



The Environmental Programme
Environment Forum February 2009

3.	<p><u>Questions and Discussions</u></p> <p>Q - Mr. Chandeeep Corea, SLWCS: Waste separation initiatives should be promoted as ‘financially beneficial’ activities, as opposed to it being a ‘responsibility’ to society, in order to ensure they go forward successfully.</p> <p>A - Dr. Sujatha Gamage, LIRNEasia: It won’t work for individuals, as their separation results are in lesser quantities, and selling them to recyclers is not feasible. But for companies, especially the private sector, it is a good approach.</p> <p>Q - Mr. Ravi De Silva, Aitken Spence Hotels: Discipline and consciousness lacking in our people, but there will be a marked improvement in the next generation. Many activities at school level to educate children. Waste management will be integrated with the school curriculum in the near future. Therefore in another 5 years, the scenario should definitely change for the better.</p> <p>Q – Use of Bottled Water Anjali - Many hotels and restaurants use plastic water bottles as opposed to the more sustainable practice of serving water from a jug. As a collective this should be changed- the fact that Sri Lanka’s water is of good quality should be widely disseminated and we should not just cave into the whimsical wants of tourists. This bottle water trend should be changed- it is slowly happening.</p> <p>A - Mr. Hasantha Lokugamage of Jetwing Hotels Jetwing uses glass bottles instead of plastic at their hotels. Another reason besides the handling and transport difficulties of glass bottled water is the scarcity of suppliers in Sri Lanka - there are only two suppliers for glass bottled water and the quality of the water of one supplier is not up to standards.</p> <p>Ms. Michele Mirchandani said that if the use of water dispensers is promoted at meetings, offices, restaurants and even hotels,(where the waiters can distribute from the dispenser and assure the guests that the water came from a clean source), it would work to some level towards reducing the usage of plastic bottles.</p> <p>Mr. Ranjith De Silva of Gami Seva Sevana Ltd said that if the customer continues to ask for water form a jug, the waiters at restaurants and hotels will eventually convert. People shouldn’t have to pay for water! Therefore the thinking style of the people needs to be changed.</p>	<p>CHA Environment programme and other parties</p> <p>Many organizations are involved in such awareness programmes as is our environment programme</p> <p>All present at the forum! Please take action at every point possible. Ask for the jug of filtered or boiled water and refuse the plastic bottle!</p>
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<p>Mr. Samarkkody of the Waste Management Authority Bigger promotional notices should be issued saying that water in Sri Lanka is 'drinkable' and there is no necessity to use 'bottled water'. Large scale public awareness by the Water Board is a must.</p> <p>Mrs. Kumari M. Weerasinghe from NBRO Water board has done many surveys on the quality of water in Colombo, but this information has not been publicized. If they did, the general public would be assured that they needn't use bottled water and that water in Colombo is clean for drinking.</p> <p>Q - Miss Gayathri Ganeshan from Hatton National Bank For large office groups, it is not practical to use many glasses alongside a dispenser, is there any other alternative?</p> <p>A – Anjali again pointed out the use of jugs instead of water bottles.</p> <p>Ms. Michelle suggested the use of 'drinking fountains' instead of dispensers.</p> <p>Mrs. Jalthota from CEA commented that the CEA has banned the use of plastic bottles at their premises, which is a practice other companies/organizations can also implement.</p> <p>Dr. Sujatha Gamage said one can debate on the importance of the 'water bottle' against the 'lunch packet', which environmental hazard should be given more priority. She also stated that when it comes to the 'waste' problem, there is a lot of incentive at a high level, but they are not activated. Many organizations are addressing the subject, but collective measures are not taken.</p> <p>Mr. Samrakkody of WMA said that they have invested on storage facilities for 48 local authorities to store the separated waste they collect. That there is a system in place for the 'sorted waste' and the management of 'Sampath Piyasa' collection points.</p> <p>Ms. Nirmi Vitarana of Federation of Canadian Municipalities said that Local Authorities should be more involved in waste management initiatives. Penalties need to be imposed.</p> <p>Ms. Priya Ramachandran of WMA also stressed the need for public awareness on better waste handling/management.</p>	<p>Environment programme to see if this can be achieved via the water board- interested parties please let us know</p> <p>The environment programme will attempt to obtain this information and see if wide dissemination is possible</p>
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Q - Mr. Ranjith De Silva of Gami Seva Sevana Ltd asked if we can organize any programmes in Kandy, especially as Kandy is a city that needs better waste management practices.

A – Anjali: It can be done, hopefully with the help of the CEA and WMA.

4. **Conclusion**

The Chairperson wrapped up the forum by discussing future initiatives, stressing on this forum's objectives to get the private sector involved in better waste management practices. She discussed the possible areas for partnerships identified by CHA:

- **Waste Management**
 - Communicating 3R to the Public
 - 3R Newspaper Advertisement Campaign
 - Organizational Waste Separation Initiatives
 - Improvement of 'Sampath Piyasa' Drop off points
 - As public awareness centers
 - *Enhancing the livelihood of caretakers*
 - Return Policies at Supermarkets
 - Bottle Returns – MD, Kist
 - Plastic PET Bottle collection points
- **Greening of the Colombo City**
 - Street-lines, Car Parks and Roundabouts
 - Marine Park on the Marine Drive
 - Vehicle Emission Testing Stations

These objectives / proposals for possible partnerships will be communicated to all participants, so that they can discuss with their colleagues and get back to us on how they would like to contribute / partner with us.