

Assessing the costs of climate change and adaptation in South Asia

In a keynote address, Bindu Lohani, Vice President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development urged Sri Lanka to fully integrate climate change adaptation into development plans given that it could lose up to 6.5% GDP annually by 2100.

“Sri Lanka is among the countries expected to be worst affected by climate change, with adverse effects on all sectors of the economy, increasing the country’s vulnerability and threatening its overall growth and development”, said Lohani. Sea level rise, higher temperatures, enhanced monsoon precipitation and runoff, more intense tropical cyclones and storm surges, floods, drought, and salinity intrusion have all been experienced over the recent past. The country’s geophysical and socio-economic characteristics tend to exacerbate the impacts of these phenomena.

The simultaneous objectives of combatting climate change and achieving inclusive economic growth are huge challenges for Sri Lanka. Addressing these challenges requires urgent action which are; increased investment and institutional capacity, and stronger government and private sector policies.

Climate change management is a complex and highly interactive responsibility involving close coordination among all sector ministries. As such, for both adaptation and mitigation, the development and enhancement of Sri Lanka’s institutional and human resource capacity will need essential managing investments and identifying intervention areas for research and knowledge



Seminar: Hon. Minister Susil Premajayantha, Ministry of Environment and Renewable Energy delivers the welcome and opening remarks at the seminar ‘Assessing the costs of climate change and adaptation in South Asia on 26 November 2014 in Colombo

management. “To this end, Sri Lanka can access technical and financial support from key development partners, such as the Asian Development Bank”, said Lohani.

Minister of Environment and Renewable Energy, Susil Premajayantha, gave the opening remarks at the seminar. Ministry officials, academia, environmental NGOs and others participated at this event.

VP Lohani also participated as a panelist on “How can business drive sustainable development”, at the UN ESCAP Asia-Pacific Business Forum 2014, in Colombo.

During his stay in Colombo, VP held productive meetings with senior government ministers and ministry secretaries and led a media roundtable on climate change.

On the final day of his four day stay, VP visited the Dippitiya Rajagiri Maha

Vidyalaya, Mawanella in the Kegalle district, where ADB funded science, IT and language laboratories. Later that day, VP delivered a lecture on “Building Knowledge-based Economies in Asia and the Pacific”, at the University of Peradeniya. ■

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Getting goods to market faster with better roads

Wastage was as high as 50%, said Kanavathapillai Manikkawasan, as he recalled the days when it was a matter of purely loading and unloading produce he had to take to market. The bad condition of this dirt road was dotted with huge crater like holes that made it almost impossible for a vehicle to ply on the road. During the rainy season it was worse as it turned into a mud pit. As such, farmers had to depend on ox carts and hand tractors to transport goods to and from the market to their farm lands. “Now we are able to take our produce to market in 45 minutes, whereas those days it would take almost a day, and at times we would reach the market only after one in the afternoon when the market had closed. This meant that all our labour was in vain. We would sell our produce to a passing trader or buyer at whatever price they offered, as we had no way to take it home, bearing an additional cost”, said 55 year old farmer – Manikkawasan.

The 10.5 km road from Vavunativu to Aithyamale in the Batticaloa district in eastern Sri Lanka was upgraded through the ADB funded Eastern and North Central Provincial

Roads Project, by widening it from 3.2 metres to a 4.5 metre wide tarred (Double Bitumen surfaced) road. The increased width and improved surface condition of the road now permits lorries and buses to ply with ease, giving the people of the area a greater number of transport choices.

It is two years since the road was improved, and this has contributed directly to Manikkawasan’s increased income. “Now I am able to take a tractor or a lorry to my farm, load all the goods for market and take it all at once to market”. As such, his transport costs have reduced and wastage from goods getting damaged is almost negligible, he says.

However, the rise in cost of living has affected him as much as everyone else. “Without the extra income from the reduced transport costs, we could not have kept up with the increased costs we have to pay for our children’s education and electricity tariffs”, says Manikkawasan, explaining the difficulties that he and many others have to face. However, I am able to survive and provide for my family thanks to the reduced transport costs which were made possible with the upgraded road.



Beneficiary: Farmer Manikkawasan with freshly uprooted manioc from his farm.

VPOI Wencai Zhang visits Sri Lanka



VP visit: VP Zhang meets President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

In a packed 24 hour visit to Sri Lanka on 20 November 2014, ADB Vice President (Operations 1) Zhang participated at the opening ceremony of the new Highway Secretariat building at Battaramulla which was financed by ADB and the government of Sri Lanka. Delivering the opening address with the Sri Lankan President, Mahinda Rajapaksa, VP Zhang highlighted ADB’s contribution as a loyal development partner to Sri Lanka, having approved a total of \$6.1 billion in loans, \$180 million in grants, and \$124 million in technical assistance to Sri Lanka, since the first loan in 1968.

Later in the day, VP held discussions on ADB operations with President Rajapaksa, and also met with senior officials of the Ministry of Finance and Planning and SLRM staff. VP Zhang witnessed the signing of the first tranche loan agreement of a two-part \$300 million facility by SLRM CD Widowati and Secretary to the Treasury Jayasundera. The facility will scale up the use of clean energy and cut the country’s reliance on costly petroleum oil for electricity generation.

ADB and GoSL sign agreements for roads and clean energy

SLRM Country Director Sri Widowati and Secretary to the Treasury P.B. Jayasundera signed the first tranche loan agreements of an \$800 million multi-tranche facility for roads and a two-part \$300 million facility for clean energy on 5 and 20 November 2014 respectively.

These facilities will upgrade approximately 2,200 kilometers of rural access roads, and rehabilitate and maintain 400 kilometers of national roads under the Integrated Road Investment Program; and scale up the use of clean energy while cutting down the country's reliance on costly petroleum oil for electricity generation under the Green Power Development and Energy Efficiency Improvement Investment Program.



Loan Signing: Country Director, SLRM, Sri Widowati and Secretary to the Treasury, P.B. Jayasundera.

Book Launch: Asia's Energy Challenge: Key issues & Policy Options

Asia's Energy Challenge: Key Issues and Policy Options' was launched in Colombo at the Institution of Engineers, Sri Lanka on 10 September. "Energy systems will be challenged to satisfy developing Asia's economic aspirations", said SLRM CD at the launch of the publication. Co-edited by ERMF's Minsoo Lee and Donghyun Park, it examines key energy issues of supply adequacy, environmental sustainability and affordable access.



Book Launch: Co-author Donghyun Park makes a presentation on the book.

SLRM CD delivered the opening remarks and Ranishka Wimalasena, Senior Project Officer (Energy) – SLRM provided an overview of ADB's energy sector operations in Sri Lanka.

New Staff at SLRM



Anouk Tyagarajah - Operations Assistant of the Economic & Programming Unit

joined SLRM as a regular staff member on 1 September 2014. However since March 2013 she worked in the same capacity on a contractual basis. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mass Communications from the University of Monash, and worked as a Team Assistant at the World Bank office in Colombo for 15 months prior to joining SLRM. Anouk is an avid reader and an animal rights activist.

Building a Participative Team Culture



Team Building: Staff engage in a team building activity - 'Enemy at the Banks'.

SLRM staff took time off from their day to day activities on 13 & 14 November 2014 to engage in an offsite retreat and team building activity at MAS Institute of Management and Technology (MMIT) Thulhiriya. The focus was on building a participative team culture and organizational effectiveness.

Staff enthusiastically participated in various group exercises, brainstormed to identify work place barriers, and recognizing each other's work to create an effective working environment. Wild Drift, a management training company facilitated the entire event.



Team Building: SLRM staff that participated at the 2014 Retreat and Team building event.

Workshop on ADB safeguards policy and practices

A one day workshop was conducted in Anuradhapura on 17 October 2014 for 45 National Water Supply & Drainage Board officers to create awareness on ADB safeguard policies, country specific laws and regulations and their applicability to development projects. SLRM's Safeguard - Officer Jayaratne Perera and Senior Project Officer (Environment) - Palitha Bandara conducted the workshop. Resettlement and environmental plan preparation and monitoring; awareness on country specific laws and regulations on environment, land acquisition and resettlement; and mitigation of issues and problems in relation to environment and resettlement were covered in addition to ADB safeguard policies.



Workshop: SLRM staff conducting the workshop.

NEWS FROM

Sri Lanka

This newsletter of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Sri Lanka Resident Mission (SLRM) aims to enhance communications between ADB and its client groups. News from Sri Lanka disseminates information on ADB activities and provides a forum on development issues in Sri Lanka. Articles in the newsletter, however, do not necessarily reflect the official ADB view. We welcome readers' comments and suggestions.

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