



On Sirasa TV
Thursdays
at 10.45 pm from
22 May 2008

Co-produced by:
TVE Asia Pacific



and
MTV Channel (Pvt)
Limited

In partnership
with:



International Union
for Conservation of
Nature

Supported under
the Raising
Environmental
Consciousness in
Society (RECS)
Project sponsored
by the Government
of the Netherlands.



Colombo, 11 June 2008

Sri Lanka 2048 looks at future choices for biological 'Treasure Island' under siege

Sri Lanka's biological heritage - comprising thousands of animal and plant species - is under immense pressure from people's quest for land and other development activities. As a result, one in every two species of mammals and amphibians, one in every three species of reptiles and freshwater fish, and one in every five bird species are currently threatened in the wild.

The most serious threat to Sri Lanka's biological treasures is running out of places to live: their natural habitats, mainly forests, are destroyed or degraded. Sri Lanka has been losing an average of 30,000 hectares of natural forest cover every year for the past five decades. Many remaining forests are now isolated into forest patches too small to support some species. These pressures are most intense in the wet zone where both human numbers and species diversity are highly concentrated.

In this struggle for land and resources, are extinctions inevitable? Do National Parks, nature reserves and other protected areas offer sufficient safe havens to plants and animals being edged out by human expansion? How can the survival needs of poor humans be balanced with the need to conserve the country's rich biological diversity? What are the policy choices, smart options and trade-offs?

These are among the key issues being addressed in this week's programme of *Sri Lanka 2048* -- an innovative series of television debates exploring prospects for a sustainable future for Sri Lanka in the Twenty First Century.

The debate will be broadcast on Sirasa TV at 10.45 pm on Thursday 12 June 2008. It involves -- as panel and studio audience -- over two dozen Sri Lankans from academic, civil society, corporate and government backgrounds.

This week's panel comprises Dr. Channa Bambaradeniya, IUCN Asia Regional Species Coordinator; Ananda Wijesooriya, Director General, Department of Wildlife Conservation; Anura Sathurusinghe, Conservator of Forests (Research and Education) Department of Forests; and Dr. Nirmali Pallewatte, Senior Lecturer in zoology at the University of Colombo. The debate is moderated by Sirasa TV's versatile presenter Kingsly Rathnayaka.



In its search for solutions, the debate draws on the findings of the *2007 Red List of Threatened Fauna and Flora of Sri Lanka*, published by the Ministry of Environment and IUCN. It also notes that Sri Lanka (along with India's Western Ghats) has been identified as one of the world's 34 'Biodiversity Hotspots' -- areas with very high number of endemic species (found nowhere else in the world) and which have already lost more than 75% of forest cover.

The *Sri Lanka 2048* debates are co-produced by TVE Asia Pacific, an educational media foundation, and IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, in partnership with MTV Channel (Private) Limited. This TV series is supported under the Raising Environmental Consciousness in Society (RECS) project, sponsored by the Government of the Netherlands.

For more information on the *Sri Lanka 2048* series, visit: www.srilanka2048.com

Contact for further info: Nalaka Gunawardene, Executive Producer
Phone 4412 195; Email: <info@srilanka2048.com>