

Norochcholai Coal Power Plant project halted

by Florence Wickramage

The Government has decided not to proceed with the construction of the Coal Power Plant at Norochcholai and has instructed the Ceylon Electricity Board to find an alternative site.

The proposal to construct a Coal Power Plant at Norochcholai ran into a controversy which finally ended with the Electricity Board giving an undertaking to the Court of Appeal that it would not proceed with the construction. This was the result of a case filed by the Environmental Foundation Limited (EFL) whereby they challenged the procedure which was adopted in granting approval for the construction of the Coal Power Plant.

The Executive Director of the Environmental Foundation Ltd (EFL) Hemantha Vithanage told the *Daily News* that the EFL in its petition had pointed out that the proposed project had been fragmented into three main components and that separate Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) had to be done

for each of these components. The EFL being of the opinion that this procedure would obscure the real cumulative impacts of this major project, pointed out that this process would result in contradicting decisions relating to different components of one and the same project.

The EFL therefore in its petition appealed to Court that the components should be reviewed as a whole in granting approval. They also stated the North Western Province Environmental Authority was unconstitutional and that the Central Environmental Authority nor the Ministry of Forestry and Environment could look into the activities of the NWPEA.

The EFL stated that a reasonable doubt had arisen as to the policy of the NWPEA with regards to this project and had appealed to courts to issue a writ of mandamus compelling relevant authorities to act in terms of the provisions of the National Environmental Act.

09/08/01 *Daily News*

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'National Water Resources Policy - Quo Vadis?' – reply

Reference the article titled 'National Water Resources Policy - Quo Vadis?' written by a Special Correspondent appeared in *The Island* paper on 26th February, 2001.

I wish to congratulate the writer for presenting a reasonably accurate account of facts and events relating to the National Water Resources Policy formulation process, with his own interpretations on several issues.

However, some of the facts appeared in the table indicating the details of investments and projects that have supported policy formulation process are not correct and need clarification.

The name of the first ADB funded Technical Assistance project that supported institutional assessment in the water sector needs to be corrected as 'Institutional Assessment for Comprehensive Water Resources Management'.

The following projects had no relationship to the water resources management and had provided no inputs to policy formulation process'.

— The Third Water Supply and Sanitation

Project

— Upper Watershed Management Project

The cost of the ADB technical assistance 'Western River Basin Sector Project' was US\$ 1.5 million and not US\$ 63 million as reflected in the article.

The amount reflected in respect of the Third Water Supply & Sanitation Project Package C including 'Water Resources Management studies covering 4 river basins & training component should be corrected as approximately US\$ 7 million instead of US\$ 39 million. Out of this total cost, NORAD provided NOK 4.2 million (approximately US\$ 0.44 million) for water resources studies covering 4 river basins and specific case studies covering three districts.

Part B of the Water Resources Management Project on water infrastructure is scheduled to be implemented by the National Water Supply and Drainage Board.

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