

A PROGRAMME ORGANIZED BY THE INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS, SRILANKA

Date: Friday, 05TH June 2020
Time: 16:45 – 18:00hrs
Place: Virtual (<https://www.iepsl.lk/webinars/>)
Target Audience: Open – Special Invitations to be sent to the IEPSL Membership

Introduction

World Environment Day is the most renowned day for environmental action. Since 1974, it has been celebrated every year on 5th June, engaging governments, businesses, celebrities and citizens to focus their efforts on a pressing environmental issue. In 2020, the **theme is biodiversity** – a concern that is both urgent and existential. Recent events, from bushfires in Brazil, the United States, and Australia to locust infestations across East Africa – and now, a global disease pandemic – demonstrate the interdependence of humans and the webs of life, in which they exist.

Biodiversity is the varied life around us. The greater the diversity, the more sustainable life is. Conserving biodiversity ensures resilience to risks and better capacity at coping with incident impacts. In today's context therefore, the conservation of biodiversity becomes even more important and it becomes our civic responsibility to ensure it is not harmed or destroyed in any way.

The Institute of Environmental Professionals, Sri Lanka is the umbrella organization of environmental professionals in the country initially established in 2006 through a Cabinet Decision. It was formally incorporated by Act of Parliament No 01 of 2020. The Institute was established to fill the much-needed gap of having no professional institute for practicing environmentalists to uphold the dignity and raise the reputation of the environmental profession in the country. The Institute is committed to extending professionalism and its services to the country at large, for the benefit of the public.

Agenda

16:40 – 16:45hrs **Logging In** - A link will be provided to registered participants beforehand to log in to the virtual programme.

16:45 – 17:00hrs **Introduction to IEPSL** – Mr H S Premachandra, *President of IEPSL*



Introduction to Topic and Panelists

by **Moderator** Mrs Shiranee Yasaratne, *Former Country Representative, IUCN Sri Lanka and Advisor, Biodiversity Sri Lanka*

Introduction will cover the following:

- IEPSL's interest and involvement
- The significance of the day and the commemoration
- Its timeliness in that today's challenges in terms of human activity and how solutions to same can be found through natural processes - are we tipping the balance

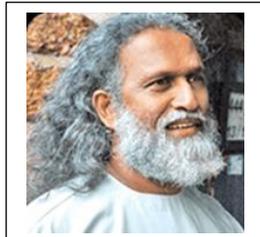
17:00 – 17:40hrs

Moderated Panel Discussion

Panelists:

- **Prof. Sarath Kotagama** – *Emeritus Professor, University of Colombo*

- Biodiversity is the varied life around us. The greater the diversity, the more sustainable life is.
- Conserving biodiversity ensures resilience to risks and better capacity at coping with incident impacts.



- In today's context therefore, the conservation of biodiversity becomes even more important and it becomes our civic responsibility to ensure it is not harmed or destroyed in any way.



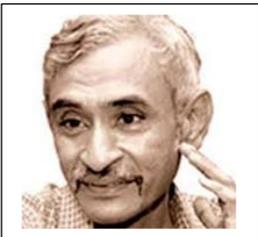
- **Dr Nishanthi Perera, Free Lance Consultant**

- Unique diversity in the ocean and aquatic environments
- The benefits humankind derives from the ocean and our individual and collective duty to use its resources sustainably for future generations
- Dependence on ocean biodiversity for a diversity of uses.
- Celebration of all that the ocean gives us and the need for us to protect it



- **Mr Samantha Gunasekera, Former Deputy Director, Sri Lanka Customs**

- It is common belief that the wildlife trade and consumption has led to the current situation the world is facing in terms of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- While scientists are looking to prove such theories with more reliable evidence, it is not a myth that zoonotic diseases exist and has put the human population at great risk from time to time.
- As such, a dialogue on the implications of the wildlife trade on heightening this risk and how a possible ban of this trade will enable humans to minimize this risk to a greater extent, is essential to be had.



- **Mr Jagath Gunawardena, Attorney at Law**

- the severity of the wildlife trade, and its implications
- The situation in relevance to Sri Lanka and the steps being taken by the Government of Sri Lanka
- How the private sector can contribute towards overcoming challenges in this respect and action currently undertaken in this regard
- Opportunities for other actors to join in the effort towards the country's commitments towards the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and related national requirements.



- **Ms Kanchana Weerakoon, President Eco-friendly Volunteers**

- The role of biodiversity in lay-people's lives – whose voices count in biodiversity conservation?

17.40 -18.00 hours

Open Discussion

Organizers:



Mr. Ajith Ethugala
Hony. Secretary
IEPSL



Dr. Sampath Wahala
Editor - IEP SL



Mr. Trishan
Perera
Council Member
IEPSL



Ms. Piyumi
Dedigamuwa
Executive Secretary
IEPSL