

National Construction Policy vital to protect industry

By SUDARSHANA PERERA

The government has to formulate a National Construction Policy immediately to protect the local construction industry as the lack of a single entity to coordinate construction activities has hampered the quality of the construction sector, said Jayasiri Samarasinghe, Chairman of the National Construction Association of Sri Lanka at a media conference at the auditorium of the Rotary Centre on Tuesday.

The National Construction Policy should also be formulated to harness local human and natural resources.

The measures should also be adopted to raise the living standard of those engaged in the construction industry, he said.

The Government in awarding contracts for various construction purposes should not give the monopoly to a single company as such a decision would lead to arbitrary price hikes, he said.

Citing an example on

sand pumping from deep sea Samarasinghe he called upon the relevant authorities to be transparent and to follow a collective policy.

He said that all resources involved in the construction sector towards development must be properly planned at national level under a National Construction Policy with their priorities identified.

"At present we see the haphazard handling of our resources by foreign contractors with natural, human and professional resources being brought to disaster, he said.

Speaking on the problems faced by the construction industry Samarasinghe said all investments channelled through the World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) assistance and other projects in the industry need a "Level Playing Field" backed by a political leadership.

He emphasised the importance of introducing a program to exchange technical know-how in the

construction industry with the other foreign companies for the benefit of local builders.

Certain policies adopted by the Government and local Government authorities in awarding construction and contracts seriously impede the growth and the development of the construction industry said Saliya Kaluarachchi, 1st Vice Chairman of NCASL.

"All construction societies have to be registered with the Institute of Construction Training and Development (ICTAD) meeting the gradings stipulated by the institute. Such a process will ensure technical competence, quality and discipline in the construction sector, he said.

Rohan Tudawe, Board Member of NCASL, Priyal Wijegunawardena, Board Member NCASL, L U Dharmapriya, Board Member NCASL, M Jayasinghe, Secretary NCASL, M Jayasinghe second Chairman NCASL and S P Liyanarachchi, Board Member NCASL also spoke.