

IEPSL NEWSLETTER



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INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS SRI LANKA

Incorporated by the Act of Parliament No. 01 of 2020, as the premier organization for Environmental Professionals in Sri Lanka



IEPSL EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

ELEVATED CO₂ LEVELS PRESENT COMPLEX CHALLENGES AND UNCERTAINTIES FOR SRI LANKA'S AGRICULTURE SECTOR

As a country what can we do to
face these challenges?

INTEGRATED ROOFTOPS: EVERY SQUARE METRE COUNTS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HEAT WAVES

Integrated rooftops designed for
heat-wave resilience

Picture: Nature Revival Walk at Beddagana Wetland Park, organised by the
Youth Environmental Professionals Forum (YEPF) of IEPSL

ABOUT



The Institute of Environmental Professionals Sri Lanka (IEPSL) was established in 2006 following Cabinet Paper No. 06/1365/221/026 and was subsequently incorporated by the Act of Parliament No. 01 of 2020. As the premier professional body for environmental professionals in Sri Lanka, IEPSL is dedicated to upholding the dignity, integrity, and reputation of the environmental profession. IEPSL provides professional leadership through capacity building, knowledge sharing, technical guidance, and the promotion of Chartered Membership for environmental practitioners. Committed to excellence and ethical practice, the Institute strives to strengthen environmental professionalism and extend its expertise.

Vision

To be a vibrant body of outstanding environmental professionals contributing effectively to the advancement of the field of environment and for resolution of environmental problems confronting the modern society.

Mission

To protect the dignity and recognition of the profession through education, research and application of scientific knowledge while contributing to maintain high standards in the practice of environmental management.

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• P R E S I D E N T ' S N O T E •

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HELLO



COMRADES

The IEP SL Newsletter reflects our shared commitment to advancing climate resilience, environmental stewardship, and sustainable development during the 2nd quarter of the year. Through the insights and experiences of our members and partners, we aim to inspire dialogue, innovation, and collaboration that will shape a more resilient future.

As environmental professionals, we have both the privilege and the responsibility to lead this transition. Let us continue to champion evidence-based solutions, build partnerships, and empower the next generation to safeguard our natural heritage for generations to come.

Best wishes,

Asela Iddawela
President

Elevated CO₂ Levels Present Complex Challenges and Uncertainties for Sri Lanka's Agriculture Sector

The World Meteorological Organization highlights that atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) is now increasing at nearly three times the rate observed in the 1960s, underscoring the accelerating pace of climate change. A decade-long period from 2011 to 2020 saw an increase of 2.4 ppm per year, as the annual average increase of 0.8 ppm turned into the phenomenon of global warming. The year 2023-2024 saw an unprecedented rise in global average CO₂ concentration of 3.5 ppm, the largest increase since modern measurements began in 1957. (WMO, 2025).

Elevated CO₂ concentration can create a huge impact to critical agriculture sector of Sri Lanka. Although elevated CO₂ enhances plant growth, the other climate effects and the ground agronomic challenges that are created by CO₂ are higher than its positive effects (Wijeratne et al., 2026).

A major concern is the "nutrient dilution," in which plants grow faster but contain lower concentrations of essential nutrients such as proteins, zinc and iron. This could deteriorate the highly valued quality and flavor profiles of important export commodities like Ceylon Tea and risk the nutritional security of staple crops. The increase in CO₂ levels is a major driver of global warming, which leads to more frequent and severe extreme weather events. Changing weather patterns, including more frequent droughts, floods, and unpredictable rainfall, are already resulting in crop losses. Consequently, increased CO₂ supports the growth of invasive plants and may change pest and disease relationships, thus raising the need for chemicals in agriculture. The report emphasizes that Coconut, a major economic crop, may be less responsive to elevated CO₂ levels, which would then make the plant more susceptible to heat and water stress. The industry's overall strength is now being challenged.

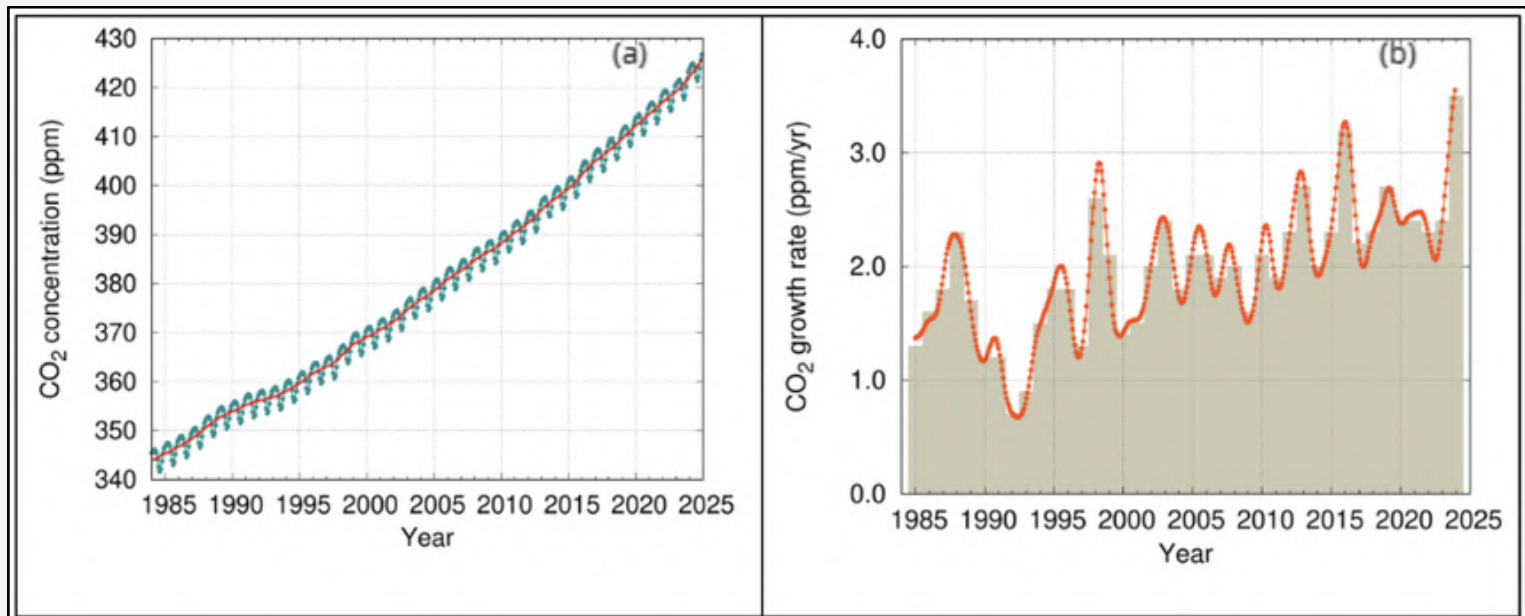


Figure 1: The concentration of CO₂ averaged globally (a) and its annual increase (b) between 1984 and 2024 are shown here. The shaded columns in (b) represent the annual mean increments. The red line of (a) indicates the monthly mean with the seasonal variation removed; the blue dots and blue line in (a) show the monthly averages (WMO, 2025).

Theoretically, elevated CO₂ can improve photosynthesis as well as water-use efficiency in certain crops like rice, tea, and some vegetables. However, research shows that these advantages are strongly dependent on optimal nutrient levels, especially nitrogen.

Yet, Sri Lanka is facing nutrient deficiencies in soil. It can affect the yield of any kind of food. The Ministry of Agriculture, along with the Department of Agriculture, is advised to give importance to the breeding of climate-resistant plant varieties and the development of eco-friendly farming methods.

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Authorities emphasize the need to revise fertilizer recommendations and strengthen soil health management to mitigate nutrient leaching. In Sri Lanka, it is a dangerous oversimplification to assume that elevated CO₂ concentrations will benefit agriculture uniformly. Evidence suggests that the overall impact is likely to be adverse, with significant implications for food security, farmers' livelihoods, and export revenues unless science-based adaptation strategies are implemented promptly.

As a country, what can we do to face these challenges?

- We can directly integrate climate adaptation and CO₂ into national agricultural policy. This must be a collective effort by the ministries of Agriculture, Environment, Irrigation, and Science.
- Emphasize the "CO₂ Fertilization Effect" Realities: Study the compromise between the possible rise in yield and the decline in essential minerals (such as zinc and iron) in rice and other major grains.
- The development of varieties with improved nutrition is necessary.
- The land should be cultivated to produce traditional millets (kurakkan), pulses, roots, and other crops that are tolerant of climate changes and thereby increase diversity in food.
- Increased levels of carbon dioxide might alter the chemical composition of plants and turn some of the crops more vulnerable to pests.
- Therefore, it is advisable to fortify national monitoring and early warning systems, and also, to conduct training programs for farmers on Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

Following above mentioned steps, we will be able to successfully face this effect of elevated CO₂ in agriculture sector.



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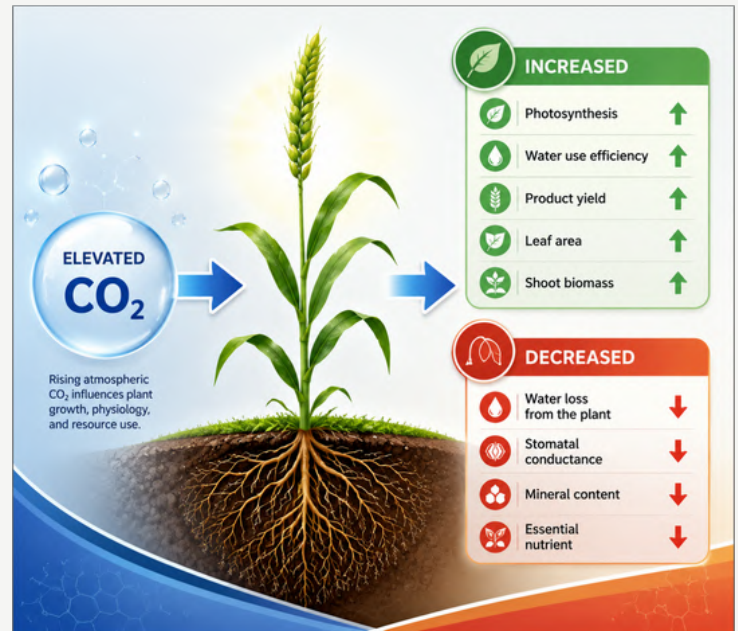


Figure 02: Impact of elevated CO₂ on plants

Reference:

Wijeratne, V. P. I. S., Mehmood, M. S., Jayatunga, J. N. D., & Manawadu, L. (2026). An Integrated Participatory Framework for Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices from the Lens of Climate Change, Farmers' Perceptions and Adaptations. Sustainability, 18(7), 3401. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su18073401>

WMO (2025) Carbon dioxide levels increase by record amount to new highs in 2024, <https://wmo.int/news/media-centre/carbon-dioxide-levels-increase-record-amount-new-highs-2024>

IEPSL Events



IEPSL and BFIN Strengthen Regional Cooperation Through Climate Finance Training

IEPSL in collaboration with the Banking, Finance and Insurance Institute of Nepal (BFIN), successfully conducted a five-day Climate Finance Training Program from 18–22 May at GAPHQ, Colombo. The program aimed to strengthen regional cooperation between Sri Lanka and Nepal while enhancing the capacity of banking professionals and institutional representatives in sustainable finance and climate-resilient banking. The training covered key topics including Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) integration, Environmental and Social Risk Management (ESRM), green financing, sustainable lending, and climate finance mechanisms.



A major highlight was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between IEPSL and BFIN to foster collaboration in professional training, environmental governance, and sustainable finance initiatives in both countries.



The inaugural session was attended by distinguished guests, including Mr. Vijay Kumar Raut, Deputy Chief of Mission and Counsellor of Nepal, and Mr. Kapila Mahesh Rajapaksha, Director General of Sri Lanka's Central Environmental Authority. The speakers underscored the growing importance of integrating climate considerations into banking operations, investment decisions, lending practices, and long-term financial sustainability.

The programme adopted a practical, interactive approach through case studies, simulations, field visits, group exercises, and micro-teaching sessions, providing participants with hands-on experience in climate finance and ESG implementation. Covering climate finance fundamentals, Environmental and Social Management Systems (ESMS), social safeguards, green product development, climate risk integration, and ESG-based credit assessment, the programme concluded with confidence that it would strengthen professional networks, promote knowledge exchange, and support the transition to resilient and sustainable financial systems across South Asia.



Address by Mr. Vijay Kumar Raut,
Deputy Chief of Mission and Counsellor of Nepal



Address by Mr. Kapila Mahesh Rajapaksha,
Director General of the
Central Environmental Authority (CEA)



Mr. Rohitha Uduwawala, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, is receiving
tokens from BIOFIN



IEPSL Events

YEPP Organizes Nature Revival Walk at Beddagana Wetland Park

As part of the World Biodiversity Day and World Environment Day celebrations, the Youth Environmental Professionals Forum (YEPP) of Institute of Environmental Professionals Sri Lanka successfully conducted the "Nature Revival Walk & Discussion" on 24 May 2026 at Beddagana Wetland Park.

Facilitated by environmentalist Ms. Narmada Dangampola, the guided nature walk brought together undergraduates, graduates, youth environmentalists, and nature lovers for an immersive learning experience within one of Colombo's most valuable urban wetland ecosystems. Participants explored the ecological significance of wetlands, observed native biodiversity, and discussed the importance of conserving natural habitats in rapidly urbanizing landscapes.

The programme promoted environmental awareness through direct engagement with nature while encouraging participants to appreciate biodiversity conservation and the role of wetlands in supporting ecosystem services, climate resilience, and sustainable urban development. The event also strengthened networking and collaboration among young environmental professionals committed to protecting Sri Lanka's natural heritage.



Integrated Rooftops: Every Square Metre Counts in the Fight Against Heat Waves

Across the world, cities are learning that their best defence against the brutal heat waves isn't always a new park or a massive cooling project: it's the roofs above our heads. Green roofs and solar panels have long been a part of this conversation. Now, cool roof paints are emerging as a crucial new layer in the integrated rooftop toolkit, turning the same patch of urban surface into a multi-purpose shield against extreme heat.

Why Heat Waves Demand “Layered” Roofs:

Heat waves strike cities the hardest because concrete, asphalt, and dark roofs soak up sunlight, store it, and release it slowly throughout the night. Top-floor residents, those without air-conditioning, and people in densely built neighbourhoods feel the worst of it. A single solution, for example, just planting more trees or adding solar panels, can help but rarely addresses all the ways heat affects buildings and people.

Recognising this need, integrated rooftops tackle the problem from multiple angles at once. Green roofs cool and manage stormwater, solar panels cut emissions and power cooling, and now cool roof paints directly attack the physics of overheating by reflecting sunlight away. Together, these measures allow each square metre of the roof to perform far more climate work than any one solution could ever achieve alone.

Cool Roof Paints: The New Frontline Against Heat

Cool roof paints are specially designed coatings that bounce a large fraction of incoming sunlight back into the sky and radiate heat away efficiently. Where a traditional dark roof might become scorching hot under the midday sun, a coated roof stays noticeably cooler, sometimes dozens of degrees lower. This temperature difference matters not only for building comfort but also for human health during extreme heat events.

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When Cool Roof Paints are added as a New Integration to Rooftop Systems, they:

- Lower indoor temperatures, reduce the need for air-conditioning and make the top floors more livable.
- Cut peak energy demand during heat waves, easing the pressure on overstressed power grids.
- Reduce the background “heat reservoir” that keeps cities hot late into the night, when bodies most need to recover.

In other words, cool roof paints turn the roof into a passive heat-wave defence system that operates continuously, requiring no behaviour change from the residents.

How Cool Paints Strengthen Green Roofs and Solar Panels?

The power of cool roof paints becomes clearer when you see how they interact with existing rooftop technologies.

- **Under solar panels:** A reflective coating beneath and around solar arrays can keep the roof surface cooler, which helps the building and can improve panel efficiency because most solar technologies perform better at lower temperatures. The combination means more electricity is produced with less heat trapped.
- **Next to green roofs:** Cool-coated zones around planted areas reduce the overall thermal load on the building. Green roofs then focus on evapotranspiration, habitat, and stormwater management. The paints and plants work in tandem: one reflects heat away, the other cools and absorbs water.
- **On roofs that cannot support heavy loads:** Many older buildings cannot safely hold deep soil or heavy installations. Cool roof paints offer a lightweight option to still join the integrated rooftop network, delivering serious heat protection without structural upgrades.

Integrated Rooftops Designed for Heat-wave Resilience

Picture a heat-wave-ready roof in a dense neighbourhood. The central area holds the solar panels angled toward the sun. Beneath and around them, the roof is coated with high-reflectance, high-emittance cool paint, slashing surface temperatures and protecting interiors. At the edges, lightweight green roof modules add plants that cool the air and soak up rainwater.

During a heat wave:

- The cool paint keeps the roof and upper floors significantly cooler than a conventional roof.
- Solar panels provide extra electricity during periods of peak heat, helping power fans, efficient air-conditioning systems, and community cooling centres, when demand is at its highest.
- Green roof sections provide micro-habitats for biodiversity and pockets of cooler air, while also holding rain if a storm follows the heat.

All of these happen on the same roof, in the same limited space. The building becomes a miniature climate system, actively helping the city to face extreme temperatures with no extra land taken up on the ground.

From One Roof to a Heat-smart City

When cool roof paints are integrated across many buildings alongside green roofs and solar panels, the effect scales up. Entire districts experience lower peak temperatures. Vulnerable communities benefit from quieter, cheaper, and more reliable cooling. Power grids face less strain when heat waves push demand upward. Meanwhile, the city becomes more climate-resilient without needing to carve out new open spaces in already crowded streets.

Integrating cool roof paints into rooftop design isn't just a cosmetic upgrade; it's a strategic move. By adding this reflective layer to the existing mix of vegetation and solar technology, cities can turn every available square metre of roof into an active ally against extreme heat.



By weaving cool roof paints into the design, integrated rooftops become more flexible. Even buildings that can't host lush gardens or large solar arrays can still contribute to citywide cooling.



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IEPSL Events

IEPSL Participates in World Ocean Day 2026 Beach Clean-up Initiative

In celebration of World Ocean Day 2026, the Institute of Environmental Professionals Sri Lanka (IEPSL) participated in a beach clean-up programme organized by EnCare, the environmental engineering and waste management subsidiary of the Sisili Projects Consortium, at Negombo Beach on 8 June 2026.

The initiative brought together a diverse group of participants, including representatives from the Sri Lanka Police, school students from the Negombo area, environmental professionals, and volunteers, demonstrating a shared commitment to protecting Sri Lanka's coastal and marine ecosystems. The beach clean-up served as a reminder of the vital role oceans play in sustaining life, supporting livelihoods, and maintaining ecological balance. Through the collective removal of marine litter, participants contributed to improving the health of the coastal environment while raising public awareness of the importance of responsible waste management and marine conservation.

IEPSL is proud to support initiatives that promote environmental stewardship and community engagement. Such collaborative efforts reinforce the importance of collective action in addressing marine pollution and advancing sustainable environmental practices for the benefit of present and future generations.



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IEPSL Events

Youth Environmental Professionals Forum Marks World Biodiversity Day with a Special Webinar

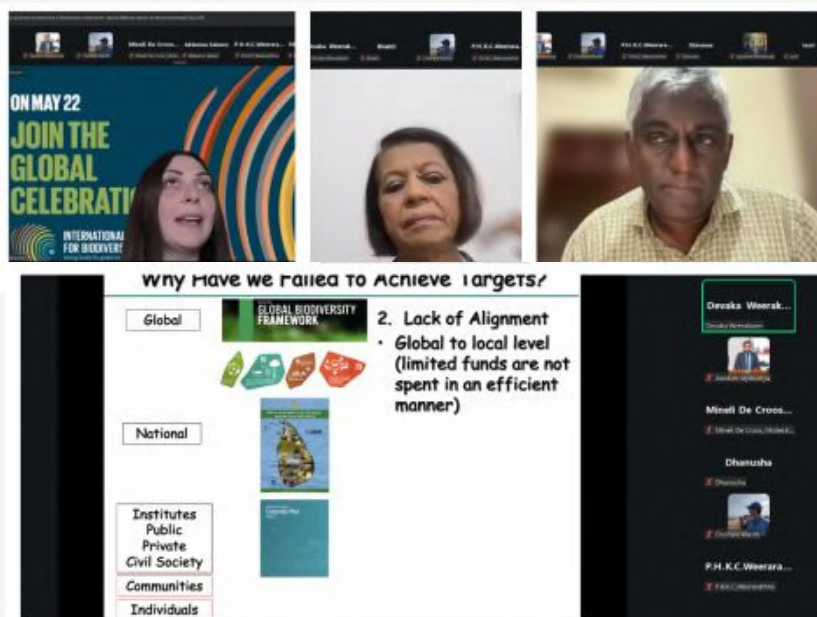
In celebration of World Biodiversity Day 2026, the Youth Environmental Professionals Forum (YEPF) of the Institute of Environmental Professionals Sri Lanka (IEPSL) successfully organised a special webinar on 22 May 2026, in line with the global theme, "Acting Locally for Global Impact." The event highlighted the importance of locally driven initiatives, professional collaboration, and youth engagement in addressing biodiversity loss and contributing to global conservation goals.

The webinar featured an expert panel discussion on Future Directions for Youth and Professionals in Biodiversity Conservation," bringing together leading environmental professionals, including Prof. Devaka K. Weerakoon (Senior Professor, University of Colombo), Dr. Alla Aleksanyan (Senior Consultant for UN CBD COP17 at WWF), and Mrs. Shiranee Yasaratne (Senior Technical Advisor of Biodiversity Sri Lanka and Immediate Past President of IEPSL).

This meaningful discussion created an inspiring and inclusive platform for young people, industry professionals, university academics, researchers, policymakers, and environmental advocates to exchange knowledge, to share practical experiences, and to explore future research perspectives related to biodiversity conservation and sustainable environmental action. By bringing together participants from diverse backgrounds, the session encouraged interdisciplinary dialogue, strengthened professional networks, and promoted greater collaboration between youth and established experts in the environmental sector.

The session provided participants with valuable insights into emerging biodiversity conservation priorities, prospective career pathways for young environmental professionals, and the importance of strengthening and improving youth engagement in biodiversity governance.

The interactive discussion encouraged the session participants to transform environmental knowledge into practical and meaningful conservation action while fostering collaboration among students, professionals, and nature enthusiasts.



IEPSL Events

IEPSL Commemorates World Ocean Day with a Webinar on Science Communication

To mark World Ocean Day on 25 June 2026, IEPSL hosted a special webinar under the global theme, "Strong Marine Protected Areas for Our Blue Planet."

The webinar, "Science Communication and the Use of Social Media for Conservation Purposes," explored how effective science communication and digital platforms can bridge the gap between research and society, inspire action, raise public awareness, and support meaningful ocean conservation.

The session featured Dr. Nathan J. Robinson, a marine biologist and researcher at the Institut de Ciències del Mar in Barcelona, Spain. Drawing on his experience in marine research and public engagement, Dr. Robinson shared valuable insights into translating complex scientific findings into compelling and understandable messages for diverse audiences. He also discussed how researchers, conservationists, and organisations can use digital storytelling and social media strategically to reach new audiences, counter misinformation, strengthen public participation, and turn scientific knowledge into practical conservation action.

Prof. P. B. Terney Pradeep Kumara, Director General of the CC&CRMD, joined the session as the expert commentator, highlighting the role of science communication in strengthening marine conservation efforts. The webinar provided participants with a deeper understanding of how communication can bridge the gap between science and society, build stronger connections between researchers and the public, and contribute to the protection of marine ecosystems and biodiversity. It also reinforced the importance of using credible, creative, and inclusive communication to foster a more informed and engaged community committed to safeguarding our blue planet. The webinar also highlighted the critical role of impactful communication in advancing ocean conservation efforts and encouraging greater responsibility towards the environment.

Organized By:
Institute of Environmental Professionals Sri Lanka (IEPSL)

Special Webinar Session on
World Ocean Day
"Strong Marine Protected Areas for Our Blue Planet"

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION AND THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR CONSERVATION PURPOSES

Explore how effective science communication and social media can inspire action, raise awareness, and drive meaningful conservation outcomes for our oceans.

**Featured Speaker**
Nathan J. Robinson
Doctor of Philosophy,
Researcher at Institut de Ciències del Mar
Barcelona, Spain

Nathan Jack Robinson is a marine biologist and science communicator from the United Kingdom. During his career, Robinson has been at the center of several viral videos. These have included videos of him removing a plastic drinking straw from the nostril of a sea turtle.

 **25th June 2026** | At **CEST 3.00pm Sri Lankan Time 6.30pm**

 **Via Microsoft Teams**
Join us for an engaging discussion on how science storytelling and social media platforms can be powerful tools to protect our oceans.



Webinar Coordinators – Dr. Kasunthi Amarasekara (0718205462) kasunthia@ocu.ac.lk
Ms. Shamli Rathnasri (0773151496) shamla@ocu.ac.lk

Expert Commentor – Prof. P.B. Terney Pradeep Kumara, Director General of the CC&CRMD





IEPSL Events

IEPSL Participated in ToT Program on Circular Economy and Biogas-Based Circular Business Models

IEPSL participated in the two-day Training of Trainers (ToT) Program on Circular Economy and Biogas-Based Circular Business Models held on 2–3 July 2026 at Camelot Hotel, Negombo. The program was organized under the FAO-led "Circular Economy in the Food Sector (CIRCULAR) 2024–2027" initiative, with support from the European Union and implementation partners. The training brought together professionals representing MSMEs, local authorities, the hospitality sector, farmer organizations, and environmental institutions to strengthen national capacity in promoting circular economy practices and sustainable biogas technologies.

The program featured expert-led technical sessions by the Lanka Biogas Association and FAO on circular economy principles, food waste management, biogas technologies, biofertilizer production, AI applications, and sector development. Participants also visited Jetwing Blue Hotel and Maxis Farms, Bujjampola, gaining practical insights into integrated biogas systems, wastewater treatment, renewable energy generation, and the conversion of livestock waste into biogas and organic fertilizer.

The program enhanced participants' technical knowledge and demonstrated the role of biogas in advancing Sri Lanka's transition towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient circular economy. IEPSL acknowledges FAO, the Lanka Biogas Association, and all partners for organizing this impactful capacity-building initiative.



IEPSL features highlevel panel discussion

IEPSL Events

“Beyond Borders”: Advancing Regional Environmental Cooperation in South Asia

A high-level panel discussion titled “Beyond Borders: Leadership, Governance, and the Future of Regional Environmental Cooperation in South Asia” was successfully held at the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) Headquarters in Colombo on 19th June 2026. Organised to explore the future of environmental collaboration in the region, the event brought together experts and stakeholders to discuss the growing need for collective action in addressing environmental challenges that transcend national boundaries. Issues such as transboundary air pollution, shared river systems, plastic pollution, climate impacts and natural disasters require coordinated regional responses rather than isolated national efforts.

The distinguished panel featured Mr Norbu Wanchuk, Director General of SACEP; Dr Tara de Mel, Executive Director of the Bandaranaike Academy for Leadership and Public Policy; and Dr (Eng.) Arosha Hemali, Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Technology, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, representing the Institute of Environmental Professionals Sri Lanka. The session was moderated by science writer and communication consultant Nalaka Gunawardene, who guided the conversation on regional cooperation, environmental governance and the role of different sectors in achieving sustainable development.

The discussion focused on the role of leadership, governance and institutional frameworks in strengthening environmental cooperation across South Asia. While countries in the region face similar environmental pressures, progress towards regional solutions remains challenging due to political complexities and differences in national priorities. The panel highlighted the need for stronger commitments, better coordination and collaboration among governments, scientific institutions, academia, civil society and the private sector to strengthen regional environmental cooperation.

The session highlighted how scientific partnerships and knowledge-sharing initiatives across South Asia can provide valuable lessons for policymakers, particularly in areas such as the circular economy, sustainable production and consumption. Participants also reflected on the importance of involving diverse stakeholders as active partners in environmental decision-making processes.

The event served as a timely platform to recognise that environmental challenges in South Asia are interconnected and require shared solutions. By encouraging dialogue among regional experts and institutions, the panel discussion contributed to a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges in advancing regional environmental cooperation. It reaffirmed the importance of visionary leadership and collaborative approaches in building a resilient, sustainable and environmentally secure future for South Asia.



Members' Corner



Heartiest congratulations to Dr. Manoj Prasanna of the Ministry of Environment on receiving an award at the Global Environmental & Korean Grand Awards 2026. This well-deserved recognition, presented at a ceremony organized by the International Environment Olympics Committee, celebrates your dedication, hard work, and outstanding contribution to environmental sustainability. Your achievement is a source of pride and an inspiration to all who are committed to creating a greener and more sustainable future.



IEPSL extends its heartfelt congratulations to Dr. C. K. Muthumala, Assistant General Manager – Research, Development and Training Division of the State Timber Corporation, on being awarded the Gold Medal in the Environment Conservation Category at the “Sahasak Nimawum” Awards. This prestigious recognition, presented by the Hon. The Minister of Science and Technology at the award ceremony held on 26 June at the Auditorium of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, reflects Dr. Muthumala's outstanding contributions to environmental conservation, research, and innovation. The event was organised by the Sri Lanka Inventors Commission, recognising individuals whose innovations make a meaningful impact on the nation.



IEPSL extends its warmest congratulations to Mr. Randeewa Malalasuriya, Vice-President of IEPSL on being honoured with the Outstanding Leadership Excellence Award at the 45 Under 45 Leadership Excellence Platinum Awards 2026, organised by the Global CEO Forum. This prestigious recognition is a testament to Mr. Malalasuriya's visionary leadership, dedication, and outstanding contributions to business excellence and innovation. IEPSL is proud to celebrate this remarkable achievement and wishes Mr. Randeewa Malalasuriya continued success.



Warmest congratulations to Dr. Sampath Wahala, Editor, IEPSL on his appointment as the Head of the Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka. Your dedication, leadership, and commitment to academic excellence continue to inspire the department towards greater growth and success.



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<https://forms.gle/V3LWFxhCPscWryTL8>

Research and Publications Committee

Local News and Updates

Sri Lanka Bans Single-Use Plastic Bottles in Government Institutions, Introduces Bag Charges



Sri Lanka has banned the purchase and use of single-use plastic water bottles in all government institutions, effective May 31, under a new government circular aimed at reducing plastic waste within the public sector. The directive applies to government offices, meetings, and official events, and encourages the use of reusable alternatives and improved drinking water infrastructure instead of disposable plastics. The policy also includes measures such as charging for plastic bags as part of broader efforts to curb consumption. The move aims to tackle Sri Lanka's plastic pollution crisis, which is damaging waterways, beaches, marine ecosystems, and waste management systems.

Environmental officials note that the challenge lies not only in introducing bans but in ensuring effective enforcement across institutions and public behavior change. According to the National Plastic Waste Inventory (2024), Sri Lanka generates around 250,000 metric tons of plastic waste annually, but recycles only about 11%. Large volumes remain uncollected or are improperly disposed of, while a significant share is lost in the waste management process. Around 70% of Sri Lanka's plastic waste comes from single-use plastics, showing the country's heavy reliance on disposable items.

Climate Week 2026: Declares New Forests, Wetlands, and Dune Protection Zones

Sri Lanka marked World Environment Day 2026 with a nationwide "Climate Week" (May 30–June 5), combining conservation measures, policy updates, and public engagement. Key actions included the declaration of five new reserved forests: Ritigala, Aliyawetunuwewa, Mulagala, Konkatiyawa, and Kallanchiya, along with new environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, dunes, and hot spring sites.

Additional measures included enhanced National Green Reporting Guidelines, designation of the Magama Sand Dunes as a sensitive area, and new protections for the Kuda Bubula Spring and Kapurella Hot Water Wetland. The program also featured the launch of environmental publications including Soba, Soba Ketha, and a plastic waste management resource book, alongside eco-innovation and art competitions led by the Climate Change Division and the Central Environmental Authority. The national event was officially certified carbon-neutral, with the certificate presented to the President.



Local News and Updates



El Niño and La Niña 2026: Sri Lanka Caught Between Shifting Climate Conditions

Sri Lanka's climate conditions in 2026 were shaped by shifting El Niño and La Niña (ENSO) influences in the Pacific, reflecting a year of heightened climate variability rather than stable seasonal patterns. By mid-year, El Niño-leaning conditions became more apparent, contributing to inconsistent monsoon behaviour and broader uncertainty in seasonal weather systems.

At the same time, lingering ENSO fluctuations meant that La Niña-like patterns could still emerge regionally, adding further complexity to rainfall distribution, temperature trends, and overall climate predictability across the island. These alternating influences placed sustained pressure on key sectors, particularly agriculture, water management, and energy production. Irrigation-dependent farming areas experienced planning difficulties as water availability became less predictable, affecting planting cycles and increasing operational risk for farmers. Reservoir-based hydropower systems also faced fluctuations in inflows, occasionally requiring greater reliance on thermal power generation to maintain energy stability. Looking forward, the 2026 experience highlights how Sri Lanka is increasingly exposed to the combined effects of both El Niño and La Niña phases, rather than one dominant pattern at a time. Stronger climate forecasting, improved water systems, and diversified energy planning are essential to reduce vulnerability. The key lesson is that climate risk now requires long-term, adaptive resilience across multiple sectors.

Global Shark Conservation Conference Held in Colombo

Sri Lanka made history by hosting Sharks International 2026 in Colombo from May 4–8, marking the first time this massive global marine conference was held in Asia. The landmark event gathered over 800 scientists, policymakers, and conservationists from more than 80 countries to confront the escalating global crisis facing shark and ray populations. Rather than just discussing the issues, the forum focused on concrete action: scaling up cutting-edge technologies like environmental DNA (eDNA) monitoring and satellite tracking, strengthening marine protected areas, and fixing the enforcement gaps that allow overfishing to persist. By placing the biodiverse Indian Ocean region at the center of the conversation, the conference set a new benchmark for turning marine research into practical, localized policy.



Local News and Updates

Urban Conditions Fuel Dengue Spread: Control Efforts Expanded



Sri Lanka has intensified nationwide dengue control operations as health authorities report a sharp rise in infections linked to worsening environmental conditions in urban and semi-urban areas, particularly during the ongoing monsoon period. A coordinated island-wide programme is currently underway across multiple districts, focusing on the elimination of mosquito breeding sites in households, schools, construction zones, and public institutions. Inspection teams have been deployed at the local level to identify and destroy stagnant water sources, with special attention given to clogged drainage networks, uncovered water storage containers, and areas where solid waste has accumulated.

Authorities say a significant share of breeding hotspots are emerging from built-up environments, and inconsistent waste management has created ideal conditions for mosquito proliferation. Flooding and irregular rainfall have increased mosquito breeding by creating more standing water and straining drainage systems. Authorities have strengthened enforcement, including legal action against breeding sites and expanded community cleanups. Long-term control requires improved waste management, drainage, and regular environmental maintenance.

Sri Lanka Enacts Landmark Environmental Law Overhaul

On 24 June 2026, Sri Lanka's Parliament approved a landmark amendment to the National Environmental Act, marking one of the most significant environmental policy updates in decades. The reform strengthens the Central Environmental Authority (CEA), modernises Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedures, introduces legal protection for wetlands, and establishes new frameworks for hazardous waste and chemical management. It also introduces Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), requiring producers to take greater responsibility for post-consumer waste. The amendments also embed Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) into law, requiring environmental considerations in national policies and development plans. They significantly increase penalties for environmental offenses, introduce stricter controls on wastewater and pollution (including vibration), and expand institutional coordination among key environmental agencies. New rules also align Sri Lanka more closely with international standards such as the Basel Convention and OECD polluter-pays principles. While widely seen as a major step toward modern environmental governance, the effectiveness of the reforms will depend on enforcement capacity and implementation.

Global News and Updates

Santa Marta Conference Sets Out Roadmaps for Moving Beyond Fossil Fuels



The first international conference devoted entirely to transitioning away from fossil fuels was held in Santa Marta, Colombia, from April 24–29, 2026. Co-hosted by Colombia and the Netherlands, the gathering brought together representatives from 57 countries and 13 stakeholder groups, with more than 1,500 participants from governments, academia, civil society, Indigenous communities and the private sector. Discussions focused on reducing economic dependence on fossil fuels, transforming energy supply and demand, and strengthening international cooperation. The conference produced several practical initiatives, including a coordination group to maintain momentum, three international workstreams and a new scientific panel to help countries develop transition roadmaps aligned with global climate goals. Participants also discussed national strategies for moving away from coal, oil and gas. However, the outcomes were not legally binding, and major fossil-fuel producers, including the United States and Saudi Arabia, did not participate. The summit nevertheless established a new platform through which willing countries can exchange knowledge, coordinate policies and translate climate commitments into concrete national action.

Bonn Climate Negotiations Lay the Groundwork for COP31



UN Climate Change Conference - Bonn

The UNFCCC's June Climate Meetings were held in Bonn, Germany, from June 8–18, 2026, helping prepare key issues for decision-making at COP31 in Antalya, Türkiye. Negotiators addressed climate finance, national adaptation planning, transparency, a just transition and the implementation of commitments arising from the first Global Stocktake. The meetings highlighted the importance of meaningful participation by Indigenous Peoples and local communities as countries work to translate international climate commitments into practical national action. During the meetings, Türkiye's incoming COP31 Presidency launched elements of its Global Climate Action Agenda. These included a target to increase electricity's share of final global energy demand to 35% by 2035, halve the growth of global waste and reduce energy-consumption intensity in the building sector by at least 25% through a resilient-cities initiative. Although several difficult negotiating issues remained unresolved, the Bonn discussions clarified priorities and built momentum ahead of COP31,

Global News and Updates



World Environment Day 2026, hosted by Azerbaijan on June 5, placed the climate crisis at the centre of the world's largest platform for environmental action. Under the theme “Climate Action” and the campaign #NowForClimate, the observance called on governments, businesses, communities and individuals to accelerate efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while preparing for the climate impacts that can no longer be avoided. The campaign highlighted the growing threats posed by extreme heat, changing rainfall patterns and other climate-related hazards. It also coincided with warnings from the World Meteorological Organization that warming Pacific Ocean conditions made the return of El Niño increasingly likely, potentially raising global temperatures and intensifying droughts, floods and heatwaves in many regions. The message from the observance was clear: stronger mitigation, adaptation and preparedness measures are urgently needed to protect communities, livelihoods and economies.



The 6th Conservation Asia Congress was held in Kathmandu from June 3–5, 2026, bringing together conservation scientists, policymakers, community leaders, practitioners, students and journalists from across Asia. Hosted by the Society for Conservation Biology Asia Region Nepal and the Burhan Community Regeneration and Conservation Foundation, the congress focused on the theme “Harmonising Biodiversity and Human Wellbeing in Asia.” The event also marked a return to Kathmandu, where the first regional conference of the Society for Conservation Biology was held in 2005. Speakers highlighted Nepal’s achievements in community-led conservation, including progress in protecting tigers and rhinos and maintaining zero-poaching milestones. Discussions stressed that biodiversity protection must combine scientific research, species-level action, local knowledge and meaningful community participation. With one-third of delegates comprising students and early-career professionals and a record 160 travel and registration grants awarded, the congress also promoted more inclusive participation. Its symposiums and presentations covered migratory birds, human-wildlife coexistence, animal tracking, and traditional conservation knowledge, thereby strengthening regional collaboration on biodiversity and human well-being.

Global News and Updates

Regional Efforts to Protect Pangolins in South Asia



A regional conference on pangolin conservation was held in Kathmandu, Nepal, in June 2026, bringing together representatives from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Government officials, researchers, wildlife enforcement agencies, and conservation organisations attended the event to discuss the protection of pangolin species across South Asia.

The conference focused on the main threats facing pangolins, including poaching, illegal wildlife trafficking, habitat loss, and limited public awareness. Participants highlighted the need for stronger cross-border cooperation, improved scientific research, more effective law enforcement, and greater participation by local communities.

One of the main outcomes was an agreement to develop a coordinated regional conservation framework extending to 2050. The proposed measures include protecting habitats, strengthening rescue and rehabilitation programmes, improving monitoring and enforcement, and promoting long-term cooperation among South Asian countries.

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කැබිනට් තීරණ | அமைச்சரவை முடிவுகள் | Cabinet Decisions | www.news.lk

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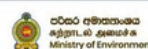
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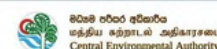


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Central Environmental Authority

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