

Summary report of Video Conference Consultation between Colombo, Sri Lanka and Washington, DC

Participants: Government of Sri Lanka and Civil Society (more details to come).

DC Participants: Warren Evans, Director, Environment Department (presenter and content expert), Michele de Nevers, Senior Manager, Environment Department (content expert), Barbara Louise Bech, Environment Department (moderator), Marilyn Markman, GDLN (rapporteur).

Representative from Bio-research Association of Sri Lanka (on support and financing for renewable energy)

We are interested in renewable energy and trying to promote it in Sri Lanka. The biggest problem is the lack of institutional support and public funding available to promote renewable energy. Currently, the private sector is the only one engaging in renewable energy, but there are only incentives and subsidies for fossil fuels. How do we get the government to support renewable energy?

Representative from Energy Forum (on mitigation investment needs and compensation for adaptation)

From the perspective of the developing world, the World Bank Group's investments should go toward mitigation and compensation for adaptation. If not, you exploit the world's most vulnerable people. Mitigation and adaptation should be differentiated. Also, renewable energy and energy efficiency should be promoted.

Representative from Ministry of Environment (on vulnerability assessments and carbon funds)

We need vulnerability and risk assessments and to strengthen vulnerable communities to be able to deal with the impacts of climate change. The Ministry of Environment is the focal point for the Climate Change Secretariat, which coordinates with other relevant agencies to promote adaptation and vulnerability assessments. What kind of the assistance can the World Bank Group offer?

Sri Lanka has established state-owned private company, the Sri Lanka Carbon Fund, to facilitate CDM and wants to obtain low carbon technologies and funding to initiate activities, although government has provided some initial capital. Also, we would like to promote REDD in Sri Lanka.

Representative from Environment Foundation (on forest cover, degradation and ecosystem services)

In Sri Lanka forest cover has been declining over decades. Forest cover is now at 20-25% but the quality of forest cover is degrading. It is important forest be resilient and can adapt to climate changes so that they may continue to provide sequestration and ecosystem services, especially in mountainous areas where they act as watersheds. Are there any funds or programs at the World Bank Group to address this issue?

Representative from Sustainable Energy Authority (on capacity building needs)

We have seen the successes and failures of donor funded projects. While the availability of financing promotes changes in small measures, we need technical, organizational, and implementation capacities to be offered in a single program. We need a package of measures and mechanisms to build capacity, not just financing.

Representative from International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Sri Lanka country program (on climate change and World Bank Country Assistance Strategies)

We are thankful that climate change is now a development issue for the World Bank. I saw the Strategic Framework draft on the web, and while it covers most areas, my question is how these broader strategies will be incorporated in Country Assistance Strategies so that countries like Sri Lanka can benefit from them?

Representative from Green Movement of Sri Lanka (on donor policies and the role of civil society in mitigating climate change)

The vast bulk of available funding for climate change is going to larger emerging economies such as India and China, which means that the larger the economy, the larger the chances for a country to receive funding. However, with vulnerability affecting poorer people, we feel that this is unfair.

People who represent the most vulnerable groups (civil society) are not part of the World Bank Group's implementation plans. We would like to engage in constructive dialogue so that the most vulnerable can benefit. Small movements do not get credit or recognition. Do you have a mechanism that will factor in the contributions of civil society groups and the on-the-ground actions of the poorest in mitigating climate change?

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