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Sethusamudram ship channel project

Indo- Lanka joint study for extensive work

The Advisory Group established by the Cabinet of Ministers to study the impact of the Indian Sethusamudram Ship channel project decided to undertake more extensive work jointly with India to ensure the project will not jeopardize the interests of Sri Lanka.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has sent the following report on the ship channel project.

The construction of the Sethusamudram Ship Channel commenced on the 2nd of July 2005. The Cabinet of Minister established an Advisory Group to study the impact of this project on Sri Lanka. The Advisory Group commenced activities in October 2005 and established the following four sub-groups of expertise:—

1. Hydrodynamic Modelling projections.
2. Environmental Measures for the sustainability of the eco-system within the channel and its adjacent areas, including the impact on marine archeology.
3. Livelihood Issues stemming from the Sethusamudram Ship Channel Project.
4. Measures to cope with Navigational emergencies including marine pollution.

The Advisory Group established a Secretariat located in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and experts were drawn in from the National

Aquatic Resources, Research & Development Agency (NARA), Ministry of Fisheries, Lanka Hydraulic Institute (LHI), Marine Pollution Prevention Authority (MPPA), Sri Lanka Port Authority (SLPA), Sri Lanka Navy, Department of Meteorology, Department of Coast Conservation, Department of Survey, Universities of Katubedde, Peradeniya, East, South, and Jaffna, IUCN Sri Lanka and other organizations within the country.

The Advisory Group studied the shortcomings of the Indian reports, collected secondary information available in Sri Lanka, undertook field studies to establish benchmarks and monitor changes and undertook hydrodynamic model testing activities and have concluded the need to undertake more extensive work preferably as a joint activity to ensure the project will not jeopardize the interests of Sri Lanka.

The 3rd bilateral meeting held on the 21st of April 2006 in Colombo saw the presentation of the Sri Lankan research to the Indian delegation with a strong request that joint monitoring and study activities are necessary to ensure that the project undertaken by the Indian authorities will not cause environmental and other adverse impacts on both Sri Lanka and India.