. Faced with displacement and other challenges, many of the CBOs that were operating in this village prior to the conflict, had halted their activities, and with the end of the conflict, they required reorganization. One such CBO was the Uruthirapuram East Women's Rural Development Society (WRDS). Following the end of the conflict, WRDS members, together with the Divisional Secretary and Rural Development Officer (RDO) of the Karaichchi DSD worked on reforming their organization, and it was subsequently registered under the social services act.

assessment (PNA) conducted by UNDP under the Community Recovery Project (CRP), funded by the European Union (EU), UNDP identified the WRDS of Uruthirapuram as the only CBO that was actively involved in the needs identification and community action planning activities.

As such, following a systematic CBO capacity assessment and the endorsement of the Divisional Secretary, the WRDS of Uruthirapuram was entrusted to partner in a number of livelihood development activities to the value of EUR 20,671 including the construction of a box culvert to the value of EUR 5,523.

Recalling the challenges they faced during the initial stages, S. Uthayathevy, president of the WRDS says that upon being selected as an implementing partner for the construction of a box culvert, villagers had argued as to how a women's society could implement an infrastructure activity, which many saw as typically male-dominated work. She went on to explain that the WRDS members were themselves afraid at first to come forward to implement the project.

involved in implementation of the construction activities. Taking courage from this, other executive members also took part in the activities, especially providing support and guidance when and where necessary. A committee was formed consisting of WRDS members to discuss the financial and physical progress of the project throughout the implementation period. The meetings, held bi-weekly, ensured effective management of the activities.

Looking back, the President stated happily, "the project helped us gain invaluable experiences and also in-depth knowledge on construction and project management and implementation processes through trainings provided by and discussions held with the UNDP infrastructure team. But more than this and most importantly, we were able to gain self-confidence and develop a vision for the future. The WRDS is now confident that we have the ability to implement even bigger infrastructure projects in the future and support our communities towards full socio-economic recovery and development."

During the Participatory Needs Assessment

Yet, she took a lead role and became more

Improving skills of Community Based Organizations

Improving the skills and capacities of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) is crucial to ensure better service delivery and stronger community participation in the development process. Further, it is also essential to strengthen the networking capabilities of these CBOs with Government institutions such as the District Secretariat and Divisional Secretariat to achieve them. As such, UNDP's Local Governance Project (LoGoPro) conducted two symposiums for CBOs operating in the Mullaitivu, Vavuniya, Kilinochchi and Mannar districts with the participation of the respective District Secretaries, Divisional Secretaries and the Field Officers of the Divisions.

The symposiums were aimed at understanding the need and good practices of networking, emphasizing the role of women in development and the need for their participation in decision making and good governance practices, while also strengthening the ability of CBO members to better advocate on behalf of their communities and monitor the quality of local service providers.

A total of 120 participants including 88 members representing 44 CBOs participated

at the first symposium conducted for CBOs in selected divisions in Vavuniya and Mullaivitu, which was held on November 3 and 4. The second symposium held on November 21 and 22 saw the participation of 148 officials including 118 members from 59 CBOs operating in Kilinochchi and Mannar districts. The respective Government Agents, Divisional Secretaries, Rural Development Officers, representatives from UNDP and other intermediary organizations also participated at the event.

With this component of the Local Governance Project drawing to a close this year, all activities of CBOs will be handed over to the Government Authorities. As such, this improved knowledge will ensure CBOs are better able to represent public needs and monitor service delivery.



Human Development Report 2011

UNDP Sri Lanka launches the 2011 Human Development Report (HDR) with review of implications of sustainability and equity on Sri Lanka



The Sri Lanka launch of the 2011 HDR titled, "Sustainability and Equity: A better Future for All," was held on November 22, 2011 at the Auditorium of the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) in the presence of Hon. Anura Priyadarshana Yapa, Minister of Environment.

This year's report focuses on the challenge of sustainable and equitable progress, and shows how environmental degradation intensifies inequality through adverse impacts on already disadvantaged people and how inequalities and human development amplify environmental degradation. The report was launched globally in Copenhagen by UNDP Administrator Helen Clark with Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt. The report ranks Sri Lanka at the 97th position out of 187 countries in terms of human development and first in South Asia. Sri Lanka's Human Development Index (HDI) has progressively increased up to 0.691 in 2011 compared to 0.658 in 2010.

"Sri Lanka has been able to achieve a higher ranking compared to other South Asian countries due to the huge amount of investment in education, health, livelihood development, infrastructure development, water supply and sanitation. The Government is continuously investing in these areas, which will have a positive impact on human development in the country," said the Hon. Minister delivering the keynote address. He added that this year's budget is focused heavily on rural sector development, as this will be significant in achieving equity.

Noting that the Human Development Report will pave the way for better and more sustainable development, he emphasized, "Sri Lanka believes in development in a sustainable manner. We are mindful that whatever we do in development, we want to keep the environment intact."

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Subinay Nandy, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Sri Lanka noted that mitigating environment risks of the future, while ensuring that today's poor are not adversely affected will be a key priority in the future. Sri Lanka has shown a clear commitment to environment sustainability. Yet, he added, "Millennium Development Goal 7 on environment sustainability is probably the most at risk of not being met in many countries including Sri Lanka, particularly due to deforestation that is underway." As such, there is a need for different stakeholders to unite for Sri Lanka's future, he added.

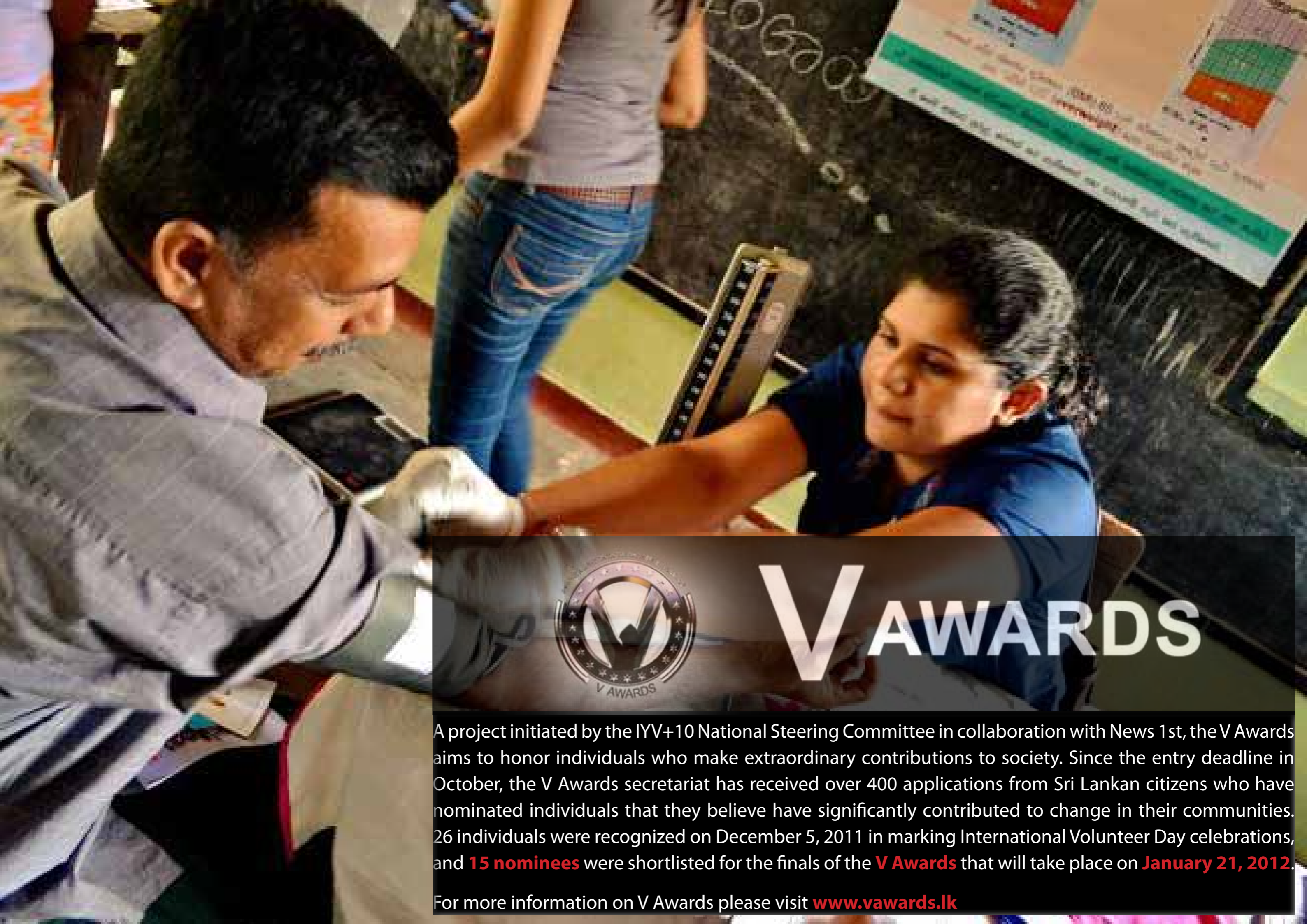
Elaborating on the significance of the report, he noted that it comes at a crucial juncture with world leaders preparing for the UNFCCC Climate Change Conference in Durban, South Africa from November 29 to December 9 this year and the Rio+20 Summit in June 2012, both of which will provide an opportunity for the world community to put sustainability and equity concerns at the heart of the post-2015 international development agenda.

In his introduction to the report, Mr. Douglas Keh, Country Director of UNDP, highlighted the link between equity and sustainability. "They do create certain policy dilemmas for governments, but it's not an insuperable problem," he said, noting that in most cases the most disadvantaged people will bear the repercussions of environmental deterioration, even if they contribute little to the problem, and as such innovate responses and major investments are needed.

Dr. B. M. S. Batagoda, Director General of the Department of National Planning, presented a review of sustainability aspects in relation to Sri Lanka, while Dr. Dileni Gunawardena, Senior Lecturer, Department of Economics and Statistics, University of Peradeniya presented an insight into the equity aspects of poverty and human development and Dr. Saman Kelegama, Executive Director, Institute of Policy Studies shed light on their economic implications and also deliberated on the proposed currency transaction tax with regard to Sri Lanka.

To listen to the speeches at the HDR Launch log onto





V AWARDS

A project initiated by the IYV+10 National Steering Committee in collaboration with News 1st, the V Awards aims to honor individuals who make extraordinary contributions to society. Since the entry deadline in October, the V Awards secretariat has received over 400 applications from Sri Lankan citizens who have nominated individuals that they believe have significantly contributed to change in their communities. 26 individuals were recognized on December 5, 2011 in marking International Volunteer Day celebrations, and **15 nominees** were shortlisted for the finals of the **V Awards** that will take place on **January 21, 2012**.

For more information on V Awards please visit www.vawards.lk

Palmyra Industry

Thamakkenni, Kilinochchi: These women are part of a group of 15 who have just completed their training in Palmyra product making. Initiated under UNDP's Vanni Rehabilitation Project of the Transition Recovery Programme, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the training aims to facilitate the sustainable resettlement of returnees and reduce tension within and between target communities by improving their socio-economic conditions.





Citizenship Certificate Distribution Ceremony

On 2nd of November 2011, more than 80 children born to Sri Lankan families in India received confirmation of their Sri Lankan Citizenship during a ceremony held in Vavuniya. The initiative was conducted as part of the activities under UNDP's Equal Access to Justice Project with the support of the District Secretariat in Vavuniya, the Citizenship Branch of the Department of Immigration and Emigration and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

Caught in the midst of the conflict the parents of the children had fled from Sri Lanka in the early 1990s to safer refuges in India. Born in India, the children had Indian birth certificates and upon returning to Sri Lanka with their families after 2003 found that they were unable to obtain a certificate of national identity.

Since 2004, UNDP's Equal Access to Justice Project has supported communities to obtain over 16,000 documents including from birth certificates, citizenship certificates and national identification cards. Particularly since 2008, UNDP has been working with the Citizenship Branch of the Department of Immigration and Emigration and held 7 community awareness clinics, 4 in Vavuniya, 2 in Mannar and 1 in Jaffna, to specially support the issuing of Citizenship Certificates.

The citizenship awarding ceremony was graced by the Divisional Secretary Mr. Sivapalasundran, UNDP Deputy Country Director Ms. Razina Bilgrami, a representative from UNHCR and the Project Analyst of the Equal Access to Justice Project Ross Clarke. Ms. Bilgrami applauded the leadership role taken on by the District Secretariat and

other government institutions such as the Department of Immigration and Emigration in support of this initiative.

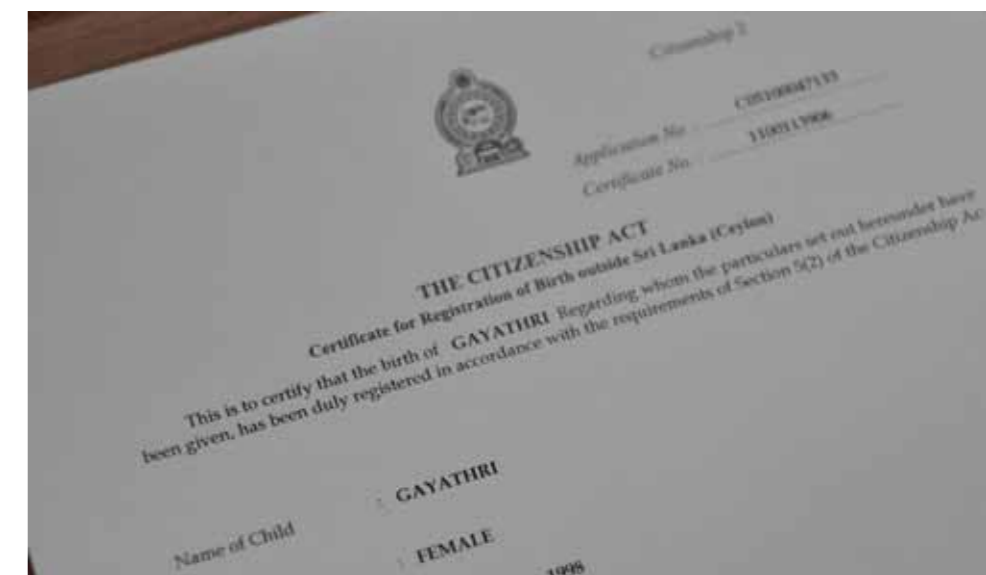
Divisional Secretary, Mr. Sivapalasundran highlighted the difficulties for parents to obtain citizenship certificates, which would cost up to Rs. 50,000 taking into consideration travel and legal costs. In addition, he noted that they have to overcome language barriers in instances where government officials may not be able to communicate in Tamil. He valued this service offered by the project partners, noting that it has made obtaining such documents more convenient.

“Today all 4 of my children are getting their Citizenship Certificates, it’s a relief for me as I did not know if this day would actually come. When I got the message to attend today’s function I was relieved,” said a father who had fled the country in 1990 and returned with his family in 2004.

The District Secretary Mrs. P. S. M. Charles, who joined the event, echoed the sentiments of the parents who had accompanied their children for the event. “The National Identity Card means reduced restrictions on their mobility, opening bank accounts, accessing government services, children being able to confirm their candidature for Ordinary and Advanced level examinations, ability to engage in formal employment and obtain a passport and exercising their right to vote” she stated.

In attendance were children of all ages from 3 to 18 with their parents. “Today all 4 of my children are getting their Citizenship Certificates, it’s a relief for me as I did not know if this day would actually come. When I got the message to attend today’s function I was relieved,” said a father who had fled the country in 1990 and returned with his family in 2004. He had got his marriage certificate also through the documentation services provided by the clinic, without which the Citizenship Certificates for his children could not be obtained.

The ceremony concluded with the children posing for a group photograph holding their Citizenship Certificates proudly, being the first batch of many more children to be supported through the Equal Access to Justice project in providing them with a valuable document which would have an impact on the rest of their lives, which ever path they choose to tread.



Meeting water and sanitation needs in Kattankudy

Access to clean drinking water and hygienic sanitation are major concerns for the villagers of Kattankudy, a densely populated town in Batticaloa District. With 99% of their well-water deemed unsuitable for human consumption, following the 2004 tsunami, the villagers faced serious threats to their overall health and well-being. In addition, the lack of proper sewerage and waste water disposal systems posed further challenges making villagers vulnerable to water-borne diseases and other health hazards.

Responding to these needs, UNDP joined hands with the Coca Cola Company and the United Nations Foundation to provide sustainable access to clean drinking water and improved sanitation facilities to the villagers of Kattankudy. Initiated two years following the tsunami, the project was completed at a cost of USD 550,000 and was funded through a joint partnership between the United Nations Foundation and Coca Cola.

The project saw the construction of a new and appropriate sewerage system connecting the 350 households in the village. Designed to prevent ground water contamination and the spread of water-borne diseases, the new system is safe and environmentally friendly. The Kattankudy Urban Council was responsible for the monitoring and supervision of on-site work.

Furthermore, in an effort to ensure the community will benefit in the long run, steps were also taken to train villagers on general hygiene practices as well as on the maintenance of the sanitation and waste management systems and associated technology. Several workshops and training sessions were conducted towards this end with the assistance of the Medical Health Division of the Local Authorities (LA) and the Department of Health. Awareness campaigns were also conducted on health problems associated with contamination of water.

Highlighting the significance of the project, Douglas Keh, Country Director of UNDP stated, "Our role at UNDP is not limited to building infrastructure per se. Instead, what we do is by building such infrastructure, we support increasing the range of choices that you will have to support your families, through more sustainable income-generation, financial independence, and economic growth."

Abhishek Jugran, Country Manager Sri Lanka & Maldives, Coca-Cola Far East Limited said, "We are proud of what we have achieved in Kattankudy. The wellbeing of the local community has always been a huge priority for our company. We are glad that we had the chance to directly touch the lives of so many families. We have overcome several challenges in implementing this project, and I must commend the UNDP for their excellent work on the project."

Hon. M. L. A. M. Hisbulla, Deputy Minister of Child Development and Women's Affairs, Hon. Al-Haj Asfar, Chairman of the Kattankudy Urban Council, Mr. Miguel Angel Ruz, Vice President South-West Asia, Coca Cola, Mr. Abhishek Jugran, Country Manager of Coca-Cola Far East Limited and Mr. Patrick Peche, Country Manager of Coca-Cola Beverages Sri Lanka, were among those present at the event.



The National Symposium series on Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation continues



With the anticipated accelerated development, the Sri Lankan socio political environment is poised to change significantly within the next couple of years. Development pressures combined with climate induced processes may change the potential vulnerabilities of disasters. It is therefore necessary to harness the ideas and scientific knowledge to reduce disaster risks at policy, regional and community levels.

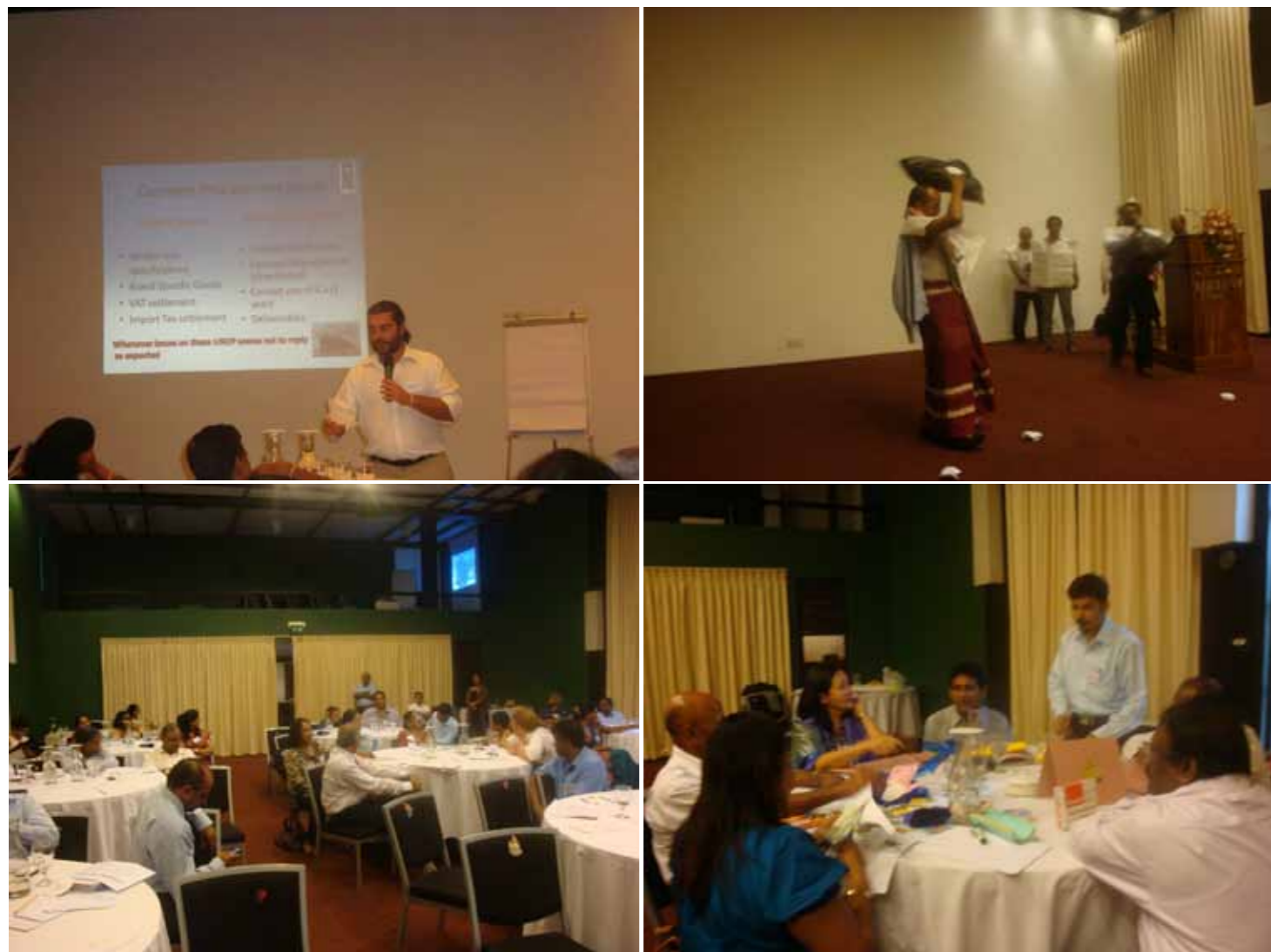
Held on November 24 and 25 at Galle Face Hotel, Colombo, the third National Symposium on Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation aimed to facilitate knowledge sharing among the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) practitioners to support the vision towards a 'safer Sri Lanka'. The symposium was conducted in the presence of Hon. Mahinda Amaraweera, Minister of Disaster Management, Ms. S. M Mohamed Secretary of the Ministry of Disaster Management, Mr. Subinay Nandy, UN Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative and many other distinguished guests.

In his keynote address Prof. Ranjith Premalal De Silva, Vice chancellor, Uva-Wellassa University highlighted the need for well established national spatial data infrastructure to facilitate data and information exchange and improved geospatial services needed for achieving development goals. Sri Lanka is rich in data, but the maximum benefit of information availability is yet to be harnessed for development work such as environment conservation, awareness and education, research and development and disaster risk reduction.

The panel discussions of the symposium focused on potential entry points for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in current development efforts, private sector involvement in Disaster Risk Reduction and use of DRR tools to minimize the impacts of disasters. The symposium concluded with a consultative discussion for senior media professionals that highlighted the need for more and regular interaction between the main disaster management actors and the media.

The symposium saw participants identify a number of recommendations including the need to use the National Disaster Management Council chaired by H. E. President Mahinda Rajapaksa to implement some of the recommendations. Development of policies to guide Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) including land use planning; minimizing road accident situations and training drivers on first aid; raising the awareness on the use of hazard maps among decision makers, planners and general public; integrating environment conservation and disaster management for sustainable socio economic development were among the recommendations highlighted.





UNDP concludes second National Partners Retreat

With UNDP currently preparing for its next programme cycle, the 2011 National Partners Retreat, held from September 30 to October 1, saw UNDP staff members and their Government partners delve further into some of the key areas for collaboration, including environmental sustainability, equitable growth and governance for empowerment and social inclusion.

Consisting of formal and informal sessions, the Retreat allowed participants to share experiences and openly discuss issues of mutual concern both on the programmatic and operational aspects of the partnership between the Government and UNDP. This also led to a better understanding of these issues and helped build common ground, develop new relationships and a shared vision in addressing these challenges.

“Combining and addressing environmental sustainability, climate change and disaster risk reduction at national, sub-national and community levels will be a key priority for UNDP in the coming years to ensure the sustainability of development efforts,” said Dr. Ananda Mallawathanthri, Team Leader, Environment, Energy and Disaster Risk Reduc-

tion, UNDP, when he made a presentation on Entry Points for Environment Sustainability and Resilience during the Retreat.

In addressing the role of the private sector in development, Gayathri Jayadevan, Private Sector Specialist of UNDP, presented UNDP’s key strategic priorities and approach to engaging with the private sector. “The group discussion was particularly rewarding, where we had the chance to look in detail at opportunities for engaging with the private sector in relation to post-war economic recovery, environment sustainability and women’s empowerment and leadership,” she added.

The Retreat provided an opportunity for participants to gain a better understanding of the visions and expectations of the Government for 2013 – 2017, which will be crucial as UNDP continues to develop its Country Programme Document.

Dr. B. M. S. Batagoda, Director General of the Department for National Planning of the Ministry of Finance and Planning welcomed the proposed programme priorities of the



new Country Programme, explaining that it well captures the expectations and priorities of the Government.

Reaffirming the Government’s commitment to continue working closely with UNDP, Dr. Batagoda emphasized the need to work in partnership with the private sector to ensure long term growth. He also highlighted the importance of developing and supporting vocational training institutes, as a means of providing more opportunities for youth.

A series of short skits helped participants creatively explore some of the key development challenges in Sri Lanka, including poverty, unemployment and corruption. The Retreat also shed light on the framework for cooperation between UNDP and national partners, where Salma El Hag Yousif, UNDP’s Programme Management Specialist spoke on the new UNDP corporately developed guidelines on National Implementation, and shared with participants the different implementation modalities of UNDP. Common operational and procurement issues, as well as support services provided by UNDP were also discussed.

