

First e – briefing
United Nations Environment Programme
Working Group on Sustainable Nitrogen Management

Country Statement – Sri Lanka

by

A H L D Gamini Wijesinghe

Additional Secretary (Environment Projects and Education Training)

Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources

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AYUBOWAN!

I believe that Covid – 19 has opened a window for us naturalists at heart to come even more closer, to work more ambitiously towards healing the planet.

Colleagues,

The sky is blue. The ocean is blue, too. The fundamentals of life depend on a blue source. According to scientists, it is Nitrogen; companion of Carbon, which gives life on this blue planet, its expression. We may argue, when it comes to environment, Nitrogen is just another factor, another issue. But this one factor means everything, a solution to environmental, socio economic issues of modern era.

Let me articulate that the critical concern of a government is the security of the nation. National security is not only measured in military terms, it is all about being secured in all aspects of life,

expressing self-sufficiency while serving the present as well as generations to come.

Fundamentally, agri-business, healthcare, environment degradation and modern education have to be successfully addressed to secure survival of a nation. If these four aspects could be represented in triangular dimensions, the most fundamental unit of a pyramid is visualized demonstrating niche of threats against a nation. Though, it seems astonishing, this simple exercise brings out the interrelations, overlapping, circular movements and the synergistic force between.

Policy makers, scientists, members of the United Nations family,

If any government could divert agri-business towards agriculture, healthcare towards immunity, environment degradation towards restoration and education towards intelligence, enormous potential is uncovered towards building a resilient and secured nation. Nitrogen is the essential language to communicate this potential, to people positioned anywhere in the society in ways close to their hearts. This frames the reason why the Government of Sri Lanka embraced the Nitrogen challenge. Building individual resilient nations is important not only for countries but ensures collective resilient future for this blue planet, the Earth, which is our home.

We are truly grateful to the Republic of India, INMS and South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme for graciously forwarding the

resolution; Sustainable Nitrogen Management at UNEA 4 and bringing Nitrogen to light.

Sri Lanka stepped in to upscale the resolution to an implementable stage and facilitated launching of the United Nations Global Campaign. The event named as “Nitrogen for life” was held in Colombo under the patronage of Deputy Executive Director of UNEP. With an ambition to halve nitrogen waste by 2030 fourteen States supported the Colombo Declaration converting it to a universal document. This was a historic milestone and was captured at the briefing notes of UN Secretary General and headlines of world press on UN day.

In order to mainstream the ambition of Colombo Declaration to national development, Sri Lanka established an Inter-ministerial Task Force, an Intra – Ministerial Action Group and an Expert Group. These three teams are coordinated through Virtual Nitrogen Secretariat established within the International Relations Division of the Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources. We observed that this set up to be practical and effective in liaising not only locally, but with Conventions, and International Programmes supplementing high end diplomatic negotiations.

Scientists and representatives of global programmes,

We explore the opportunities of international scientific collaboration to deliver clear, convincing scientific Nitrogen messages linked to

national security and in the context of implementing SDGs both locally and globally.

Colleagues,

Finally, let me express Sri Lanka's interest to work with proposed INCOM platform, international programmes and any country on this planet allowing Nitrogen, which makes 78% of our breath to deliver its mandate; "Nitrogen for Life".

Thank You!