

## Visit of Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, Secretary General of the Commonwealth to the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment, Sri Lanka



Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, Secretary General of the Commonwealth has visited the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment, Sri Lanka on 2 August 2018 during her visit to Sri Lanka.

Mr. Anura Dissanayake, Secretary to the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment welcoming the Secretary-General of Commonwealth explained Climate change impacts in Sri Lanka and major initiatives taken to address its adverse impacts. Also it's highlighted the outcomes of Moragahakanda and Kalu Ganga Development Projects multipurpose development projects, which aim to provide adequate water for perennial cultivation, generate hydro-electric power, enhance inland fish production, and increase the potential of portable water supply.

The Queen's Commonwealth Canopy (QCC) initiative was also presented where 10 hectare of degraded forest land in the Kanthale and Thananparichchan Forest Reserves of Trincomalee will be restored with a view of achieving many environmental and social benefits.



Further Secretary General was briefed about the policy initiatives Sri Lanka taken to minimize land-based plastic pollution to the ocean environment by imposing ban on single use plastic utilization including shopping bags, carry bags, lunch sheets and polystyrene lunch boxes, the usage of polythene in all decorations, specially the usage of polythene in political, social and cultural events and banning the burning of polythene and plastics in open spaces.

The "Coastal Zone Beach Care Takers" programme and programme for establishment of sixty beach parks along the coastline with the exclusive participation of women selected from the coastal zone were also highlighted.

Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, Secretary General of Commonwealth (SGC), appreciated the achievement of Sri Lanka in combating climate change, forest restoration, eliminating plastic pollution. She has also appreciated the community participation as well as the participation of women in the development process as it would produce more sustainable outcomes. She has highlighted that QCC initiative of Sri Lanka for restoration of degraded forest as creative rather than maintaining which would enable the voluntary participation of the community with its benefits to them. She encouraged to showcase the Sri

Lanka's promise to Champion the Mangrove Restoration under the Commonwealth Blue Charter and adding further, she requested Sri Lanka to participate in the Commonwealth Secretary General's Innovation Award, in which environment is one of the categories to compete.

Commonwealth Secretary General expressed her gratitude to His Excellency the President as the Minister in charge, for bold actions taken for conservation of environment.