



Inception Workshop

Development of a City Waste Management Strategy for Negombo City

21 January, 2019, Negombo Municipal Council, Negombo, Sri Lanka

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Introduction

IGES Centre Collaborating with UNEP on Environmental Technologies (CCET) and UNEP-IETC undertook preliminary discussions with the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment (MOMDE) in March 2018. In October 2018, MOMDE and CCET agreed to work together in implementing the following three activities aimed at improving the waste management system in Sri Lanka:

- 1) Assistance for the development of a revised national waste management strategy
- 2) Assistance for the development of waste management strategy and action plan for Negombo City
- 3) Assistance for the preparation of good practices.

In regards to activity 2), in consultation with MOMDE and Negombo Municipal Council, and considering the need and commitment to improve the current waste management in the city, Negombo was selected as the pilot city for development of waste management strategy and action plans. CCET team visited Negombo City twice in March and October respectively to meet key stakeholders including the Mayor, Commissioner and Public Health Inspectors, and also to observe and understand the current waste management in the city.

Negombo is one of the fastest growing tourist destinations in Sri Lanka and it is experiencing a rapid increase in waste generation. The daily waste generation is 110-120 tonnes of which 70-90 tonnes of waste is collected. Out of the collected waste, 10 tonnes of waste is used for compost-making at its compost plant. The remaining 60-80 tonnes of collected waste is currently disposed of at Ovitiyawatta, an area of private land rented by the city, as there is no public land for final disposal. Negombo City is carrying out some activities for management of their waste such as composting, recycling and public awareness etc. but only on a very small scale. Most of the generated waste in the city is dumped into non-engineered landfill with very limited resource recovery. Moreover, the lifetime of the landfill is expected to end within less than two years and no alternative options have been found for final disposal. Therefore, Negombo City needs a proper waste management strategy and long-term action plans to improve the current waste management situation as well as prepare itself to tackle future problems in the waste sector. Furthermore, this can help Sri Lanka to achieve its global commitments at the local level such as the reduction of marine plastic waste, the SDGs and Paris Agreement. In this regard, CCET-IGES is assisting Negombo Municipal Council to develop and strengthen an efficient waste management plan for the city in coordination with Federation of Sri Lankan Local Government Authorities (FSLGA) as a local partner. The inception workshop aimed to introduce our project and team members to the key stakeholders in the city to discuss the project activities and gain everyone's commitment and support in development of a city strategy and also in implementation of a pilot project in line with the developed city strategy.

Preliminaries

Participants were welcomed by the Municipal Commissioner of Negombo Municipal Council Ms. Ruwanthi Fernando with a brief introduction on the programme for the Inception Workshop.

Plenary Presentation

1. Waste Management System in Sri Lanka

Ms. Sujeewa Fernando, Assistant Director, Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment (MOMDE)

Ms. Fernando highlighted the current status of waste management in Sri Lanka and briefly explained the actions taken by the Ministry to address the issues in the sector of waste management such as development of the National Strategy for Solid Waste Management (2001), the National Policy on Solid Waste Management (2007) and the Database of Municipal Solid Waste in Sri Lanka (2005). In addition, she also emphasised that MOMDE is working on the development of a revised waste management policy to address emerging new waste streams such as packaging waste, construction and demolition waste, healthcare waste, electronic waste, food waste and radiation waste etc. Further, she underlined the issues in waste management such as a lack of proper knowledge on management of household hazardous waste, household health care waste, and household e-waste. She also underscored the need for development of infrastructure as well as monitoring, evaluation feedback and reporting mechanism. She then highlighted some of the upcoming mega projects including waste-to-energy projects by the Ministry of Mega Polis, Ministry of Provincial and Local Government, and Western Province Waste Management Authority; the Aravakkaru Project by the Ministry of Mega Polis and Western Development; Composting Project by Colombo Municipal Council, Provincial Composting Projects (Kawashima Machines) by Ministry of Provincial Local Government and Sports; and Sanitary Landfill by Central Environmental Authority. Finally, she underscored MOMDE collaboration with CCET-IGES on different activities including development of waste management strategy and action plan for Negombo City.

2. Negombo City Waste Management Plan

Mr. K. Gunarathne, Chief Public Health Inspector (PHI), NMC

Mr. Gunarathne explained the progress and setbacks of the ongoing city plan. He underlined the need for developing a ward-based waste management plan by conducting meetings with community leaders to identify their challenges and priorities on waste management in each ward, which will ultimately be

endorsed by the Negombo council and the PHIs. Referring to the current city plan, Mr. Gunarathne highlighted the major challenges in the city plan such as lack of space and facilities at the final disposal site and the need for more waste collection centres for recycling. He also emphasised the need for more training and capacity building for government workers in the field of waste management from labourers to the PHIs. Mr. Gunarathne underscored that PHIs are doing adequate work to keep the city clean and healthy, but he appealed to the central government to provide clear and precise information and directions to the PHIs and to the city council. He also highlighted that NMC is closely working with the Janathakshan Institute on garbage reduction in the city with more focus on plastic.

3. Development of City Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan

Dr. Rajeev Kumar Singh, researcher, CCET-IGES, Japan

Dr. Singh introduced the Institute for Global Environment Strategies and Centre Collaborating with UNEP on Environmental Technologies (CCET), and highlighted the need and coverage of waste management strategy and action plans. Furthermore, he underlined the development of city strategy and action plans in Negombo City and discussed all the steps involved in the waste management strategy. In addition, he shared observations on waste management that were received during his field visits to different cities in Sri Lanka. His presentation highlighted the importance of supporting the local government authorities and sub-national government institutes on development and strengthening waste management policies and institutional practices. He also highlighted the CCET's project in Mandalay City, Myanmar on city strategy, and then shared a video on CCET project in Mandalay which highlighted the activities during the strategy formulation and implementation of the pilot project activities in Mandalay.

Discussion

Discussion Highlights

Below are key highlights from the open plenary.

- Consultant of FSLGA, Mr. A. Subhakaran underlined current waste management practices and emphasised the importance of increasing the efficiency of the Sri Lankan system through strengthening Local Government Authorities.
- Dr. Anurudda Karunarathne highlighted some of the challenges in current waste management in Sri Lanka as follows:
 - Findings and solutions by universities, public and private institutes on waste management issues lack political support for implementation

- Policy formulation on the waste issue needs more consideration in terms of practical scenarios
- Plans or projects on waste management cannot continue with sole dependency on funding agencies
- It is essential that cities prepare sustainable plans without depending on external funds
- Policy development and project implementation must be integrated and initiated through local government authorities as the key government agency with full authority on waste management for each respective area.
- A participating PHI officer highlighted an introductory workshop on waste bio-charcoal and underlined the need for more training and awareness for government officials.
- Janathakshan (NGO) representative, Mr. Lakshitha, emphasised the following points during the discussion:
 - Segregation is the key to success from the household level to industrial level. Segregation of degradable and non-degradable is not enough. To promote segregation, strict law enforcement is necessary.
 - Plastic pollution is one of the most severe issues in the Negombo area. As Negombo is surrounded by a lagoon and the ocean, plastic pollution has a high negative contribution into the water bodies.
 - NMC should consider a common green rating system to recognise and rate hotels, supermarkets and shops in Negombo taking into account the implementation of 3R concept.
 - There is a need for extensive awareness programmes among all stakeholders including government entities, hotels, supermarkets, harbour users, school children and general communities.
 - Expansion of the plastic recycling process in Negombo is economically viable but requires major investment.
 - To manage organic waste, Negombo can consider establishing a 10-tonne biogas unit to treat degradable waste generated in the NMC area (same as Kaduwela) and the electricity generated can be easily connected to the national grid, which would provide income.
 - NMC would consider constructing a large storage facility to store recyclables such as glass bottles, polythene, black plastics, paper, cardboards and PET bottles. Such a facility will help to store more recyclables and when there is sufficient quantity, it can be sold to the buyers easily.
 - To manage the remaining waste, a proper sanitary landfill site needs to be constructed.

- During the discussion, the following institutes and representatives of organisations were identified as important stakeholders on waste management to be considered for the future meetings:
 - Public Health Inspectors (PHIs) from each wards
 - Ministry of Health representatives
 - Civil Society – Green Committee members
 - Hotel representatives
 - Canteen committee
 - Fisheries societies
 - Private plastic recyclers

Follow up

The participants agreed on the following next steps:

1. Formulation of technical team and identification of all relevant stakeholders
2. Need for ward-based meetings to identify the current waste management system, challenges and priorities.

Closing Remarks

Ms. Fernando, the commissioner, thanked the all the participants for their valuable inputs during the discussion. She thanked CCET-IGES for its support in the development of a city strategy on waste management. She also mentioned that NMC has a strong motivation to improve the waste management in the city due to strong support and guidance from the honorable Mayor of Negombo City, Mr. W. M. Dayan Lanza. She also stressed that we should think about developing a sustainable strategy which highlights the use of local resources rather than relying on foreign donations. She looked forward to the same level of participation for future activities.