

Sustainable Development in Sri Lanka – An Outsider’s View

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Sustainable development focuses on the importance of meeting the needs of current and future generations through the integration of environmental protection, social advancement and economic prosperity. In the implementation of sustainable development strategies the communities, people and their values are considered to be of vital importance. “A Sustainable community would be secure, healthy and equitable, with a clear sense of place,” (Environment Protection Authority, 2002).

After more than 130 years of colonial rule, Sri Lanka gained independence from the British in 1948. Today, the country is at crossroads following a brutal civil war which ravaged the country since 1983. Despite all the internal constraints and challenges facing economic prosperity, “Sri Lanka reaffirms the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 which emphasize the need to eradicate poverty and reduce disparities in living standards to achieve sustainable development...” (United Nations, 1997).

The paper will question the extent to which Sri Lanka’s sustainable development strategy assists in developing a society which is secure, healthy and equitable, with a clear sense of place. In this regard the paper will examine key issues which either link or separate Sri Lanka’s sustainable development programme from its national disaster management programme. Its objective is to highlight the need for developing an alternate, sustainable development strategy which will meet the needs of current and future generations, through the integration of environmental protection, social advancement and economic prosperity.

Key Words: Sustainable development; Environment; Economic prosperity; Community

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