

Rural water supply policy for Sri Lanka

Hanwella group correspondent

The National Director W. Piyasena, of the Community Water Supply and Sanitation Project (CWSSP) said that for the first time in Sri Lanka's history a rural water supply policy has been approved by the Cabinet of Ministers.

He said that all future water supply projects throughout the island will be implemented in conformity with the approved policy. He was addressing the provincial journalists of Colombo and Gampaha districts at a workshop at Tholangamuwa Human Resources Centre, Warakapola recently.

He said that a study is being carried out by the CWSSP to explore the possibility of implementing projects

in the North and East and in Hambantota in the Southern Province. "We have already started projects for the estate community," he said.

Piyasena said that under the policy, community based beneficiary organisations will be the decision-makers of the water supply projects. They procure the required materials and set up projects to supply water and sanitation facilities on their own to promote good hygienic practices in rural areas.

He said that 8 organisations are empowered to undertake contracts up to Rs. 50,000 for water supply and sanitation projects.

No sooner than the contracts are signed 40 per cent of the total cost is paid as an advance to purchase the

materials, he said. The Director said that although 574 projects were identified for the year 2002. There were certain setbacks due to the delay in releasing funds by the World Bank.

But since the CWSSP has been vested in the Ministry of Housing and Plantation Infrastructure, the General Treasury has already granted an allocation of Rs. 200 million and that action has been taken to complete the projects soon.

Deputy Director Community Development and Training Nimal Padmasiri said that with the empowerment of the people to take decisions they attend to teamwork with great enthusiasm and courage.

Apart from water supply and sani-

tation, in certain areas they have started death donation schemes, thrift and savings societies, vocational training centres, sports clubs and poverty alleviation programs, he said.

Gampaha Director W. P. Gunapala said that several projects had been successfully completed in the district.

Colombo Director Jayantha Weliwita said that projects have been started in 53 Grama Niladhari divisions of Hanwella, Padukka and Homagama Divisional Secretariat (DS) areas.

He said that a water supply project for the estate community is under way at Elston Estate, Avissawella in Hanwella DS area.