CEJ advocates for a better world for the future generation. We campaign on today’s most urgent environmental issues. We sharpens the debate on environmental good governance, promotes ecologically sustainable development and safeguards nature and people from environmentally and socially irresponsible activities and human rights violations. We also promote community participation in decision making on natural resources, and promotes environmental justice and equity through legal and other means.

**Date of Registration:** 28th January 2004

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Unbound Struggle for Environmental Justice

January 28, 2019
Centre for Environmental Justice

“Justice for All”

Fighting for Environmental Justice and Good Governance since 2004
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CEJ struggle for a better future

“Imagine a planet that has no bird sound, no bees to pollinate, no clean and running rivers, no forested mountains, no clean oceans and beaches, no clean air to breath. Sapiens are driving our mother earth to this destiny. We know we cannot live alone. We are part of the nature and ecosystems. We are part of the social, cultural, economic and governance system. Unless we respect the rights of the other species, other human kind, there is less hope for our own future. Together, we can change this destiny.”
Environmental struggle in Sri Lanka has a long history. Struggles to save Sinharaja forest, save Kandalama tank, save St Clair water fall and seven other falls, to save Muthurajawela and Bolgoda lake, save Eppawela Phosphate deposit,............ and then born Centre for Environmental Justice(CEJ) in 2004.

CEJ was born in the minds of few activists Hemantha Withanage, Ravindranath Dabare, Dilena Pathragoda and Chandana Jayakody in a tea shop behind the “Dasa building” in Borella to find new adventures in our environmental activism. We were in the opinion that we need a movement to fight for environmental justice and beyond species conservation.

We wanted to save nature as well as fight for people's environmental rights. We wanted to assist marginalised people and fight for our common struggle for survival.

Thus, our vision became “Justice for all”. We set the mission “to Protect the equal environmental rights of the people & environment and promote ecological sustainability by supporting ecologically sound community activities”. Wasn’t easy as it sounds though.

This newly born organisation were backed by few other activists including Iranganie Serasinghe, Kamini Vitarana, Suramya Edirisinghe, Suranjan Kodithuwakku, Sampath Ariyasena, Nilmal Wickramasinghe and Shivantha Withanage.

We were encouraged by many colleagues in the national and international environmental movement, civil society, government and some among the communities.

We were supported by the Oxfam Australia, Both Ends and Global Green Grants immediately.

We began our operations in “Thilakarathnaramaya” at Borella and soon moved to the space given by the Green Movement at Nugegoda. Few months later, we set up our full office in “Pothgul Viharaya” temple at Borella in 2006 where we found more conducing working environment.

We thank Ven. Waskaduve Gnaninda Tissa Thero, Chief incumbent of the “Gnanobasa Pothgul Viharaya” for his blessings.
Board of Directors: (2014-2017)
From Left: Chandana Jayakody, Ravindranatha Dabare (Chairperson), Suramya Edirisinghe, Kamini Vitarana, Iranganie Serasinghe, Hemantha Withanage, Dilena Pathragoda, Kumararathna Bandara (Company Secretary)
Environmental Good Governance and Environmental Justice is our aim. We have initiated our work though environmental litigation, scientific research, environmental awareness, supporting community struggles and policy advocacy. CEJ set its objectives i.e sharpening the public debate on environmental good governance, promoting ecologically sustainable development and environmentally responsible neighbourhoods, safeguarding nature and people from environmentally & socially irresponsible activities and human rights violations, promoting community participation in decision making on natural resources and, promoting environmental justice and equity through legal and other means. Fifteen years later we conduct our work under four major programme areas.

1. **Environmental Justice Programme** - to ensure environmental justice and laws related to natural resources are enforced and advocated in a proper manner,

2. **Empowerment of environmental awareness, campaign, research and training Programme** - to empower environmentally distressed communities,

3. **Natural Resource, Climate Justice and Forest Governance Programme** - For increased public participation in Natural Resource Governance and engage in climate change dialogue,

4. **Hazardous Chemical control & garbage management Programme** - Communities are aware of harmful chemicals in food and in products and promote better waste management
CEJ Team 2005- 
Kim McCoy (Intern), Chandi, Asanka, Dilena, Chandana, Sashika

CEJ Team 2008- Front- Indu, Lakmali, Piyasena 
Back- Thilini, Chamali, Dilhara, Rohana, Dilena, Hemantha

CEJ Team 2012- Front-Chamali, Waruna, Thilini, Indu 
Back-Hemantha, Dilena, Rohana, Piyasena

CEJ Team 2013- Front-Indu, Ruvini, Chalani, Shanika, Chathupama 
Back- Hemantha, Dilena, Gamini
Our work in a nutshell...

CEJ has been engaged in several areas from the beginning. Monitoring environmental pollution, engaging the International Financial institutions, assisting local communities, filing legal actions, scientific research on chemical in products are some areas of work.

In the beginning of 2004, we travelled across the country studying the environmental issues that we could engage. We also had a series of workshops on monitoring the IFIs and educating people on the neo-liberal approach on development and how it could lead to resources destruction and rising debt.

It was still the time of civil conflicts. But we went to Eastern cities to educate people on the environmental destruction in the country including the environmental impact of the war.

We filed our first court case to protect the sand dunes in Kalpitya peninsula from illegal mining. We also filed a case to bring a Coastal Resource Master plan. Then filed the case to bring Genetically modified food labelling legislation.

When Sri Lanka got struck with the Tsunami, CEJ assisted local people to test their water wells and cleaning them. We initiated rebuilding the green coastal belt in the Southern province understanding that Tsunami damage was less, where coastal trees act as a barrier.
2005 මුළු 05 දින අතර 08:00 මාස කොළඹු ජාතික පාලනය කිරීමට සැමාරුණින් සහ ප්‍රශ්නකර් ස්වීමාවිත් ආරම්භයේදී පැවති

Tree planting along the Southern coast | Top: Devundara- 2005 | Bottom: Hambanthota-2006
Just laws cannot protect forests....

CEJ has been engaging in several activities towards forest management and conservation since 2004. We assisted communities living around Nilgala Forest with the support of IUCN in 2009 to involve in community forest governance. CEJ helps the communities to establish a revolving fund in number of forest resource management groups. We have replicated the project with new features around Bogahapelassa forest in the Uva province with the support of SHALIN, a Finnish organisation.

CEJ also established forest Vigilance groups across the country to monitor the forest destruction and established the “forest watch”, a hot line with the financial support from UNDP to inform any act violating the forest laws.

CEJ act together with the Forest Department officers around the two forest areas i.e. Nilgala and Bogahapalessa to develop a Forest Management plan in consultation with the local communities. The process was a good learning for everyone. CEJ raised awareness among people explaining that they should protect the forest from which they get their clean water and air to breath, how they use the forest sustainably for none but for their own children.
CEJ receives several complaints on forest destruction every month. CEJ hot line on “Forest watch” is active around the clock. We choose to act on selected cases due to limited resources.

Challenge the legality of re-demarcation of the boundaries of the Bundala National park and to require the implementation of the National Wetland Policy, prevent the illegal forest clearing in Nelliyadda forest, prevent illegal forest clearing in Bakmitiyawa- Thimbirigolla reserve, prevent the illegal forest clearing at Wilpattu National Park, prevent illegal construction and deforestation declared area in Soragune for the construction of a golf course, Prevent destruction of forest and farm lands in Rideemaliyadda etc., are some significant forest related court cases that CEJ has been involving in the past few years.

**Tree ordination - a new approach...**

In 2012, Nilgala forest was encroached by a group of people with the support of a local politicians. CEJ was instrumental in having a tree ordination ceremony lead by Buddhist monks including Badullagammana Sumanasara Thero, Kalupahana Piyarathana Thero, Thalangalle Sudhamma Thero and Balaharuwe Sirisumana Thero. This brought a new concept of conservation to Sri Lanka which has been practiced in Thailand, Cambodia and Laos for several decades.

This was a special campaign conducted by CEJ. The first tree was ordained in 1997 by Keeranthidiye Pannasekara Thero, Ajantha Palihawadana and others. It was a “Dun” tree of about 200 ft high, which was to be cut down in widening the Baduraliya- Kukulegama road. The second was a red sandalwood tree at Badulla city centre ordained in 2008 by Balaharuve Sirisumana Thero with the support of CEJ.

CEJ used the same strategy to protect forests from illegal land grabbing at Nilgala forest (2014), to protect the watershed of Weli Oya that provide water for around 7000 farmers to cultivate around 38000 hectares (2014), Around Athwelthota waterfall to prevent destruction for a Mini hydro project (2015) and to prevent using 62500 acres for sugarcane cultivation at Dehigama, Redeemaliyadda (2017).

Catholic, Hindu and Muslim priests backed these campaigns lead by Buddhist monks showing that every religion respects the environment. At times when religious faith is the only thing that differentiates right from wrong, this was the only strategy to protect valuable trees and important ecosystems. CEJ took the lead in organising 3 day Dharma Yathra for Forest Conservation in 2014, in line to the tree ordination in Weli Oya/Soragune forest to protect it becoming a Golf Course.

**Biodiversity conservation is not easy, But...**

Sri Lanka is a rich habitat with many species. It is among the most important hot spots around the world. Unfortunately
Tree Ordination in Nilgala-

This first massive tree ordination ceremony in Sri Lanka was held on the 11th January 2014 in Akkara Anuwa and Dimbuldena villages in the Nilgala Forest. Fifty Buddhist monks, over 300 local people and a range of environmental organizations participated in the event. Other religious leaders from the area also joined the event.

The Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ)/ Friends of the Earth Sri Lanka initiated this tree ordination ritual in order to highlight the massive forest destruction of the Nilgala forest.
the current development model in Sri Lanka does not care for habitat conservation. CEJ works on biodiversity in many ways to protect country’s biodiversity including opposing forest and other habitat destruction. CEJ opposed several mini hydropower plants that destroy point endemic species, opposed mono-cultivations, opposed illegal human settlements/illegal land grabbing and expanding sugarcane cultivations in forest areas etc. Our fight to save waterfalls in Athwelthota river, Kuru Ganga, Gin Ganga was in line with CEJ efforts for biodiversity conservation.

Athwelthota waterfall is home to two known point endemic species and 19 other endemic species. The proposal to generate hydropower would have already killed the waterfall unless CEJ had done its duty including legal actions. As a result of the Court case filed by the CEJ against the Sustainable Energy Authority and others, in 2018, the government agencies agreed to produce a Strategic Environmental Assessment for all the rivers before approving any new mini hydro project. They further agreed to revisit the existing mini hydro projects and enforce new conditions and set up real time monitoring system.

Food Security as a prime right…

What we eat is not so healthy. They are chemically contaminated and sometimes are processed through unhygienic processes. Fighting against the use of agro-
chemicals and supporting toxic free agriculture and promoting agro-ecology is one of the main roles of the CEJ. CEJ travelled around the country with the support of UNDP/GEF/SGP to educate people on the harmful effects of agrochemicals. We advised the agrochemical shops on how to keep agrochemicals away from rest of the goods. We fought against Glyphosate at the ground level and in the advocacy level.

CEJ filed 2 Court cases in 2011 against the distribution of Arsenic contaminated pesticides in Sri Lanka. CEJ also helped the farmers to sell their organic foods through the ECO store.

Fighting against genetically Modified food was one of the earliest struggle of the CEJ. Understanding the global struggle and the danger faced by public in consuming Genetically Modified (GM) Food, CEJ filed a lawsuit asking for the formulation of Regulations requiring mandatory labelling of GM food.

This is one of the milestones of CEJ which enabled consumers to identify and choose to eat or avoid GM food. As a result Gazette to introduce GM food labelling was published which came into effect in January 2007.

Water, Sanitation - Leave no one behind...

Sri Lanka has much better access to water and sanitation compared to some countries in the region. But Poor and marginalized people in Sri Lanka such as the plantation sector workers, sanitation workers, school children especially the adolescent girls and people with disabilities do not have adequate sanitation facilities. CEJ conducted number of projects on Water and sanitation in order to assure clean water and sanitation facilities for people. Back in 2010, CEJ initiated a research on usage of latrines and raised awareness. “Leave no one behind” (2015) is an analysis of the country situation with respect to sanitation, that presented; the sanitation coverage, current practices, challenges and recommendations in a nutshell.

CEJ played a very critical role in organising the SACOSAN IV held in Sri Lanka in 2011 and hosting the Civil society organisations engaged in Water and sanitation work in many times. Most latest, CEJ hosted the FANSA members regional discussion in August 2018. CEJ is the host organization for the Sri Lankan chapter of the Fresh Water Action Network South Asia.

Relief to unresolved CKDue affected communities...

Chronic Kidney Disease in Sri Lanka is a water related disease. When CEJ went to North Central Province to conduct awareness programs on water and environment, CEJ could not explain them about environmental issues, instead had to listen to a tragic disease that the people were affected.
Some families were totally broke by expenses on treating the patients, children couldn’t attend school, neighbours paid no heed and ignored the families, some wives left their husbands for the fear of being contaminated, for the thought of family being shattered and loosing all the properties for medication, some people hide the fact that they are affected. Listening how pathetic their lives were due to this unknown strange noncommunicable disease, CEJ started to bring a relief for these people, who serve the nation by cultivating rice.

We have been involved in conducting surveys, research, awareness programs and screening clinics. Back in 2012, CEJ joined the Indian NGO, Centre for Environment and Science (CES) to test water and pesticide samples for heavy metals to identify the cause for the CKDUe. It found no clue of the heavy metals in water. CEJ conducted number of clinics in Anuradhapura, Moneragala and Badulla districts in 2012 and 2013 and directed affected people for further treatments.

In 2013, CEJ implemented a survey and awareness program to study the spreading of the disease and the facts on lifestyle of the affected community. Concluding that all the theories brought up by scientists are more or less among the affected community. But the real need of the community is to be facilitated in screening, supply of drinking water and some welfare for living. CEJ gratefully reminds all those people who supported our initiative back then.
We feel today that we did something and made a difference in some of their lives. It’s an innocent pride and a pleasure that we feel someday when we do something for a total stranger to make his life better without any personal gain.

**Zero Waste Management- not yet realised...**

CEJ started advocating Zero Waste management back in 2004. Proper electronic waste management, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and problems related to the irresponsible dumping of polythene and plastics were among the main topics. CEJ tried to aware public with posters, small booklets, awareness programs and radio programs about harmful effects of irresponsible dumping of these waste categories.

CEJ cartoon book on E-Waste soon became a hit. CEJ published a book on how to make garbage a resource. We also conducted a survey on polythene usage and found that one person carries around 18 polythene bags in one time he/she goes to the weekly fair. As a measure of systemizing this harmful practice, CEJ motivated housewives to produce and sell linen bags. In order to systemize the E-Waste recycling system CEJ distributed boxes to collect E-waste to small communication centres, banks, etc.

CEJ argued many public nuisance cases with regard to
garbage dumping. But nothing satisfied the CEJ’s objective to make a proper garbage management system by the time when 32 People died from garbage slide at Meethotamulla, CEJ knew it’s time to demand the government for a proper plan and thereby filed the lawsuit S.C. (F.R.) Ap. No. 152/2017 asking to formulate a proper procedure for waste management and formulate a proper national policy, regulations and mechanism to monitor such activities.

By today (2018), although the case isn’t finalized, the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment has finalized a garbage management policy and now (2018) drafting the regulations.

Chemical Management...

CEJ not only focused on food security and pesticides, but also many other consumer goods. Amongst are the lead in paint, mercury in fish and hair of the people living in the vicinity of Negombo lagoon, mercury in hair of the women living around Norochcholei coal power Plant, mercury in fairness creams, help regulate heavy metals in toothpastes, phasing out mercury apparatus from hospitals, raising the issue on PCBs under work on POPs, warn about Asbestos are all among the working circle of CEJ. All these have a story to tell.
As a member of the international NGO, IPEN [International POps Elimination Network] CEJ got a chance to work on this group of toxic chemicals that was banned by the Stockholm convention. CEJ helped spreading the knowledge on chemicals including the chemicals of “dirty Dozen”. Books, leaflets and stickers were published to educate public on POPs.

**Poly Chlorinated Biphenyls...**

In 2012, When CEJ found that PCB (Polychlorinated biphenyls) is still importing to Sri Lanka despite being banned in 2005 by ratifying the Stockholm Convention, the government officials argued that this PCB refers to “Printed Circuit Boards”. But then, the CEJ team took a description of the customs’ tariff to prove that this is nothing but Polychlorinated biphenyls.

Once this information was on hand CEJ communicated to Hon. Minister Anura Priyadharshana Yapa of Ministry of Environment and others in June, 2012 appealing to ban PCBs (Polychlorinated biphenyls) importation to Sri Lanka and manage contaminated sites and equipment. CEJ also published a “Country Situation Report on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in Sri Lanka”. In this study CEJ revealed that PCB contaminated oil is handled among welders and they apply it on wounds without knowing the toxicity of this chemical.

In 2017, CEJ found the gazette notification Gazette Extraordinary No 2044/40 on 9th of November 2017, banning the importation of many items including PCBs and items that contain PCBs. By today there’s a ongoing project by the ministry of Environment with funding from UNIDO to phase out POPs. They have identified the transformers and welding plants contaminated with PCBs and taking measures to decontaminate and safe disposal. CEJ is happy to be a part of these measures in ensuring public health safety.

**Mercury in products and ...**

The study on mercury in whitening creams was another effort by us. When CEJ published that we found certain creams has 30,167 ppm of Mercury many consumers were curious to know the better cream to use.

We found that not only people in urban areas but also in rural areas use these creams to get a fair skin. Anyhow, CEJ was also challenged by market leaders of fairness creams production.

We aimed at a national policy and requested authorities to take measures. At that time Cosmetics, Devices and Drugs Regulatory Authority (CDDA) held the responsibility of this matter and it instantly issued a draft gazette notification setting maximum level of heavy metal limits allowed in cosmetic products in Sri Lanka.
Aftermaths, almost 5 years now it has become a law (Gazette Extraordinary No 2069/37 on 3rd of May 2018 establishing permissible maximum limits for heavy metals in skin creams and lotions, to take effect from 01st November 2018). CEJ is the proud initiator behind this achievement.

**Chemical governance and awareness**

CEJ has conducted over 2000 workshops, round table discussions, conferences, awareness programs, surveys and pocket meetings within these 15 years in order to aware public on chemicals in consumer goods, how they can affect their day to day work, how to prevent getting contaminated and avoid contaminating the environment.

We have produced and distributed over 250,000 publications; leaflets, posters, books, research papers, reports, banners, calendars, greeting cards and stickers to the public. All free just for the sake of making at least one new person take the message.

Phasing out mercury apparatus was another huge achievement. It wasn’t easy to convince the officials to phase out mercury apparatus such as; thermometers, Sphygmomanometers and dental amalgam. CEJ conducted surveys to find the amount of mercury used and disposed by hospitals, calculated the amount of mercury imported to Sri Lanka and lobby the Ministry of Finance and Presidential Secretariat to make budget allocation for non-mercury hospital appliances. It did make a difference. The Ministry of Health later informed relevant Medical departments to purchase non-mercury thermometers and non-mercury aneroid Sphygmomanometers, Collect dental amalgam using amalgam separators for safe recycling, use more safer CFL bulbs and store used CFL bulbs without breaking.

In extending our efforts, CEJ now undertakes a project on phasing out dental amalgam as a measure of “protecting the human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds” under the Minamata convention on Mercury signed on 8th October 2014 and ratified from 19th June 2017.

**Lead safe paints - A great achievement**

Lead in Paint campaign is one of the remarkable projects undertaken by CEJ. In 2010, Centre for Environmental Justice in collaboration with international POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) and the Indian NGO, Toxics Link, carried out a global scientific study on “Lead in New Decorative Paints”.

Lead is a toxic heavy metal that damages many systems in human body. Its most threatening effect is the effect on child’s IQ, thereby creating a population with less intelligence and violent.

Based on the findings of this study, CEJ went to the Supreme
Court with a petition asking to reduce the lead level in paint in order to protect children’s health. As a result, the Consumer Affairs Authority made a gazette notification (Gazette Extraordinary No 1725/30 on 30th of September 2011) establishing new mandatory standards for lead levels in paint to take effect January 1, 2013.

Again in 2013, CEJ conducted a lead in paint research, under the Asian Lead paint elimination project in collaboration with IPEN, which was funded by European Union. The study revealed that about 50% of oil-based paints still exceeded the regulated limit of 600 ppm while 35 paint samples out of 94 were detected for levels less than 90 ppm, which is a very low amount and also the level suggested by CEJ, reflecting the ability of paint manufacturers to produce low leaded oil-based paints once the effort is given.

Discussions and meetings of CEJ with small and medium paint manufacturers revealed that conversion is not an issue once they buy pure ingredients.

Consecutively, CEJ conducted another study on Lead levels in dust in pre schools and homestead under the same project, and found hazardous lead levels in dust samples as high as 600 μg/ft2 (micrograms per square foot), whereas, research shows that lead levels as low as 10 μg/ft2 can contribute to blood lead levels harmful to the developing brain. The only visible source of lead in these locations was chipped and damaged paint.

After publishing this report, the Consumer Affairs Authority published another gazette on the label standards with the statement “The Consumer Affairs Authority Directs all manufacturers and traders of paints used in the building industry that they shall print legibly the total content of Lead in paint in mg/kg on the packs of containers of paints...” which then changed in 2016 to “print a self-declaration that the lead content in paint is below the regulated level” (Gazette Extraordinary No. 1985/38 on 23rd of September 2016, effected from 01st January, 2017). This was a big achievement for CEJ.

In order to raise public attention, CEJ conducted innumerable amount of awareness programs to paint sellers, manufacturers, painters, government officials, media and general public that includes mothers, fathers, children and school/ preschool teachers. Also, to reduce the threat of Lead contamination through pre schools CEJ brought the concept of establishing “Lead safe preschools” in which all the paints used on all applications of paint within the preschool premises are certified to be lead safe. So far, CEJ has given lead safe paints to 25 preschools, child care facilities and 2 hospitals in association with Lead safe paint manufacturers.

This is one such campaign in which CEJ collaborated with every party to bring justice to present and future generations.
Climate Justice

Activities on climate change were initiated back in 2006 by raising awareness among public on climate change. By using the knowledge acquired through these programs, “Public perceptions on climate change and adaptation in Sri Lanka” was published in 2008. We have interviewed over 100 people representing farmers, fisher folk, women, community leaders, priests and CSO leaders from Uva, north central, central, eastern, southern and western provinces of Sri Lanka.

This research created a stage to bring up the practical experiences of general public in their own observations such as animal migrations, changes in rainfall pattern, wind pattern and even cultivation.

CEJ produced leaflets and books for trainings civil society organizations on climate impacts to work with vulnerable communities, conduct a research on most vulnerable communities and their potential to face climate disasters and develop project ideas to face the future climate impacts.

In 2012, CEJ worked on agriculture and climate change. This included site visits to areas that are most vulnerable to droughts, its impact on agriculture and adaptations acquired by the farmers and adaptations implemented by government bodies. In 2016 again CEJ conducted a survey at kilinochchi, Padaviya and produced a video on the stories.

In addition, CEJ actively participates and follows the UNFCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) meetings since 2007. CEJ organised the National conference on “Sri Lanka’s readiness for implementing the Paris Climate Agreement” in 2016 with the support of the German Embassy, in Colombo.

**Environmental Impact Assessment.**

CEJ is one of the advocate for a better EIA process in Sri Lanka. CEJ believes that its time for introducing broader safeguard policies rather than limiting this to project based EIAs.

CEJ has conducted number of programs to promote environmental law among general public. Such include EIA training programs, International Intensive trainings on EIA (10 days) (in the years 2007,2008), National Intensive trainings on EIA (10 days) (in the years 2013, 2014) conducted for the government and private sector officers to give a qualified training on the EIA process.

We have organised 3 days EIA trainings for relevant officials, who plays a major role in environmental decision making such as CEA, police, Pradeshiya
sabha, District secretariats, developers, Private sector, University lecturers, Engineers, CBOs, NGOs, youth groups, etc.

CEJ also commented on around 50 EIA reports of the more significant development projects that challenged the environmental safeguard through development activities.

Gap analysis of the current EIA system which was organised in collaboration with the UNDP, IUCN, IEPSL held in September 2018 and suggestions for improvement is the most recent contribution by the CEJ on this topic.

**SDGs yet to achieve...**

After the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) the world wanted to set a new target for countries to achieve and thereby born SDGs. Soon after the SDG goals were adopted CEJ produced a publication to localise the SDGs. We have trained over 300 politicians using this opportunity. When the government started producing the Voluntary National Review of the implementation of SDG in Sri Lanka, CEJ joined other CSOs and the SDG Platform to produce a Voluntary People’s Review with the support of Action For Sustainable Development, Asia Civil Society Partnership for Sustainable Development (APSD) and Global Campaign against Poverty (GCAP). Asia Development Alliance (ADA).
Environmental and Social Justice award...

Centre for Environmental Justice recognised those who have contributed their time and efforts for environmental and Social justice for a significant period of time. They have been identified from various sector including media.

2014
Rev. Badullagammana Sumanasara Thero
Fr. Sarath Iddamalgoda
Uruwarige Wannila Aththo
Mrs. Kamini Meedeniya Vitarana,
Mrs. Iranganie Serasinghe

Mr. Sarath Fernando
Mr. Rohana Stanley
Mr. E.M. Chandrasekera
Mr. Saheed Mohammed Mubarak,
Mr. Jagath Gunawerdena
Mr. Ravi Algama
Dr. Ranil Senanayake
Mr. M.B. Adikaram

2016
Ven Athurualiye Rathana Thero
Ven Balaharuve Siri Sumana Thero
Mrs. Shireen Samarasooriya
Human Rights defenders are more visible and recognised in any society. However, Environment and Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs) do not have the same recognition both nationally and internationally. According to the United Nations; “Human rights defender” is a term used to describe people who, individually or with others, act to promote or protect human rights.

EHRDs are those who live among the local communities who are risking their lives to protect the nature/ ecology/
Environment and environmental rights for present and future generations with no personal gains. In their personal or professional capacity, individually or collectively, Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs) fight for the realization of the rights and fundamental freedom in relation to the enjoyment of a safe, healthy and sustainable environment.

EHRDs are very vulnerable in today's context. Sri Lanka is not free from harassments, killing, detention, threats, intimidation, stigma, criminalization or legal actions for EHRDs. There were number of incidents in Sri Lanka in the past. Most of them had no political agendas when engaging defending environmental and human rights. In fact, it was hard to separate depending land and environment from fighting for better government or a noncorrupt system.

In the recent years, CEJ brought such EHRDs together to help them understand the risk by sharing each other's experience and create network among them and find ways and means to help them.

**World Environment Day (WED)...**

Among all other events, CEJ also organized celebration of World Environment Day in many times. Mostly, people in
Colombo have the opportunity to join the environment day programs. But in rural areas people and children are not exposed to such programmes. Therefore, this was organized in different districts; Matara (2005), Kegalle (2007), Bibila (2010), Dehiattakandiya (2011), Hungama in Ambalantota (2012), Devundara (2013), Kotaweheramankada in Monaragala District (2016) and Batangala of Kegalle (2018).

World Environment Day Celebration included exhibitions, environmental competitions, Educational exhibition stalls, food and craft stalls, lectures and presentations related to various topics for school children, youth groups and communities.

Department of Wildlife, Forest, Central Environmental Authority, other government institutions, environmental friendly companies, environmental Civil Society Organizations, community groups, school children and youth societies also joined in these exhibitions.

**Youth in Environment Conservation Network...**

Centre for Environmental Justice together with the National Youth Council organised an Environment day programme in 2018 and brought over 150 youth all around the country to learn on environment.
The activity ended by developing the Youth Environment Network (YEN) with a promise to engage in conservation efforts of the country in future.

**Monitoring International Financial institutions**

CEJ plays a critical role in monitoring the Asian Development Bank, World Bank and Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank at the global level. Mr. Hemantha Withanage served as the International Convenor of the bank watchdog NGO Forum on ADB within the period of 2012-2018.

**Environmental mediation...**

Back in 2004, CEJ promoted environmental mediation through conducting over 40 awareness programs. Publications promoted mediation facilitating people to solve environmental issues without going to courts. Awareness programs including legal consultations and over 50 public nuisance cases kept the CEJ lawyers busy at all times.

In 2017 CEJ conducted two mediation programs for Forest vigilance groups at Bogahapalassa and Nilgala. CEJ practice mediation by opening discussions with relevant parties whenever there’s a complaint on an environmental issue.
and try to solve the matter through letters and coordination between parties before considering court actions.

**Environmental Manifesto to President...**

CEJ was among the Civil society organisations to handover the Environmental Manifesto to Presidential candidate Hon. Mithripala Sirisena in December 2014. More than 250 environmental activists gathered for this occasion and signed the manifesto expecting a better environmental conservation for the country. Rev. Aruraliye Rathana Thero also attended this occasion. This event was jointly organised by the “Parisara Sanvidhana Ekamuthuwa”.

**Media tours and Campaigns...**

CEJ work together with the media partners at International, national and regional level to bring about the publicity to environmental issues. CEJ sponsored a radio program on Environmental education in SLBC for several years. They include “Mihithalaya” (30 minutes), “Parisayata Vinadiyak” and 5 Minute Radio programme “Parisara Sirisara” a well known environmental programs conducted by SLBC.

For some campaigns, CEJ produced small video clips, participated in TV (Eg. Pb paint interview at “Mahajana sevaya pinisayi” in Swarnawahini”, “Warenthuwa” against the
construction of the Mattala airport, Nuga sewana and Radio interviews on number of environmental issues.

CEJ organised several media tours in the past to some significant locations with environmental problems. In 2006, over 30 media persons were taken to a field tour to Daduru oya Sand Mining. As they published media reports president announced to avoid environmental damage by this sand mining.

CEJ also organised the media tours to Gampola when Yellow fever spread around the area due to the unhygienic condition in the water. We have also organised media visits to Wilpaththu forest destruction, Uma Oya, Rideemaliyadda Sugar cane project etc.

“Wasa Visa” and other Videos...

CEJ produced a documentary video on toxic chemicals under UNDP/GEF/SGP and many short video clips on rising issues in the recent history. This film was directed by Chamil Jayaneththi.

Publications and Newsletter...

There are number of printed materials produced by CEJ for every project and campaign in order to raise awareness among general public. These include; posters, brochures, leaflets/ handbills, stickers, books and banners/ displays. The first newsletter published by CEJ (in 2004) was “Voice (towards Good governance and Environmental Justice)”. 
It included number of articles considering environmental issues. Since 2008, the name changed to “e-justice”, quarterly news magazine that carried news and articles on existing environmental issues. From 2016 it was published as the “Green eye”.

Support to Media, CSOs and communities

CEJ supported over 25 community members, civil society representatives and media personnel to attend various conferences such as ADB Annual General Meeting, South Asian Conference on Sanitation, lobby meetings to IFIs and exposure visits time to time in other countries. CEJ also involved them in the International Conferences held in Sri Lanka including the major international event held back to back with the Friends of the Earth International Biennial general Meeting held at Tree of Life, Kandy entitled “Role of Communities in environmental decision Making”

“CEJ also organised a national Symposium on the “Potential health and Environmental Impacts of Exposure to Hazardous Natural and Man made Chemicals and their Proper management” in association with the Department of Zoology, University of Sri Jayewardenepura and the financial assistance of UNDP/GEF/SGP, in November 2012. There were more than 60 participants representing universities, individual scientists, government authorities, private organisations and representatives from media. This made a great opportunity for participants to enhance the knowledge on ongoing research work and a stage to grab and develop new research ideas.”
Some International Workshops organised...

2006  Training & Awareness programme on persistent Organic Pollutants (POP's)
2009  Follow up CSO Consultation to the 3rd South Asia Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN III)
2011  Follow up CSO Consultation to the 4th South Asia Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN IV)
2011  CSO meeting for the 4th South Asia Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN IV)
2011  Friends of the Earth Asia Pacific Meeting of IFIs
2012  Apac General Assembly 2012 - Sri Lanka
2013  Asia Lead paint Elimination Project - Workshop 2013
2014  International Conference on the role of Communities in Environmental Decision making
2014  Friends of the Earth Biennial General Meeting
2018  FANSA Regional Workshop on “Strengthening Advocacy Action of CSOs on Sanitation”
2019  Capacity Building Workshop on Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs)
Participants to the International Conference on the Role of Communities in Environmental Decision making
- Tree of Life Kandy- October 2014
Friends of the Earth Biannual Conference - October 2014 - Hotel Tree of Life, Kandy Sri Lanka.
CEJ is the Sri Lankan member to the Friends of the Earth International since 2008
CEJ was not reluctant to acts upon national level crisis. Colombo Port city, illegal settlements at Wilpattu/Mavillu forest, Garbage dump tragedy at Meethotamulla, environmental destruction by mini-hydropower plants, Lead in decorative paint, Environmental pollution due to Norochcholei power plant, Rathupaswala water issue, illegal construction and deforestation in Soragune, etc. are some interventions which CEJ still struggling at the court of law.
Our legal battle begins in Kalpitiya when we tried to protect the sand dunes from illegal mining. Centre for Environmental Justice is very proved to share the summary of its court cases filed in the Court system within the last one and half decade. We were not successful in all our interventions. Yet there are few remarkable achievements. We dedicate them for those who walked with us along this path. We know this is not possible without strong communities, dedicated staff, financial partners and good souls in the media, government agencies and fellow environmental activists and well wishers.

CA WRIT 1866/2004 to protect Sand Dunes in Kalpitiya peninsula

Natural sand dunes along Udappuwa to Kalpitiya in the North western province were being exploited in a rapid rate using machines in 2004 with political support. This become a serious threat to the inland water. People in the area started protesting this mining. CEJ filed a writ application No 1886/2004 against GSMB, Central Environmental Authority and others. The court concluded that the damage is severe and decided to ban mechanical mining of sand in the area.

CA WRIT 551/2005- Coastal zone management

The Coast Conservation Act required to have a survey made on the Coastal Zone and to prepare a comprehensive National Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) once in every four years. With the unexpected tsunami disaster, the necessity of a new Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP) arose. CEJ filed a WRIT application requesting Coast Conservation Department (CCD) to produce a version in 2004 and CCD agreed to prepare the same.

CA WRIT 1380/2005- Genetically modified foods

In May 2005, the Centre for Environmental Justice, filed its writ application No.1380/06, Hemantha Withanage Vs Consumer Affairs Authority and others. Consequently, the Government of Sri Lanka finally approved a GM food labelling legislation (Gazette Ex. Ordinary. 1456/22, 3rd August 2006) on August 2006, making it mandatory for importers and local manufacturers of GM foods to label their products in the future. Genetically modified foods had unidentified health effects and no research had been done in Sri Lanka.

84765/ 05 Madinnagoda water extraction

According to a request made by people is Madinnagoda, CEJ provided legal assistance in the case 84765/ 05 at the Magistrate's Court in Colombo which was filed against a
food processing factory by the Public Health Inspector in the area.

We also work on a complaint made by people within the limits of Seeduwa urban Council area, with respect to the health, and environmental degradation due to decreasing ground water table in the area due to illegal extraction, dragging out and selling ground water in high scale through tube wells by a businessman. This case will be filed under and in terms of Sec. 98 of the Code of Criminal Procedure Act.

CA WRIT 320/2006- Bundala National Park

CEJ filed a Writ application at the Court of Appeal seeking Writs of Certiorari and Mandamus against the Ministers of Agriculture, Environment, Irrigation and Director of Wildlife Conservation and others to protect Bundala Ramsar site from handing over of some land to the private parties. CEJ was seeking for a writ of certiorari quashing the order of the minister and WRIT of Mandamus directing Respondents to formulate Regulations to implement a National Policy on Wetlands in compliance with provisions ( especially under sec 32(2)(b)) of the National Environment Act and Flora and Fauna Ordinance. Respondents were available for a settlement and made an undertaking to formulate a National Policy on Wetlands. Accordingly ,the case was withdrawn on 2007.

CA Writ 1055/2006 NWP Case

CEJ filed CA WRIT 1055/06 writ application in the Court of Appeal against the Chief Minister and others challenging the constitutionality of the North Western Province Environmental Statute (NWPES).The said statute was purportedly made by the relevant provincial council following the enactment of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution in Sri Lanka. Petitioner states that there is no law made by Parliament empowering provincial councils to make statute for the protection of the environment and therefore the said statute is unconstitutional, and sought a writ of Certiorari to quash same. The case was transferred to Kurunagala Provincial High Court as there is the Jurisdiction,by the Court of Appeal and have dismissed.

CA WRIT 1112/2006 - Norochcholai Coal Power Plant

The petition CA WRIT 1112/2006 filed seeking orders in the nature of Certiorari and Mandamus to quash the IEE approval obtained from the North Western Provincial Environmental Authority and to conduct new EIA regarding the Norochcholai Coal Power Plant and to obtain approval from the proper project approving agency in terms of the section 23 of the National Environmental Act and its regulations. The case was not heard until 2012 and asked to withdrew since the power plant was already in operation. This case was filed by S.M Mubarak and seven others with the support of CEJ.
Kandy Magistrate’s Court – Case No: 2130/07

This case is with regard to an unauthorized spray painting and vehicle servicing centre carried out without approval from the relevant authorities as required by law. The activities of this centre caused irreversible and irrecoverable environmental hazards to the general public of the area. The Central Environmental Authority has filed this case, also under the National Environmental Act No: 47 of 1980 as amended, in the Kandy Magistrate’s Court and the CEJ is appearing and providing legal assistance to the aggrieved parties.

CA Wril 1631/06 - Deduru Oya sand mining

CEJ filed this case with a petition against the GSMB and CEA and others dated 30.10.2006 on unlawful mining of sand in the bed, banks, and adjacent areas of Deduru Oya in the North Western Province was considered by the Court of Appeal. Unlawful sand mining has caused intensive damage not only to the environment but to the infrastructure facilities such as Chilaw main bridge, Nikaweratiya bridge, Chilaw railway bridge, Chilaw water pump house and Sengal Oya water diversion scheme. We have prayed that a writ of mandamus be issued against Respondents to take proper actions against persons responsible for unlawful sand mining in Deduru oya, in terms of the law. The Court of Appeal terminated proceedings as there was a similar case in the Supreme Court, which is the highest court. However, the petitioner reserved his right to file a fresh complaint if the reliefs prayed were not granted.

CA Writ 497/07- National Policy on Elephants

Human Elephant conflict is a major problem in Sri Lanka. CEJ filed an application CA Writ 497/07 in the Court of Appeal seeking a writ of mandamus against the Central Environmental Authority and the Minister of Environment for the formulation of a National Policy for Conservation of Wild Elephants in Sri Lanka and for the implementation of the same. We stated the current population of wild elephants in Sri Lanka is about 3000 and elephants are being killed at the rate of 3 per week. Thus, as the Red Data Book published by the IUCN states, in about 10 years time the elephants will become extinct in Sri Lanka, which will have major repercussions. The Respondents cited were the CEA, Director of Wildlife Conservation, Minister of Environmental Resources and the Attorney General. The case was withdrawn in 2007 after the respondents gave an undertaking, on behalf of the Minister, to draft necessary regulations and implement the same.

CA. WRIT 565/07 - National Policy for Solid Waste Management

CEJ filed an application in the Court of Appeal seeking a writ of mandamus against the CEA for the formulation of a National Policy for Solid Waste Management, and the Minister of
Protest against the Colombo Port City- 2016
Environment and Natural Resources to implement the said policy by formulating regulations. The generation of Solid Waste from both domestic and commercial sources, has grown drastically in the country owing to the population growth, urbanization, technological development etc. It is estimated that about 3000 tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste is collected per day throughout the country, but the actual quantum may be much higher. CEJ petition further stated that waste management practices here are highly deficient outdated and lacks of public participation. The case was withdrawn as the respondents have taken steps to amend the National Environmental Act and also to bring relevant regulations and implement same.

CA. Writ 135/2009- Displaying of Unauthorised Posters, Banners, Hoardings

The CEJ filed an application in the Court of Appeal seeking an order in Writ of Mandamus against the IGP and CEA. The petitioner stated that the said posters, banners and hoardings of different sizes, colours and shapes displayed by candidates contesting The P.C. Elections have obliterated the natural beauty and vistas of the cities and major towns. The sites, such as the vicinity of educational institutions, places of worship, buildings of national importance, historical monuments, places of scenic beauty and visual quality, have all been affected. The movement of pedestrians has also been impeded as pavements are obstructed. The authorities concerned (the respondents) have been informed but no satisfactory action had been taken and the CEJ believes that the powers of the courts should be exercised as there is inaction. CEA has undertaken to develop Visual pollution regulations which was not done for 10 years.

Case No.HCWA 03/2009 Unauthorised Piggery in Kandana

CEJ filed an application seeking a Writ of Mandamus against the CEA, Ja-Ela Pradeshiya Sabha Chairman and the AG in the High Court requesting them to exercise their statutory powers against 02 illegal piggeries run in the Kandana area. As the required standards were not maintained and licences were not obtained from the CEA and local authority the general public in the vicinity had encountered serious economic, social and environmental problems.

The case was consequent to failure of the relevant Respondents to enforce their statutory powers. After considering the evidence lead by both parties the High Court delivered a judgment in favour of the Petitioner.

Magistrate’s Court Case No: 63412 Electroplating Factory in Minuwangoda

Owners of an unlicensed industry conducting electro-plating and galvanizing of bolts and nuts, recycling of polythene and fabricating of water tanks were causing irreversible and irrecoverable environmental hazards and asenic pollution to the general public in the area. The CEA has filed this case
Protest during the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP 24), Katowice, Poland - 2018
under provisions of the National Environmental Act No: 47 of 1980, as amended, in the Minuwangoda Magistrate’s Courts on the basis that the industry is being carried on without obtaining a valid license from the relevant Authority. The Central Environmental Authority has filed this case in accordance with the National Environmental Act No. 47 of 1980. CEJ is providing legal assistance to the aggrieved parties.

WP/HCCA/KAL/11/09 - Unauthorised Vehicle Service Station, Bandaragama

A case was filed against an unauthorised Vehicle Service Station, Bandaragama in year 2009 in the High Court. The case is relating to a vehicle service station operating since 2006 violating the existing environmental provisions. This has caused grave environmental and health hazards to the community as high pressure sprays, chemicals and lubricants are used.

Public Nuisance by a Paint factory in Sarikkamulla, Panadura

CEJ assisted the local communities to file a Public Nuisance Action regarding pollution in Sarikkamulla, Panadura. Case was filed under Section 98 of the Code of Criminal Procedure Act in the Panadura Magistrate’s Court against an unauthorized plastic, polythene, car washing chemical and paints manufacturing industry carried out without a valid licence from the authorities causing grave and irreparable damage to the vicinity. Considering the facts the Magistrate issued a Conditional Order to stop all activities in the factory of the company. However the respondent company produced a licence from the authorities and the Conditional Order was dismissed by the Magistrate on 26.01.2010.

MC 13052 – Homagama Magistrate Court

A public nuisance case filed in the Homagama Magistrate Court under section 98 of the Criminal Procedure Code related to a pollution caused by a service station. A conditional order was issued and CEA was asked to produce an inspection report. CEA reported that the site is not suitable for this activity.

HCWA 13/210- Case on Colombo Floods

CEJ filed a case seeking a Writ of Mandamus in the Western Province Provincial High Court (HCWA 13/210) on behalf of the people severely affected by floods due to rain, requesting to compel the State Ministers and relevant State Institutions to remove obstructions which prevent drainage of water in Colombo City and the Western Province to formulate a permanent system to be produced in courts. Chief Executive Officer of the Colombo Municipal Council, Minister of Environment and several others were cited as the parties. The case was withdrawn after the parties given an assurance to implement the plan submitted to the Court.
SC FR 64/2011- Lead in Paint Case

Lead is a known toxicant for the children both born and unborn. Considering the serious health impacts CEJ filed this case seeking an order directing the Consumer Affairs Authority to frame suitable regulation compelling manufacturers of paints to be compliance with international standards relating to the use of lead in paints. As a result, gazette notification No 1725/30 was published on 30th September 2011 by Consumer Affairs Authority with permissible maximum lead contents (90 ppm in emulsion paint and 600 ppm in enamel paint) in paints and accessories. This gazette came into effect from 1st January 2013.

CA WRIT 531/2011- Arsenic case

CEJ filed this Writ application on 2nd of August 2011 seeking a writ of Mandamus directing the Registrar of Pesticides to device and to recommend the government for the implementation of a comprehensive National Policy and criteria for the regulation of a use of pesticides and to require government authorities to comply with said regulations, preventing illegal importation of pesticides, as per the provisions of the Pesticides act. Finally considering the steps taken by the respondents to remedy the situation, the case was withdrawn by the petitioner. Petitioner specially considered scientific research reports published by the academic experts in Rajarata and adjacent areas, revealing the direct relationship between usage of pesticides and CKDue patients. The case was withdrawn by the petitioner in 2013, after considering and recording before court by the steps taken by the Respondents to minimize the above allegations.

Case on the release of arsenic contaminated pesticide containers:

In accordance to the Court of Appeal on the Arsenic issue, High Court Writ Action was also filed by us seeking for a Writ of Mandamus against the respondents for compelling not to release the pesticide containers in custody of the Customs Department which contained Arsenic, that is harmful for human health. Considering the circumstances, an interim order was issued by the High Court, stopping the activities banning the delivering those pesticides to the market. The government Authorities couldn’t comply with the court order, as they have released those containers to the market.

CA WRIT 671/2011- Soragune Golf Course

A legal action was filed in 2011 in the Court of Appeal against an illegal forest clearing by a private company approximately an extent of 628 acres for the construction of a Golf course and a mega holiday resort which comes under the administration of Soragune, Kuda kataragama Devalaya (Shrine) without following the proper environmental impact assessment procedure as directed by the National Environmental Act and other Laws. The CEA announced that
it will not allow this construction since it’s a highly sensitive area.

HRC 4033./11- Arsenic in Pesticides

This Human Rights Commission case was filed on the name of a farmer Mr. Jayatissa in Polonnaruwa area who is suffering from the kidney disease, and other related health problems as a result of using harmful pesticides containing constituents such as Arsenic Mercury and other heavy metals for long term for his cultivation, against the Respondents who neglected statutory duties vested by the Pesticides Control Act.

CA WRIT 401/12 - Nelliyadda illegal logging

The Centre for Environmental Justice filed an application in the Court of Appeal seeking an order in Writ of Certiorari & Mandamus against the conservator General of Forest, Surveyor General, Minister of Environment & Natural Resources & Attorney General against unlawful deforestation done by the unidentified persons in the forest area on Nelliyadda in Monaragala District. Although the Petitioner has informed the land grabbing in several areas relevant authorities failed to take action in performance of the statutory duty vested upon by the Forest Ordinance, National Environment Act. Accordingly we filed the application seeking to exercise said powers.

CA WRIT 385/13- Rathupaswela water Pollution

CEJ filed application in the court of appeal seeking an order in Writ of Mandamus against the CEA, Board of Investment of Sri Lanka & Venigros (Pvt) Ltd. The action is on alleged pollution up the inland water & soil by the Respondent venigros company which is located in a residential area where water pollution has disputed the day to day lives of the people in the petition. It was prayed for a mandamus directing the respondent government authorities to conduct the environment impact assessment about the respondent venigros company & to relocate it in an appropriate area. Case was withdrawn after the company agreed to remove their machineries from the location and shift the industry to another place.

K 16909 – Magistrates Court Negombo

The case was filed by CEJ against certain illegal activities violating conditions of the License that are being carried out by the Melbourn metal Company of Ja-ela which is located in a residential area. The company engages in the production of wire in which process emits health hazardous gases in to the atmosphere as a result of this industrial process. It has created noise air & water pollution which directly affects the people in the vicinity. Accordingly CEJ appears for the Aggrieved party in the Public Nuisance case filed under Section 98 of the Criminal Procedure Act.
B 417/13 14833 Hettipola- Magistrates Court

The case was filed under the section 51(2) North Western Provincial Environment Statute No, 90/12 as amended. Respondent to the case is Nicko battery company Ltd & the Director of North Western Provincial Environmental authority. The company which has been established within a residential area, discharges lead & other toxic gases in to the air.

CA WRIT 112/2015- Colombo Port City

Coastal eco-system & livelihood of more than 15000 families of fisheries community have been affected by the Colombo port city project started in 2014. This Chinese investment have already initiated to reclaim more than 575 acres in the sea. Considering present & future impacts CEJ filed a writ application CA WRIT 112/2015 to quash the EIA report and mitigate the harmful environment, social and economic impacts. The matter is still pending at the counter objection stage.

CEJ filed the amended Petition. Court Directed the Petitioner to support this matter with Notice to the 2nd, 3rd and 4th respondents. The Attorney General had preliminary objections challenging the maintainability of a writ petition filed against the Chinese funded Colombo Port City Project. After considering the facts of Written Submission Court of appeal overruled the objections taken up by the respondents and decided to uphold our arguments and also decided to issue notices on the respondents.

SC FR 273/2015- Uma Oya Multipurpose Project

Thousands of people have been affected due to environmental, social, ecological & geological issues due to the collapse of the Uma Oya tunnel at Kurundugolla in Bandarawela on December 2014. CEJ filed a case on behalf of the people living in the area and the Court ordered to pay more than 3000 million crop compensation with respect to the crop damages, establish three drinking water schemes in Makulellella, Weheragalathenna, and Kurundugolla and pay over 1000 million housing & other building compensation. Case is still continuing at the Supreme Court. More than 7500 houses are already damage & about 20000 families in Bandarawela & Badulla area are suffering from adverse effects of this project.

CA WRIT 291/2015- Wilpatthu Forest destruction

Approximately 3000 hectares in the forest complex adjoining Wilpattu National Park has been cleared for unauthorized resettlement. CEJ filed an application in May 2015, in Court of Appeal seeking an order of Writ of Certiorari and Mandamus against of Conservator of Forest, Director of Wild Life Department, Commissioner General of Land and few others and Attorney General for allowing illegal resettlements in a forest reserve. The report issued
by Auditor General finds that there are many violation of forest, wildlife & state land law during the resettlement in the Vilaththikulam forest area. This case helped to stop the illegal clearance and encroachment. The matter now fixed for the judgment on February 2019.

CA WRIT/516/15 – Encroachment of Soragune Forest

Centre for Environmental Justice and 3 other Petitioners filed a Writ Application in the Court of Appeal on 18th of December 2015 against several illegal activities namely, illegal occupation of the part of the forest reserved area and a part of the property owned by the Soragune Dewalaya, engagement in illegal clearance of forest reserved area and engagement in illegal sand mining from Weli Oya creating series of environmental hazards, engagement in number of illegal activities in the forest reserved area declared by the Gazette Extraordinary bearing No. 1824/20 Dated 22nd August 2013. Approximately 50 acres of Soragune forest have been leased out to (Help Foundation) Mr. Meegasdeniya Kankanamge Sirisena and an illegal clearance of the said forest has been commenced with the intention of constructing a sand mining. Attorney General was directed to make a clear identification ownership of lands via survey department. After considering all circumstances court decided to acquire every related land of the Soragune Dewalaya and the Petitioner met with his pleadings which were seeking in the petition. Accordingly, case was withdrawn by the Petitioner.

APN 01/15 - Destruction of Wattamadu reservation -

CEJ supported the parties to entered this case as an Intervenient Petitioner. This is a Revision matter filed in the Court of Appeal based on a conflict between Tamil & Muslim People for the occupation of a forest reserved in Ampara area (Wattamadu Reservation). It was a dispute between Tamil dairy farmers and the Muslims Paddy & Chena Cultivators. Paddy cultivators tried to destroy grazing lands. The matter was firstly referred to Kalmune Magistrate Court and then appealed before High Court of Pothuvil and final Appeal was filed in Court of Appeal. The Stay order granted by High Court of Pothuvil against activities of paddy farmers was affirmed and extended by Court of Appeal.

CA WRIT 365/16 – Garbage Dump Operated By Gampaha And Attanagalla

CEJ filed a Writ Application CA WRIT 365/16 in Court of Appeal on 25th of October 2016. This matter was filed against unhealthy garbage disposal dump operate by Gampaha & Attanagalle Municipal councils. This issue has raised multiple environmental & social Concerns As it is located in “Dabuwawatte” residential area. Central Environmental Authority & 4 others Have been made Respondents in this matter. The District Development Committee has decided to ban dumping garbage to this site. The respondent proposed an alternative site for waste disposal.
MC 64172/6/16 - Sound Pollution case

On December 6, 2016, the Court issued a conditional order preventing Ven. Uduwe Dhammaloka Thera from using loudspeakers in a manner of causing nuisance at Alan Methiniyaramaya Temple in Polhengoda between 5 a.m. and 6 a.m. The Court had made this order taking into consideration a private plaint filed by six parties including former Minister Milinda Moragoda and Centre for Environmental Justice alleging that Loudspeakers was causing annoyance and disturbance to the residents.

SC FR 137/2017 - Centre For Environmental Justice vs Sustainable Energy Authority & 16 others.

CEJ filed fundamental Rights application to stop a mini hydro power project located in Palan Ganga in a globally and nationally important biological hotspot at Morapitiya – Athwelthota. The permission has been granted without a proper assessment on the detrimental environmental and ecological impact and threat to the point endemic fish species found in the location.

This is the habitat for 2 point endemic fish species and 15 endangered species. CEJ filed the court case to save this pristine location. The court later dismissed this case due to late submission, however all the permits have been elapsed and the location is so far safe.

CA Writ 29/2017 - Kehelgamu Oya Mini Hydro Project

CEJ & Chairman of the “Kithulgala Sancharaka Kalapaye Parisaraya Surekime Sanvidanaya” filed this writ application CA Writ 29/2017 against the mini hydro power plant located in Kithulgala River. According to National Environmental Act in Sri Lanka all the project proponents must prepare EIA/IEE before starting the project. But this project has been approved without an EIA/IEE and also, they had not got the proper approval from the project approving agencies. After hearing the fact, court had issued a conditional order to the project proponent to stop further construction. Leave to proceed was not granted due to a technical ground. However, the respondents have informed the court the project will no longer be carried out.

BR 2297/14  | MCA 46234  | BR 1976/14  | BR 2296/14  | BR 2295/14  | BR 2295/14  | BR 2297 / 14- Magistrate Court-Metal Quarry in Galpatha

Centre for Environmental Justice supported series of Public Nuisance cases filed by the aggrieved parties of eight quarry sites in the Kalutara area under the section 98 of the Criminal Procedure Code in Magistrate Court Kalutara. Magistrate decided that there is no public nuisance. Therefore, aggrieved people decided to file the revision application in High Court in the Kaluthara. As a result of the revision application one of the project proponents filed an appeal in Court of Appeal against the High court case.
CA PHC(APN) 33/2017- Appeal to Court of Appeal

Aggrieved people of the area & CEJ stated their observation against reissuing of the the permit. After the written submission by both parties the Judgment was delivered in open court by Justice K.K Wicramasinghe. This Revision Application was dismissed without a cost and the court granted to continue the high court case.

HC(Rev) 29/2016- Metal Quarry In Galpatha

Accordingly, we have begun to continue the high court case. Now the high court matter is heard before Kaluthara High Court.

SC FR 57/2017 – Centre For Environmental Justice & 4 Others Vs Sustainable Energy Authority & 16 Others.

CEJ filed this fundamental right case on mini hydro power projects as a common mini Hydro case in the Supreme Court on 13th of March 2017 against seventeen government parties. The Petitioners state that a Mini-Hydro Power Plants is constructed by building a weir across a small streams. As a result parties agreed to conduct a Strategic
Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the rivers before new approvals granted. Further Respondents will identify Mini Hydro Power Projects that fail to comply with the minimum Environmental Flow and will implement a mechanism to constantly monitor the minimum Environmental Flow. Joint inspection will be done for the existing Projects and identify any harmful environmental impacts and provide new conditions.

SC FR 152/2017 - Meethotamulla garbage dumping matter

This case was filed on 31st of May 2017 in the Supreme Court against violation of fundamental rights by uncontrolled garbage dumping by the government of Sri Lanka soon after the Meethotamulla tragedy of killing 32 people due to collapse of the garbage dump. President Maithreepala Sirisena (Minister of Environment & Mahaweli) and Minister of disaster management, Anura Priyadarshana Yapa, Central Environment Authority have been cited as the respondents in this case. CEJ brought the attention of court about the dumping of garbage all over the country and asked for formulation of a national policy. As a result, it was agreed to prepare the new policy on waste management and a National strategy was formulated and legislative Committee has been appointed.

SC FR 191/2017- Maru Kanda Mini Hydro Project- -Ananda Premasiri Vs Sustainable Energy Authority & 16 Others.

This case was filed to stop using the lands of several families living along the Kuru Ganga for a mini hydro project and drying up of the remaining 3 km of the river. There are 4 projects already operating along this river. These lands are river reservation and cannot grant permission or deed for commercial purposes or permanent construction. However, Divisional Secretary can allow cultivation by the local communities on annul permits. We have submitted the complaint to the Human Right Commission in Sri Lanka on breaching a fundamental right of the communities. However, the Court observed that the counsel for the petitioners had not even established a prima facia case. Leave to proceed is thus, refused. After the Petitioner filed a fresh application regarding this issue bearing number SC FR 191/2017 on 31st of June 2017. In the first instance of this case Attorney General’s Department raised preliminary objection to the case & court directed parties to support the case connected with the Common Mini Hydro Power Case (SC FR 57/2017). The case was dismissed before the Supreme Court because of a technical matter. But CEJ supports the magistrate court case for petitioners.

MC 14939/2017 plastic factory Kadawatha

CEJ supported local communities living in Mahawela Road, Pahala Biyanvila, Kadawatha to file a nuisance actions
case against an unauthorised plastic sheet manufacturing factory. About 300 families were affected by this industry. Court ordered the factory to be relocated in an industrial zone.

**SC FR 317/2018 – Rideemaliyadda Sugar Cane Case**

CEJ filed a case against sugar cane plantation which is going to be implemented in Rideemaliyadda area acquiring 62500 acres of land in Baulla, Monaragala and Amapara district. Mahaweli Development authority along with companies called Gazel ventures and IMS Holdings are the project proponent. The case filed against 10 respondents including Bibila Sugar Cane Industry and others.

Three petitioners including two farmers and CEJ declare that their fundamental rights including right to lands, right to engage in a preferred profession have been violated with this proposed sugar cane project. Furthermore the petitioners mentioned that Environmental Impact Assessment has not been done for the whole project and it has been fragmented. The EIA approval has only been granted for 149 hectares where sugar cane factory is going to be located. CEJ filed a Supreme Court Case against the proposed sugar cane project and case was heard before the court on 01 st of November 2018. Leave to proceed was granted and summons with petitions will be handed over to the respondents.
CA WRIT 286/2018 - Elephant case

This case was filed seeking a scientific elephant management policy for the country. Elephants in Sri Lanka being killed in an alarming rate during the past several years. Approximately 250 elephants are being killed annually and at least 200 people die annually. The Ministers were doing haphazard management decisions which is detrimental to the species. However, the court of appeal rejected the petition based on technical grounds.

Environmental Cases Taken To The Human Rights Commission

Marukanda- Human Rights Commission Application

Marukanda Mini hydro Power Plant Project was proposed without analysing and addressing significant environmental impacts complying with the EIA provisions of the National Environment Act, in the area of Rathapura District. Lands of several families living along the Kuru Ganga banks are going to be deprived their fundamental rights by the proposed project. Due to the project construction and drying up of
the remaining 3 km of the river. There are 4 projects already operating along this river. If they construct this project people will lose river water for bathing and other purposes. These lands are river reservation and cannot grant permission or deed for these lands for commercial purposes. CEJ on behalf of the petitioners filed this FR application on 05.12. 2016.

Rideemaliyadda sugar cultivation

Affected communities of the Dehigama, Rideemaliyadda proposed sugar cane factory filed a Human rights application seeking their human rights been protected. The complaint was not initially accepted by the Commission however, accepted after several interventions. A hearing was held however, the Mahaweli Authority did not join the hearings. Human Rights Commission was suppose to give another date for the hearing.

Rights To Information Act Requests

CEJ has resorted to Right to Information Act No. 12 of 2016 to obtain approvals & other necessary documents regarding EIAs/IEEs & other current environmental issues.

CEJ received the environmental approvals given by the Central Environmental Authority in few cases. We have
Sri Lankan forests are been disappearing fast due to human actions. They are not just trees. They are habitats for unnumber of unknown species. Trees should be treated as sacred. They clean air and gives fruits, flowers and many other living aid to human and other species. CEJ was instrumental in ordaining trees in number of habitats.
also requested information related to Rideemaliyadda Sugar Cane cultivation agreement issues, The Tripartite Agreement signed on Colombo port city Development Project in August 2016 and the proposed Metro Colombo Solid Waste Management Project.

The Ministry of Megapolis refused to give a copy of the agreement stating that the Chinese counterpart has not allowed them to divulge the agreement.
Fighting Environmental Justice across borders
In Solidarity with Global Struggles

Fighting for Environmental justice is a global struggle. Our common environmental space is now under serious threat due to neoliberal model of development. Rich and poor disparity is a global concern. Our food systems, forest systems, ocean system, climate system are under threat. We cannot fight these struggles separately. Making local struggles a part of the global struggles is an important strategy of the Centre for Environmental Justice.
In the name of FoEI I would like to wish you a great 15th Anniversary and a future full of amazing campaigns for environmental justice. As you know, justice is at the core of what we as FoEI stand for, and we want to thank CEJ for having contributed so much to our federation through years of struggles for Environmental Justice, which in fact are in your DNA as your name clearly shows.

From your campaigns and fights against toxics affecting people’s health, the struggle with local communities against dams and in defense of the rights of climate impacted peoples, to the work in defense of forest and biodiversity as common heritage, you have shown that it is possible to mobilize and resist to defend our fundamental rights and Nature, and to address the root causes of the environmental and social crisis we face.

Your contributions to nurture public debate and advocacy work to change the economic system and the course of so called development have also been amazing, including your continuous efforts to challenge the power of International Financial Institutions in order to allow for more democratic decision making with active participation of the people, as well as the promotion of a Binding Treaty on Transnational Corporations and Human Rights at the UN level.

We will never forget your generous hospitality during our 2014 BGM and the impressive Pre Conference you have organized, involving local communities, social organizations, public officials and religious leaders, to discuss and strengthen our common pathways towards environmental, social, gender and economic justice. Our visit to your beautiful country and the time shared with CEJ left very nice memories in our minds and hearts.

As an international federation aiming to build climate and energy justice, food sovereignty, community forest management, an economy based in solidarity, and radical democracy, we have immense challenges ahead of us. Our member groups as CEJ are fundamental to show that the drastic changes needed are possible and that the real solutions are already being built by the people and demand peoples’ power and proper policies.

In FoEI we all know we can count on your great work to build a better world and future! You can also count on the support and solidarity of our Federation to continue and strengthen your struggles.

Happy Anniversary and many more years of joint work and friendship!

Karin Nansen, Chairperson
Diakonia is looking forward to strengthening CEJ’s hand through our partnership, towards Sustainable Development and a GREEN Sri Lanka with the involvement and engagement of all its people.

Frank Stephen, Country Director, Diakonia

Diakonia is a Swedish Development Aid Organization

On behalf of Diakonia, I take this opportunity to congratulate CEJ (Centre for Environmental Justice) for their tireless work towards environmental justice during the past 15 years, which has propelled them as the leading organization working for environmental justice in Sri Lanka. CEJ’s involvement in the Global environmental scene through the ‘friends of the Earth’ network is highly recognized and commendable. Diakonia values the recognition and acceptance of CEJ and appreciates the role, CEJ plays within Sri Lanka and Globally.
“Congratulations to CEJ on its 15th anniversary! We need more dedicated, public interest entities like CEJ out in the world. CEJ has been a great and longtime partner to IPEN in many areas, including the elimination of lead paint, analyzation of POPs and mercury in Sri Lanka, and awareness-raising about illegal pesticide use. CEJ is a mighty force in the quest for a toxics-free future, and a stalwart supporter of health and the environment both nationally and internationally. Bravo and keep up the great work!”

(Ms.) Jennifer FEDERICO, IPEN Operations & Network Advisor

“Congratulations CEJ for 15 years of very successful campaigning on many important environmental issues to protect the people in Sri Lanka! Your creative, effective and collaborative approaches in the lead paint campaign have already served as models for many other countries and have provided the children of Sri Lanka with a brighter future. My best wishes to both former and current CEJ champions and I look forward to see many more years of successes to come.”

Sara Broche, Lead Paint Elimination project, IPEN
“I congratulate the Centre for Environmental Justice team for 15 years of great, high impact work. Thank you for giving voice to communities and building a better future. Your work reaches across borders and inspires people around the world. Again, congratulations and thanks!”

Bern Johnson, Executive Director,

International Union for Conservation of Nature – IUCN completes its 70 years of existence as the lead global agency for conservation and 30 years ground presence in Sri Lanka. IUCN in Sri Lanka

and Centre for Environmental Justice – CEJ maintained a symbiotic relationship founded on trust that we appreciate and proud of. The role CEJ played over the years had been catalytic, aggressive at times but all in good faith to advocate and ensure that present and future generations enjoy the natural resources in a sustainable manner.

While admiring the leadership of CEJ and its contributions in environmental and social justice, equity and transparency in the governance of natural resources in the country, we wish to take this opportunity to congratulate CEJ for a 15 year of consistent contributions filled with innovative approaches to improve environmental governance and being a regular voice, locally and globally.
IUCN promotes nature solutions and generates vast amount of scientific information useful for environment planning and governance. CEJ pro actively uses local and global scientific data such as information on heavy metal on paints, water quality and plant species etc. In that context, CEJ role in promoting science and advocating relevant authorities to use evidence-based science in natural capital related decision making is complementary to the role of IUCN. We are delighted and lucky to find common grounds with CEJ mostly on the capacity building of environment governance processes in the country that covered Govt., non-Govt., Private Sector and Civil Society Organizations. We keep reminding ourselves that our professional common goal is to enhance the sustainability and resilience of Sri Lankan citizens and its natural resources. In that context, we find solidarity in access to information, improved capacity of Govt. institutions, climate resilience and sustainable development goals. As a conservation agency saying “yes” to development, we at IUCN stand ready to expand our work with CEJ and other partners in all aspects of environmental good governance.

Dr. Ananda Mallawathanthri, IUCN Sri Lanka

Fifteen years of solid environmental justice work is a milestone worth celebrating and especially so in these challenging days. In a world of shrinking civil society spaces and that is getting increasingly dangerous for environmental defenders, Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ) has stood very strong and continues to do so. We salute your focus, determination and commitment to stand with the oppressed, the exploited and impacted communities to demand justice and to show that things can be done differently and that we can achieve best results when we work in harmony with Nature and with our peoples.

We are not only saluting you for the work you have done over the period of 15 years in Sri Lanka, but for your global outreaches and works of solidarity through Friends of the Earth International and other networks and movements that you work in. Your work resonates around the world!

As we toast to your successes, we also send you strength for the expanding challenges that remain to be surmounted. We will continue to stand with you in your efforts as we connect our struggles for the betterment of our people and for the benefit of Mother Earth.

Solidarity! Until victory!

Nnimmo Bassey
Director, Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF), Nigeria, Ex-Chair, Friends of the Earth International (2008-2012)
Greetings of solidarity to all our colleagues at the Centre for Environmental Justice on the celebration of your 15th anniversary from all of us at the Global Forest Coalition.

The Global Forest Coalition (GFC) is an international coalition of 99 NGOs and Indigenous Peoples’ Organisations from 64 countries defending social justice and the rights of forest peoples in forest policies. GFC organises joint advocacy campaigns on the need to respect the rights, role and needs of Indigenous Peoples, women and local communities in forest conservation and the need to address the underlying causes of forest loss.

The Global Forest Coalition has been working together with the Centre for Environmental Justice on various campaigns, including the Women2030 programme. We congratulate the team for their profound work promoting women’s rights and gender justice in Sri Lanka. Through the Women2030, the Centre for Environmental Justice has been building capacity at the national level on gender and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and with local forest communities, particularly women, that are affected by development projects. We support the efforts of your organization and the women and men in forest communities with whom you work with that are collectively struggling against land grabbing and land rights violations as well as depleted water resources, forests, and sustainable livelihoods caused by development projects.

In line with our commitment to the defense of social justice and the rights of forest peoples and Indigenous Peoples, women and local communities, we most especially reiterate our unwavering support for you, our member organization, the Centre for Environmental Justice.

We continue to struggle against neo-liberal, extractivist growth and development paradigms and work towards realising the rights of women, communities and their territories. We therefore send you our support and solidarity to assure you that you have the continued belief and appreciation of your work.

Congratulations and more strength to all of you on your 15th anniversary!

On behalf of the Global Forest Coalition
Simone Lovera, Executive Director and Jeanette Sequeira, Gender Programme Coordinator
UNDP has been very happy to partner with the Centre for Environmental Justice on a number of important initiatives. UNDP and CEJ worked together on a study of pollution in the Kelani River Basin, linked to the water quality of the river that provides drinking water to the capital city, Colombo. Last year, UNDP with CEJ and other partners initiated a discussion on lessons learnt from the Environmental Impact Assessment process as it is applied in Sri Lanka bringing together the regulator, the private sector and government project proponents and representatives of citizens groups to discuss an improved application of EIA regulations and a more informed monitoring process. CEJ is working with the Global Environmental Facility’s Small Grants Programme to develop mechanisms to protect the urban wetlands of Colombo from illegal land uses. CEJ is a trusted and valued partner, and UNDP hopes to develop this partnership further to ensure citizens greater participation in natural resources management and greater transparency in environmental decision-making.

Tharuka Dissanaike
Policy Specialist (Environment and Climate Change)
UNDP Sri Lanka

It gives me immense pleasure to note that Centre For Environmental Justice, Sri Lanka is going to have the landmark celebration of completing 15 years of its committed efforts in championing the cause safe environment for the safe and healthy lives of the current and future generations.

Freshwater Action Network South Asia (FANSA) has been closely working with CEJ for the past eight years which has taken the leadership in initiating FANSA National Chapter in Sri Lanka and connected a large number of well meaning grassroots organizations working for improving access to safe and sustainable water and sanitation services for the poor and most marginalized.

CEJ has been anchoring the secretariat of FANSA Sri Lanka under the leadership of Mr. Hemantha as National Convenor. CEJ played a very constructive role in hosting and facilitating major network events of FANSA in the past few years which include, CSO’s follow up meeting one year after SACOSAN III, pre meeting of CSO’s before SACOSAN IV hosted by Government of Sri Lanka, Regional Strategy Meetings of CSOs and Sector partners in 2016 and 2018.

CEJ has lead the country level consultation process in generating evidence on lack of inclusive and equitable WASH progress and facilitated representation of the peoples
voices in the high level decision making platforms at the Regional and international level. I had the opportunity to visit some of the communities in Sri Lanka where CEJ had taken up bold initiatives of organizing communities against and challenging myopic development projects threatening the ecosystems and the symbiotic relationship between people and the nature.

I have found the team of CEJ extremely respectful to the local communities, professionally committed and hardworking. I must say that I was very impressed with the financial and governance systems of CEJ which is extremely important in adhering to best standards of accountability and professionalism in managing the not to profit organizations.

I found Mr. Hemantha as an extremely committed person who is very knowledgeable, well rooted into the realities of the ground level situation, uncompromising approach in advocating for the cause of ‘people and environment’, internationally very well connected and very simple and humble in his lifestyle.

FANSA is keen to pursue much stronger and deeper collaboration with CEJ in advocating for universal realization of Sustainable Development Goal No.6, ‘Ensure Availability and sustainable management of Water and Sanitation for All’.

I wish to congratulate the entire team and board of CEJ for such wonderful work over the past 15 years and wishing that CEJ should grow to much greater heights in terms of its contribution to sustainable development of the people of Sri Lanka.

Ramisetty Murali, Regional Convenor,
Freshwater Action Network South Asia.

NGO Forum on ADB would like to extend its heartiest congratulations to the Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ) for completing 15 glorious years of success. You have always been on the top of the list for serving the community with your unselfish activities. An organization like yours with a brilliant team of dedicated workers and with a friendly work environment can only aim for success. Working with you has been a real honour and we value each and every engagement. You have been with NGO Forum through thick and thin, from ADB 50 Years to the Mannar Wind Power Project.

With your commitment and sincerity, you have proved your worth and have gained the much-deserved recognition.

NGO Forum on ADB wishes you all the success for many more years to come.

Rayyan Hassan, Executive Director
### Financial contributions

Centre for Environmental Justice thanks following individuals and the organisations for their financial and other contributions to achieve our objectives during the past fifteen years.

- Asian Development Alliance
- Asia Civil Society Partnership for Sustainable Development
- Arnika Association
- Both Ends, The Netherlands
- CEE Bank Watch Network
- Diakonia
- Environmental Law Alliance World Wide (ELAW)
- European Union
- Episcopal Relief and Development
- Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Colombo
- Friends of the Earth JAPAN
- Freshwater Action Network South Asia (FANSA)
- Friends of the Earth International (FOEI)
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland
- Global Forest Coalition (GFC)
- Global Green Grant
- GCAP Global Foundation
- International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN)
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- IPEN Switch Asia Project
- Just Environment Charitable Trust
- Korea Green Foundation
- Korea Zero Waste Movement
- Korean Federation of Environmental Movement (KFEM)
- Ministry of Environment & Natural Resource, Sri Lanka
- National Endowment for Democracy (NED)
- New Venture Fund
- NGO Forum on ADB- ADB watchers since 1992
- OXFAM Australia
- Pure Earh/Blacksmith
- SHALIN Ry, Finland
- Siemenpuu Foundation, Finland
- Sunrise Project Australia Ltd
- Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC)
- Takagi Fund
- Toxics Link (The Just Environment Charitable Trust)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- UNDP, GEF small Grant Programme
- UK AID
- UNICEF
- Water Aid International
- World Justice Project
- Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC)
Messages from CEJ Board of Directors

Centre for Environmental Justice has a clear path to engage in Environmental advocacy and activism both locally and globally. It has a solid foundation built gradually over the last 15 years. We truly believe working together. Our strength is our membership, local civil society environmental activists and network of global organisations truly believe that each of environmental justice actions would lead to a greater system change for people and the planet.
Strong foundation has been laid

It gives me great pleasure to present this message to the publication prepared to mark our 15th Anniversary.

As we look back at the evaluation of the Centre for Environmental Justice since its inception in 2004, we can be pleased with the many successes the Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ) has achieved, and as we look forward we can be confident that the strong foundation, that has been laid will enable the CEJ draw from strength to strength.

Our team headed by Hemantha Withanage and Dilena Pathragoda maintain their winning streak receiving national and international accolade for good work and hard work done for the betterment for the mother earth. At this juncture we extremely proud to report that CEJ is considered as the best environmental organization operated in the country at present by national and international entities.

We acted for the growth of the CEJ in an aggressive but sustainable manner by enhancing the geniality of our work with a version focusing on environmental protection and environmental justice.

I also take this opportunity to thank all community organization and community leaders who acted hand in hand with us to achieve our aims and targets by arresting us in numerous ways. We also thank our founders at this memorable occasion for funding our projects, trusting our dedication and commitment for the environmental Justice.

Finally I seek your encouragements and guidance in order to achieve our goals and targets during our future journey ahead of us.

Ravindranath Dabare, Attorney at Law
Chairperson

Unbound struggle on environmental justice

Environmental conservation is an undeniable responsibility for the humankind. Its my 28th year in the environmental activism to make a better world. I have been in the environmental struggles since the campaign against Kandalama hotel. I have
contributed to save Eppawela Phosphate mine from privatization. I was instrumental in filing the Eppawela lawsuit in 1999. During this period I have contributed many other battles. My best contribution is building the CEJ from scratch.

As Centre for Environmental Justice we have contributed 15 years our joint effort to save the planet, the life forms, humankind and nature. This is an ongoing struggle of millions of people around the world. I am happy that CEJ I co-founded is now playing a significant role in this massive struggle locally and around the world. It is in the forefront of the environmental justice struggle.

I salute all frontline environmental defenders, CEJ members, all supporters at every level and the global environmental movement for joining this path and helping us during the last 15 years. I also thank all financial contributors to CEJ to make this possible. I am very much thankful to the CEJ co-founders Ravindranath, Chandana, Dilena and the Board of Directors appointed time to time Iranganie Sersasinghe, Kamini Vitarana, Suranjan Kodithuwakku, Suramya Edirisinghe, Shivantha Withanage, Ranjan Atigalle and Dr. Kokila Konasinghe for their commitments.

We have much more to do. I expect each of their untiring contributions to continue this struggle in the future.

**Hemantha Withanage, Director**

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**Most of our targets achieved**

It was a very modest beginning, with a staff of 2-3, and almost no resources to run an office. Many people have been critical on this journey. Today I want to pay tribute to all of them. Our founder members, Board of Directors, Staff Officers, Our Partners, Friends & Supporters.

When the Centre of Environmental Justice was born, we had high hopes and aspirations to make it a leading environmental organization. In the following years, those aspirations were often challenged. And finally we have achieved most of our targets in protecting and safeguarding the environment by creating a platform which serves “Environmental Justice for all”.

So as we look back as to whether we have been true and faithful to our founding objectives, we can say with pride that we have played our part. The network of friends of CEJ has grown over the years, through the creation of CEJ. As the needs of the communities who seek environmental justice have grown, the Centre for Environmental Justice has strived to respond. Now we must redesign ourselves for the new challenges and opportunities that CEJ faces. We must
constantly rethink our tools, our systems, our responses to make sure that we provide equal opportunities for all.

No organization has a divine right to exist. The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual. We still have a lot to do.

Centre for Environmental Justice.. You’ll Do Great!

**Chandana Sesath Jayakody, Director**

**Built solidarity on environmental matters**

The Center for Environment Justice (CEJ) has made a mark during its 15-year existence at National, Regional and local levels in environment protection, good governance, fair play and educating the general public on good governance principles and environmental issues at local level.

CEJ is a leading non-governmental agency who has taken a leading role in national issues like Port City Development Project, Wilpaththu Deforestation and Uma oya Development Project are some the highly controversial initiatives of the successive governments in the recent past. However the CEJ had the courage and ability to fearlessly lead the legal battles, and mobilize the affected parties through awareness creation in times where many NGOs were afraid to take up the challenge.

The cases in Nilgala and Athweltota are unique examples of their environment conservation efforts to protect the endangered flora and fauna. CEJ was instrumental in highlighting the factual errors of the relevant environmental reports in many instances challenging the so called “experts” of their findings. They successfully established several vigilance groups at the village level to protect the local forest and developed a tool and a hotline to report on forest crimes under a UNREDD Programme.

CEJ has been involving in many net works, fora in Sri Lanka to foster solidarity in environmental matters and always played a major role and at some instances pioneered the work. CEJ at times act as an activist, mobilize communities, lead in advocacy, act as facilitators and mediators and take up legal action to obtain justice for the people and environment.

CEJ is still in their second decade and are with capable people who know their scope of work and has a long way to go. They have already stamped their name in the NGO sector in this country.

**P R Attygalle, Director**
Connected with the grass root level

Sri Lanka is not in the forefront of green movements in comparison with India and many other Southern states. Therefore, as an academic in environmental law I sincerely wish we had more institutions and non-state actors who would genuinely dedicate for a greener world.

In this context, I place Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ) at a significant place among other green actors in the country for their contribution so far. It shows immense positive impacts on the community through its activities towards protection, promotion and preservation of nature and its riches.

I greatly appreciate the CEJ for its ability to connect with the grassroots level community organisations effectively all over the island. Building up a wider and diverse network among various resources and thrive them to achieve a common goal towards conserving nature is not an easy task and that is exactly what CEJ has been doing for past 15 years.

I am blessed and honoured to be a part of Centre for Environmental Justice at this glorious moment.

Dr. Kokila Konasinghe
Senior Lecturer, Department of Public and International Law, Faculty of Law, University of Colombo

We work with multi-stakeholder groups

Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ) was born unexpectedly on 28th January 2004. It was the effort of four co-founders to initiate a new environmental organization to address people’s voice on environment under the vision of “Justice for All”.

When we formed the CEJ, we never thought that CEJ would play the role of a pioneer Environmental organization in Sri Lanka within next few years. But it was achieved within a short period of time, even if we had many barriers on our journey.

As an environmental organization we are working on both environment and people. May it be internationally, nationally, regionally or locally. We always raise our voice on
environmental and human rights on behalf of people. But at the same time we are working with government ministries and authorities and they have recognized us as a powerful organization working on environmental matters. Because we fight against all destructive activities, despite of the power of the person they being created.

I take this opportunity to thank, especially the Co-founders of CEJ; Hemantha Withanage, Ravindranath Dabare and Chandana S. Jayakody and the Board of Directors for guiding all the activities, we conducted and achieved success within this one and a half decade. Also the current and the former Staff members who have done their superior job during the last period. My special gratitude goes to all our funding agencies that were the financial strength of CEJ’s work.

I wish all the success for CEJ efforts in protecting the environment in future.

_Dilena Pathragoda, Director_

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**Long Journey with multiple challenges**

Let me forward my sincere gratitude to present this massage on this great day celebrating Centre for Environmental Justice’s (CEJ’s) 15th anniversary.

Undoubtedly years in this field is a long journey with bulk of challenges. At the evolution of our own, it is not an exaggeration that CEJ has kept exclusive and remarkable boundaries as the best environmental organization on its way towards the conservation and protection of environment and natural resources and bringing justice to the real owners of the mother earth.

CEJ has been fighting with politically empowered personalities, local, international and multinational organizations that were behind so called top level national development projects during last one and half decades. However a limited number of staff of CEJ has proven all the time that unity, brotherhood and hard work means a lot even in such a juncture.

My specials thank goes to all the staff including each and every minor staff members headed by Mr. Hemantha Withanage during such a long period of time.
I would like to thank all funding agencies, community based organizations that work together and keep trust on us, and professional colleagues who encourages and well-wishers in achieving our goals towards enhancing the concept of sustainable development for the betterment of next generations.

_Nilmal Wickramasinghe, Director_  
_Attorney-at-Law_

_We had a passion for protection_

Fifteen years ago, 5 or 6 people got together to form an organisation to ensure Justice for the Environment. There was little money, no office, but what they had was passion for protecting the environment, determination, and experience as they had been working for the environment before.

They saw the value and the necessity of the legal process to gain Justice for the Environment, and justice for all those humans and animals whose lives are destroyed by unthinking activity sometimes called development. Hard work and commitment produced results and today we the Centre for Environmental Justice (CEJ) is a force to be reckoned with in environment protection.

Congratulations and Best wishes to all working in the CEJ for now and the future.

_Kamini Vitarana, Director_

_Those who rule need to be more conscious and loving towards the county_

We do not care much about what we have inherited from the nature. There was a time where the whole world spoke about the environment. Even Lord Buddha, mentioned about the value of protection the environment in the Dhamma Preaching. Natural environment has a greater value. But unfortunately many people do not understand this. Everything is lined. One fails, everything fails. Our young generations need to be educated on this.
I’m too much worried where we will end up in the course of technology development. Today world is more leaned towards commerce. It’s a system of buying and selling. Today kids do not have much time to enjoy the natural environment or to learn about relationships in the nature. Those days we very much enjoyed nature, learned a lot about small insects. One time during a film shooting some kids from our team asked me what is “Niyara”. Desire and jealousy are biggest weaknesses. Jealous destroys a person’s mind.

“Ruk Rakaganno” has a long history. Me, my friend Mr. Nihal Fernando and Mr. Pat Dekkar were founders. Nihal Fernando was a skilled photographer in wildlife. When we were working in the Times News Paper in late 1940’s during an exhibition the idea came for an our own organisation and Ruk Rakaganno was the outcome.

Wild Life and Nature Protection Society brought up a proposal to declare Yala, as an animal sanctuary. People raised the question why protect a land for leopards? At such times we had to convince people that they are also part of the environment and they also should get to live. Yala became sanctuary and shooting of animal was prohibited. It is a pain to hear the death of hundreds of elephants due to many reasons in these days.

Centre for Environmental Justice engages in many legal and environmental battles. But new characters also must come forward. More conservation oriented young generation should be built.

Today, rulers are appointed through elections. Their voters, followers expect something in return. So they are gratified through exploitation natural resources such as forests. I think today politicians must be more concerned about the environment. Everyone should give their priority for environment. In this occasion, where CEJ celebrate 15th Anniversary I wish all the strength and courage to a long journey.

Iranganie Serasinghe, Former Director
“everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels”.

(Article 1 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders)

Environmental human rights defenders are the heart of our future and the future of our planet…They are committed to protect your right to land, water, air, soil and nature. It’s your responsibility to defend them.