



**Side Event at UNFCCC COP24
Katowice, Poland**

“A Tropical Country Response to Climate Change with Integrated Water Resources Management Strategies”

Date, Time, Venue: 4 December 2018, 13:15 – 14:45, Room Pieniny

Organizers: Government of Sri Lanka & Global Water Partnership

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Climate action is about water action, and integrated approaches are critical

The urgent context to accelerate mitigation and adaptation laid out by the IPCC’s Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C demands that the effectiveness of climate action be examined and enhanced, to ensure that the most vulnerable populations, economies and ecosystems truly build resilience. This is particularly important for water - 9 out of 10 countries prioritize water actions for adaptation in their NDCs, but 6 of these do not have a sufficient foundation of water infrastructure and institutions to manage their water effectively and efficiently.¹

¹ 2018 GWP analysis of adaptation components of over 80 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), in conjunction with the UN’s 2018 Progress Report on SDG6 (Water).

Water management is complex, and successful in the long-term only if decisions are taken in an integrated manner – across sectors and multiple governance layers, sequencing infrastructure and institutions, and balancing priorities of equity, the environment, and the economy. This approach becomes even more critical for small tropical islands composed of diverse microclimates and varied hydrological conditions, with shifting and less predictable hydrological patterns and more frequent and intense extreme events that come with climate change, all amidst increasing demand for water for people and the economy.

Water, the problem of climate change: tropical small islands among the most vulnerable

Sri Lanka is a case in point: Revolving around agricultural activities, Sri Lanka's economy and its people's livelihoods are highly dependent on effective water resources management and eco-system protection. Since ancient times, Sri Lankans have managed their water, with availabilities drastically differing in the country's wet and dry zones, via a vast network of thousands of water harvesting reservoirs and irrigation water distribution infrastructure across the country, governed by a water allocation system that balanced equity among populations and respected nature's needs. Climate change has disrupted this delicate balance in Sri Lanka's water management system. Ranked amongst the most vulnerable countries in the world, this tropical island state is experiencing dual challenges of harsher floods and drought, more intense rains and subsequent landslides, and sea level rise. All of these directly threaten Sri Lanka's food and energy security, arresting economic and livelihood activities especially for the poorest and most vulnerable.

Water, an important part of the solution: experiences and lessons from Sri Lanka

Faced by increasing uncertainty and water stress, small tropical islands are compelled to 'get it right' when it comes to water management. Sri Lanka is a model country that has many experiences and lessons to share: in modeling climate impacts to target the most vulnerable areas, in using water as an entry-point to design cross sectoral climate adaptation and mitigation responses, in mobilizing both traditional and modern water management infrastructure and technologies, and in preparing and packaging water investments – across infrastructure, management instruments, and governance mechanisms – to successfully secure climate finance.

This event will discuss, taking Sri Lanka and other developing countries as cases, the challenges and opportunities for effectively undertaking water-related climate mitigation and adaptation for tropical small island countries – in the context of effectively delivering on its commitments via implementing its National Adaptation Plan, while achieving its SDG targets, and raising ambition of its Nationally Determined Contributions.

The event aims to:

- Share experiences and lessons from Sri Lanka on managing water – via a balance of infrastructure investments, governance mechanisms, and management instruments – to adapt to climate change
- Discuss the value of the NAP process in outlining Sri Lanka's strategic framework for responding to climate change, and the importance of an integrated, ecosystem-based water management approach in this process
- Discuss national-provincial coordination in Sri Lanka's adaptation planning and programmes

- Discuss good practices and approaches to facilitate stakeholder engagement in water-related adaptation initiatives, including gender responsiveness and vulnerability-targeting
- Discuss challenges and lessons on mobilizing climate finance, including from the GCF, for climate resilience water projects
- Discuss the need for science-based, country-driven approaches to climate change adaptation in water sector

PROPOSED DRAFT AGENDA

13:15-13:17	<p>Welcome by Moderator Confirmed: Ms. Vositha Wijenayake, Executive Director, SLYCAN Trust</p>
13:17-13:27	<p>Opening Address: Addressing climate change impacts on Sri Lanka's water sector (10 mins) <i>Confirmed:</i> Mr. Anura Dissanayake, Secretary, Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment, Government of Sri Lanka</p>
13:27-13:30	<p>Brief introduction of all Panelists by Moderator, followed by a pre-agreed question from Moderator to each Panelist. Panelists will make their interventions in the context laid out by the Secretary (8 mins each). Some panelists will present a few slides to hone their key messages, others will use talking points. This interactive format/avoiding a series of presentations will hopefully make the session engaging.</p>
13:30-14:10 (8 mins per panelist)	<p>Learning from the ancient Kings to adapt to the future: Rehabilitating Sri Lanka's ancient cascade reservoir system for increased water and food security (highlight stakeholder inclusive processes) <i>Confirmed</i> Dr. Buddhi Marambe, Professor, University of Peradeniya</p>
	<p>An ecosystem-based response strategy for climate resilience in Sri Lanka's highlands <i>Confirmed:</i> Dr. Tony Simons, Director General, International Council for Research in Agroforestry</p>
	<p>Accessing climate finance for climate resilient water projects (highlight gender responsiveness and vulnerability targeting) <i>Proposed:</i> Dr. Oyun Sanjaasuren, Director of External Relations, Green Climate Fund</p>
	<p>Climate information services for water related adaptation – articulating the climate rationale in country readiness and project proposals <i>Confirmed:</i> Mr. Frederik Pischke, Senior Programme Officer, Global Water Partnership & World Meteorological Organization – Integrated Drought Management Programme (IDMP) and Associated Programme on Flood Management (APFM)</p>
	<p>Integrated water management strategies for adapting to climate change – experiences from West and Central Africa <i>Confirmed:</i> Dr. Sarra Touzzi, Senior Programme Officer, Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean</p>
14:10-14:40	<p>Moderated Q&A with audience</p>
14:40-14:45	<p>Conclusions and wrap up by Moderator <i>Confirmed:</i> Ms. Vositha Wijenayake</p>