



International Conference on
**The Role of Communities in
Environmental Decision Making**

September 30- October 1, 2014
Hotel Tree of Life
Kandy, Sri Lanka

Programme



Organized by

Centre For Environmental Justice/ Friends of the Earth Sri Lanka

Supported by





Message from the CEJ Executive Director

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development(UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro created a platform for the world nations to discuss the matters related to two conflicting priorities of the world in 1992, which ended delivering number of agreements and declarations which have failed to show results till now. Sustainable development, which was agreed and approved in Rio, is still a dream. Worlds poor and marginal communities are still unable to live in a dignified, peaceful and healthy life and engage in better livelihood. Meanwhile, Front line communities are severely suffering due to lack of environmental democracy around the world in the present development model. Very often, most polluting industries are located in the midst of marginal communities dwelling space or infrastructure projects grab community land for various development activities. Environmental Impact Assessment is the most common tool to deal with such situations by means of addressing any negative impacts. While this law is not implemented properly, it does raise the question of the peoples basic rights enshrined in and ensured by the national international norms.

Centre or Environmental Justice is honoured to organize the “**International Conference on the Role of Communities in Environmental Decision Making**”, which provides a platform for Friends of the Earth Member groups around the world and the local communities to share their experiences over two days and agree on certain principles that will lead to demand for environmental democracy.

We warmly welcome the FOE member groups form 74 nations and the local participants representing from various governmental and non governmental agencies together with the local community representatives to grace this occasion.

Hemantha Withanage

Executive Director, Centre for Environmental Justice



Message from the CEJ Chairperson

Hearing the voices of the local communities is the most vital part in environment and development decision making. Formulation of national and global environmental strategies cannot be successfully done without learning from the local experiences.

This international conference is aimed at with the intention of formulation of strategies in achieving global and local environmental democracy through sharing experiences of the diverse environmental activists, communities and the policy makers. The distinctions between environmental citizens and normal citizens should be clearly understood before start our march towards achieving Environmental Democracy. Transformation of every citizen to an environmental citizen is fundamental. Meantime information, participation and the justice are three key pillars to achieve the desired goal.

Two day conference provide a platform for the participants to discuss these subjects in detail and agree on principles to follow in achieving environmental democracy. I wish the success of achieving the objectives of this workshop.

Ravindranath Dabare

Attorney-at-Law and Un official Magistrate
Chairman – Centre for Environmental Justice



Message From The FOEI Chairperson

Participatory democracy and other forms of participatory decision making processes is one of the core value of the Friends of the Earth International, together with Peoples' sovereignty, human and peoples' rights. We at FOEI, strongly believe in environmental and social justice, meaning that the natural resources have to be shared justly and that local communities have right to use natural resources in sustainable manner. Furthermore, not only that local communities, including urban, rural and, of course, indigenous communities, should be consulted regarding the questions of resource management, but they need to be able to have a final say, and no project should get a green light from governments without informed prior consent of communities in question.

Moreover, FOEI advocates for the management and ownership of the resources by local communities, be it food production, communal forest or watershed management or community renewable energy projects that meet the needs of the communities, reduce poverty and lead towards sustainable societies worldwide. Indeed, we have promoted and supported, initiatives that manage the resources as commons, or as territories in different parts of the World. We are advocate for legitimate and legal tools for local communities to reclaim their power. Examples can be different in different countries while somewhere we have community consultations regarding the big investment projects and mining, in other places, we are using the international conventions and legal tools such as environmental impact assessments and planning procedures, and sometimes even local referendums.

At the conference, we shall exchange knowledge about these different examples and tools and explore the concepts in the more details. And last, but not the least, we will discuss how we can, together, empower local communities to use these tools and to manage the resources for the benefit of all.

Jagoda Munic

Chairperson, Friends of the Earth International

International Conference on The Role of Communities in Environmental Decision Making

Often, people who live in close proximity to natural resources do not have rights of access to information, participation and access to justice when those resources are exploited. In many documented instances, the communities become victims of development processes. Such rights are broadly referred to as Environmental Democracy which offers a viable means for communities to engage in decision-making regarding developments in their locality and includes a development paradigm that is self- evolved rather than imposed by others with vested interests. Regaining these rights is vital part of the transformation of the communities. Informed with basic and the most pertinent facts about the quality of their environment, citizens can become active participants in identifying and resolving issues at both local and national levels.

The International Conference on the Role of Communities in Environmental Decision Making- will share the community experiences of FoEI groups around the world with local groups in Sri Lanka, and mobilize grassroots organizations/ communities in Sri Lanka, through an understanding and promotion of environmental democracy, to fight to ensure protection of basic rights including right to water, right to land, right to livelihood so on. Group discussions would be held to understand the ground realities and the major challenges faced by the different regions in the FOEI – Latin America, Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe and North America. This would enable an identification of the factors which hinder thereby facilitate to achieve environmental democracy.

The Conference will allow participants to broaden their knowledge on the environmental democracy, community ownership of the natural resource management and decision-making.

Programme

Day 1- September 30, 2014

Time			
08.00 am	Inaugural session		
11.00 am	Tea / Coffee Break		
11.30 am	Workshop I Infrastructure Develop- ment And Community Rights	Workshop II Land Grabbing And Com- munity Rights	
13.00 pm	Lunch Break		
14.00 pm	Workshop III Women And Environmental Decision Making	Workshop IV Indigenous Peoples And Environmental Decision Making	Workshop V Urban Com- munities And Environmental Decision Making
16.30 pm	Tea/Coffee Break		
17.00 pm	Plenary		
19.00 pm	Solidarity Night and Dinner Environmental and Social Justice Award 2014		
21.00 pm	End of Day 1		

Programme

Day 2- October 1, 2014

Time	
08.00 am	Technical session: Environmental Democracy and Community Experience
10.30 am	Tea/Coffee
11.00 am	Community Action plan -Group work
13.00 pm	Lunch
14.00 pm	Plenary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting the salient points of the Draft Community Action Plan • Agree on the basic principles of Environmental Democracy for the communities / Kandy Declaration
16.00 pm	End of the Conference

AGENDA-Inaugural session

30th September 2014- 8.30 am – 11.00 am

Venue- Tree of Life

Lighting Traditional Lamp

Welcome and Objectives– By Hemantha Withanage, Executive Director, CEJ/
FoE Sri Lanka

Welcome Remarks by Mrs. Iranganie Serasinghe Board member, CEJ

Welcome Remarks by Miss. Jagoda Munic, Chairperson, Friends of the Earth
International

Environmental Rights in Religious Perspectives by

Buddhist - Ven. Kalupahana Piyarathana Thero

Hindu

Christian- Fr. Sarath Iddamaloda

Muslims-

Keynote Address- Hon. Minister Susil Premajayantha, Minister of Environ-
ment and Renewable Energy -**Balancing Right to Development and Right to
Environment**

Experiences in Protecting Communities' Rights in

Africa,- Mr. Nimmo Basse , ERA/ FoE Nigeria

Europe- Mr. Asad Rehman, FoE England, Walse and N. Ireland

Latin America – Mr. Ricardo Navarro, FoE El Salvador

Asia – Mrs. Meena Raman, FoE Malaysia

Vote of Thanks- Chandana Jayakody, Director, CEJ/FoE Sri Lanka



WORKSHOP I

11.30 am- 1.00 pm.

Infrastructure Development and Community Rights

Infrastructure development of national interests builds in through the marginalized and poor communities. Most often livelihood and survival space of these communities depend on traditional agriculture. Once paddy lands, home gardens, small forests or wetlands destroyed, the communities lose their income and the living environment. Once displaced, they don't receive an equal opportunities and often live in a unfamiliar impoverished environment. It takes longer times to adapt to new environment and find livelihoods.

This workshop will allow participants to discuss about how the national/international social and environmental safeguards protect their life and livelihood.

Speakers- Mrs. Heather Mundy, Southern Expressway Affected person
Mr. Godwin Ojo, ERA/FoE Nigeria

Chair- Mr. Shamen Vidanage, IUCN Sri Lanka

Rapporteur- Mrs. Chalani Rubasinghe, CEJ/FoE Sri Lanka



WORKSHOP II

11.30 am- 1.00 pm.

Land Grabbing and Community Rights

Grabbing community lands is a common issue around the world. Investments such as commercial agriculture, mining, tourism expansion and urban expansion are some of them, which affect the communities and their livelihood for generation.

This workshop will allow participants to discuss the gross violations of their civil rights, human rights and above all their environmental rights on the face of such land grabbing by investors.

Speakers- Kirtana Chandrasekaran, FoEI Food Sovereignty Coordinator
Lucia Ortiz, FoEI EJRN Coordinator
Mr. Sandun Thudugala, Oxfam Australia

Chair- Mr. Thilak Kariyawasam

Rapporteur- Dr. Avilash Roul

WORKSHOP III

14.00pm - 16.30 pm

Women and Environmental Decision Making

This workshop will discuss the gender perspectives and why the women involvement in environmental and development decision making is vital for environmental democracy.

Speakers - Mrs. Karin Nansen, FoE Uruguay
Mrs. Kamini Vitarana, Ruk Rakaganno
Mrs. Shireen Samarasooriya, GEF/SGP coordinator

Chair- Mrs. Kusum Athukorala, Net Water

Rapporteur- Mrs. Theiva Lingam, FoE Malaysia

WORKSHOP IV

14.00pm - 16.30 pm

Indigenous Peoples and Environmental Decision Making

Although the Indigenous communities rights have been accepted in decision making, however, their voice is not heard. This workshop will discuss how the indigenous and local communities differently affected when their voice is not heard.

Speakers - Uruwarige Vannila Attho, Dambana
Mr. Issac Rojas, FOE, Costa Rica

Chair- Mr. Sujeewa Jasingha, Centre for Eco Culture Studies

Rapporteur- Mr. Ajith Ethugala, Central Environmental Authority

WORKSHOP V

14.00pm - 16.30 pm

Urban Communities and Environmental Decision Making

Changes in urban setting is very rapid compare to rural environment. Poor communities some time displace more than once. Issues related to the urban communities will be shared during this session.

Speakers - Mr. Bobby Peak, Ground Work. FoE South Africa
Mrs. M.L.R.P Munasinghe, Urban Development Authority

Chair- Mrs. Dipti Bhatnagar, FoE Mozambique

Rapporteur- Mrs. Nilmal Wickramasinghe, CEJ/FoE Sri Lanka

SOLIDARITY NIGHT AND DINNER
30th September 2014- 19.00 pm- 21.00 pm
Venue: Tree of Life

Guests

Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena, Minister of Water Supply and Drainage

Hon. Tikiri Kobbekaduwa, Governor, Central province

Hon. Sarath Ekanayake, Chief Minister, Central Province

Prof. Athula Senarathne, Vice Chancellor, University of Peradeniya

Prof. Shantha Hennayake, Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Peradeniya

Agenda

Traditional dance

Speech by Guest of Honour- Judge C. G. Weeramanthri, Former Vice President, International Courts of Justice -**Environmental democracy**

Honouring the local communities defending the Environment

Guest speeches

Environmental and Social Justice Award 2014- In recognition of outstanding contribution for Environmental conservation, defending environmental and social justice in Sri Lanka

Vote of Thanks

TECHNICAL SESSION:

Environmental democracy and Community Experience

1st October 2014-8.00 am – 10.30 am

Venue- Tree of Life

Environmental Democracy broadly refers to the rights of access to information, public participation, and access to justice. Such rights have been accepted by the United Nations in many occasions. However, national acceptance and the implementation vary by country to country. This session will share the implications for achieving environmental democracy.

Speakers-

- **What is Environmental Democracy?** Hemantha Withanage, Executive Director, Centre for Environmental Justice
- **Role of Police in Environmental Protection.** Mr. Quintos Raymond, Director, Environmental Police Division
- **Role of Communities in Achieving Environmental Democracy and Environmental Decision Making** - Mrs. Rizwana Hassan

Facilitator- Mr. Jagath Gunawardena, Environmental Lawyer

Rapporteur- Mr. Prasad Ranjan Atigalla

GUESTS



Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena,
Minister of Water Supply and Drainage



Hon. Susil Premajyantha,
Minister of Environment and Renewable Energy.



Hon. Tikiri Kobbekaduwa,
Governor of the Central Province



Hon. Sarath Ekanayake,
Chief Minister of the Central Province

Key Speakers



Judge C.G. Weeramanthri is a Sri Lankan lawyer who was a Judge of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) from 1991 to 2000, serving as its Vice-President from 1997 to 2000. He was a Judge of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka from 1967 to 1972. He is also the founder of the Weeramanthri Centre for Peace Education and Judicial Integrity.



Mrs. Iranganee Serasinghe is an eminent actress in Sri Lanka. She is a leading environmentalist over the past four decades and a co-founder of the Ruk Rekaganno, Tree Society. Her work helped to save Sinharaja forest from logging in 70s. She is a director of the Centre for Environmental Justice since 2013.



Mr. B.M.U.D. Basnayake is the current Secretary to the Ministry of Environment and Renewable Energy. He is a senior government servant and has vast experience working with the local communities in Sri Lanka.



Prof. Athula Senarathne is the Vice Chancellor of the University of Peradeniya Sri Lanka, since August 2012. He has held the positions as the Head of the Department of Geology, Director, Atomic Energy Authority of Sri Lanka and the Chairman, Water Resources Board of Sri Lanka, 2004-2005.



Prof. Shantha Hennayake is the current Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Peradeniya and the Professor of Geography. He obtained his BA and MA from University of Peradeniya. He obtained the Ph.D. in Political Geography from Syracuse University, New York, USA.



Mrs. Jagoda Munic is the Chairperson of the Friends of the Earth International. She is working at the Zelena akcija / FoE Croatia. She holds a Master degree in Pollution and Environmental Control from the University of Manchester. Her work on Genetically Modified (GM) crops, resulted in Croatia adopting one of the strictest GM laws in the world.



Mr. Nnimmo Bassey is the immediate past chairperson of the Friends of the Earth International. He is a founder of the Environmental Rights Action(ERA)/FoE Nigeria. He is an architect, environmentalist activist, author and poet. Nnimmo Bassey was named co-winner of the Right Livelihood Award, and in 2012 he was awarded the Rafto Prize.



Mrs. Meena Raman is the FoEI chairperson from 2004-2008 period. She is the Executive Director of the Sahabat Alam Malaysia/ FoE Malaysia. Meena is an environmental lawyer and she closely follows the climate negotiations at the UN-FCC.



Dr. Ricardo Navarro founded the Salvadoran Centre for Appropriate Technology (CESTA) to address his country's critical environmental and social needs. Ricardo, is an engineer by training. He received the Goldman Prize in 1995, appreciating his work on the Environment. Ricardo held the FoEI Chairperson position from 2000-2004.



Karin Nansen is a founding member of Friends of the Earth Uruguay/REDES. She is vice chairperson of the Friends of the Earth International and a Excom member. Karin studied social sciences and social ecology, but she has learnt most through her work with peasant farming women in Uruguay and Latin America.



Mrs. Kamini Vitarana is a leading environmental activist in Sri Lanka. She has more than 35 years experience in the environmental field. She is the current President of “Ruk Raka-ganno” (Tree Society). Kamini is a Director of the Centre for Environmental Justice since 2004.



Mr. Ravindranath Dabare is the Chairperson of the Centre for Environmental Justice and is a lawyer by profession. He is also an unofficial magistrate. Ravindranath has represented communities on number of environmental cases in the court of Justice. He is a founding member of the CEJ.



Mr. Hemantha Withanage is the founder and the current Executive Director of the Centre for Environmental Justice/ Friends of the Earth Sri Lanka. He is a Executive Committee member and the Treasure of the Friends of the Earth International. Hemantha is also the International Convenor of the NGO Forum on ADB.



Mr. Dilena Pathragoda is a Management Graduate of the University of Sri Jayawardenapura. He has gained expertise on environmental mediation and the collaborative management of natural resources in his past work. He has a diploma on Human Rights. Dilena is a founding member of the CEJ.



Mr. Chandana S. Jayakody is a founding member of the Centre for Environmental Justice. Chandana is a Computer Technologist. He has initiated research on electronic waste in Sri Lanka and published articles on the needs of an e-waste recycling policy in Sri Lanka.



Dr. (Mrs.) E. S Edirisinghe was awarded her M.B.B.S. from the University of Colombo, and subsequently Awarded the post graduate Diploma in Child Health by the Post Graduate Institute of Medicine. She is a Director of the CEJ since 2006.



Mr. Shivantha Navod is a medical Student. Shivantha is a Director of the Centre for Environmental Justice since 2013.



Mrs. Rizwana Hassan is an environmental Lawyer based in Bangladesh. She is the current Executive Director of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyer Association(BELA). She received most prestigious Goldman awards in 2009 and the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 2012.



Mr Asad Rehman is a Senior Campaigner, of the Friends of the Earth England, Walse and N. Ireland. Asad leads Friends of the Earth's campaign for international action to prevent dangerous climate change. His work focuses on cutting global greenhouse gas emissions and helping poor countries to develop in a clean and sustainable way.



Mr. Bobby Peak is a founding member of the the Ground Work/Friends of the Earth South Africa. He is currently the Executive Director of the Ground work. He received Goldman price in 1998 for his contribution to save the environment in South Africa.



Uruwarige Wannila Attho is the Chieftain of the Vedda (Forest people) live in Sri Lanka. He lives in Kotabakiniya in Dambana.



Mr. Jagath Gunawardena is a environmental lawyer and a leading environmentalist over three decades. He started his environmental carrier as a young zoologist. Jagath is a know bird and reptile expert and currently he chairs the Environmental Council of the Central Environmental Authority.



Mr. Issac Rojas is the Director of the COECOCEIB/FoE Costa Rica and also the Forest and Biodiversity programme coordinator of the Friends of the Earth International.



Mrs. Dipti Bhatnagar is the Co-coordinator of the Climate Justice and Energy Programme of the Friends of the Earth International. She is also a member of the Friends of the Earth Mozambique.



Mr. Godwin Ojo is the current Executive Director of the Environment Rights Action/ Friends of the Earth Nigeria. Godwin has vast experience on fighting against the oil mining in Niger delta.



Mrs. Shireen samarasooriya is the Coordinator of the GEP/SGP in Sri Lanka. She has a long time experience working with the community organisation in the environmental sector.



Mr. Prasad Ranjan Atigalla spent his early life with the Mahaweli Authority as an environmental advisor. He now serve as the Technical Advisor to UN-REDD Programme IN SRI LANKA.



Mrs. Theiva Lingam is an environmental lawyer attached to the Sahabat Alam Malaysia/Friends of the Earth Malaysia.



Mr. Sandun Thudugala is the Food Sovereignty Coordinator of the Oxfam Australia office based in Colombo. He holds a degree from the University of Colombo.



Mr. Ranga Pallawala is the Chief Executive Officer of the Janathakshan/ Practical Action based in Colombo Sri lanka. He actively engage in climate debate in the past several years.



Mr. Shamen Vidanage currently working as the staff member of the IUCN Sri Lanka. He holds a degree on Resources Economics from the University of Peradeniya. He served as the country representative of IUCN Sri Lanka from 2012-2014.



Mr. Thilak Kariyawasam is the Director of the Sri Lanka Nature Group and the Environmental Conservation Trust.



Dr. Avilash Roul currently serve as senior fellow on water, energy and environment at SSPC. Earlier he served as Executive Director of the NGO Forum on ADB (2010-2012) and Assistant South Asia Coordinator in Bank Information Center. He holds a PhD on Negotiating Water Security from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) of India.



Mrs. Nilmal Wickramasinghe is an environment Lawyer attached to the Centre for Environmental Justice since 2008.



Mrs. Chalani Rubasinghe currently serve as the Environmental Officer of the Centre for Environmental Justice. She is a biology degree holder from the Open University of Sri Lanka and Master Degree from the University of Peradeniya.



Mrs. Lucia Ortiz is an environmental activist based in Brazil. She is currently working as the programme coordinator of the Economic Justice and Resisting Neo Liberalism programme of the Friends of the Earth International.



Mr. Bertrand Sansonnens is the chief of the project of the international Corporation in Pro Natura/ Friends of the Earth Switzerland.

Notes



Centre for Environmental Justice

Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ) is a public interest environmental organization based in Sri Lanka working for environmental justice and good governance established 2004. We provide legal aid for the affected and marginalized communities to protect their environmental rights, legal and scientific awareness on the environmental matters and engage in environmental advocacy. CEJ is a member of the Friends of the Earth International.



Friends of the Earth International

Friends of the Earth international is the world's largest grassroots environmental network, established in 1971, uniting 74 national member groups and some 5,000 local activist groups on every continent. With over 2 million members and supporters around the world, FOEI campaign on today's most urgent environmental and social issues. FOEI challenge the current model of economic and corporate globalization, and promote solutions that will help to create environmentally sustainable and socially just societies.



Justice for all

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