Forest Cover/Forest Resources Status in Sri Lanka

Dr. Ajith Gunawardena
Deputy Director - (Research and Development)
Central Environmental Authority
Sri Lanka
Sri Lanka Land Use/ Cover

- Sri Lanka has a land area of 65,610 km$^2$
- Total of 19,400 km$^2$ of forests - covering 29.5%
- Dense forests 14,700 km$^2$ or 22.4% (over 75% canopy cover)
- Open forests 4,700 km$^2$ or 7% (40%-75% canopy cover)
- Paddy 10.7%
- Forest plantations about 900 km$^2$ - Teak, Mahogany, Eucalypts, Pine and other local species nearly 1%
- Tea, Rubber, Coconut plantations and agroforestry /home gardens approximately 20%
Sri Lanka has been named the best country in the world to visit in 2019 by Lonely Planet.
Biodiversity Hotspots
Development of Tourism

Data from the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA)
Water

103 Rivers
Sri Lanka is a classic example of the "hydraulic civilization" which had developed in 543 BC.

| Man made Tanks | - Around 10,900 |
| Reservoirs     | - around 52    |
| Canals         | - around 70    |
Paddy (rice)

- Rice is the single most important crop occupying 34 percent (0.77 /million ha) of the total cultivated area in Sri Lanka. The average annual extent sown with rice is about 870,000 ha.
- About 1.8 million farm families
- Sri Lanka currently produces 2.7 million t of rough rice annually and satisfies around 95 percent of the domestic requirement. The per capita consumption of rice fluctuates around 100 kg per year
Tea production is one of the main sources of foreign exchange for Sri Lanka, and accounts for 2% of GDP. One of the best quality tea in the world. Around 233,500 ha
Rubber

The traditional rubber growing areas of Sri Lanka is located mainly in the wet zone in a land extent of 127,500 hectares. Total 246,600 ha of the country.
Coconut

- Total land area under cultivation is 395,000 hectares
- Current production in the country varies from 2,500 to 3,000 million nuts
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forest Classification</th>
<th>Extent (Sq. km)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Montane Forest</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Montane Forest</td>
<td>690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowland Rain Forest</td>
<td>1,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moist Monsoon Forest</td>
<td>2,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry Monsoon Forest</td>
<td>10,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverine Dry Forest</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangrove Forest</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sparse forest</td>
<td>4,638</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend**

- **Dry Monsoon Forests**
- **Lowland Rain Forests**
- **Moist Monsoon Forests**
- **Montane Forests**
- **Riverine Dry Forest**
- **Sub Montane Forests**
- **Forest Plantations**
- **Mangrove Forests**
- **Marsh**
- **Montane Grasslands**
- **Open and Sparse Forests**
- **Savannah**
- **Shrubs**
- **Thorn Forest**
Land use / cover changes

Forest to Other Land Uses

- Approximately 29% forest
- Deforestation
  - Between 2000 and 2005 rate 1.43% per annum
  - Policy and laws – deforestation rate decreased 35%

- The forests
  - To agricultural land
  - plantations
  - provide fuel
  - timber.
Why Sri Lanka is important?

Because Many Ecosystems
Forest Types

- Tropical rain forests
- Dry mixed evergreen forests
- Montane forests
- Sub Montane Forest
- Thorn forests/ Scrublands
- Moist Monsoon Forest
Sub Montane Forest
Dry/ Semi Arid Ecosystem
Dry Mixed evergreen Forest
Grassland Ecosystems

Grasslands

Savanna

Patana

Wet Patana

Dry Patana
Grassland (Dry Patna)
Riverine
This is significant due to high species diversity, and for existence of nationally, and globally threatened and endemic plant species. Stemonoporous moonii (Horawel), Mesua stylosa (Suwanda) plants, which were believed to be extinct, has been rediscovered after 160 years, in 1979, in this freshwater swamp forest.
Mangroves
Sand dunes
Forest Plantation

- Teak
- Mahogany
- Pine
- Eucalyptus
- Jak
- Kaya
- Forest Cover - 23%
- Natural Forests - 2,046,600Ha
- Forest Plantations - 89,000Ha
- Forest Department - 1,064,000Ha
- Department of Wildlife Conservation - 782,000Ha
Factors contributed to Deforestation in Sri Lanka

• Population increase
• Clearing of forests for commercial agricultural crops
• Shifting (Chena) cultivation
• Large scale development projects
• Felling of trees for fuel wood
• Felling of trees for timber
• Animal husbandry
• Mining industry
Annual sawn wood demand (FSMP, 1995)

- Year 2000 - 626,000 cubic meters
- Year 2020 - 889,000 cubic meters

Total Wood supply in 2006 is approximately 1,240,000 cubic meters (FAO)

Annual sawn wood consumption per 1000 persons (cubic meters)

Sri Lanka - 31.0
Estimated shares of sawn wood supply

- Home Gardens: 41%
- Natural Forests: 22%
- Rubber Plantations: 18%
- Coconut Plantations: 11%
- Forest Plantations: 4%
- Imports: 1%
- Other: 4%
Estimated shares of fire wood supply in 2006

- Home Gardens: 42%
- Rubber Plantations: 18%
- Coconut Plantations: 11%
- Forest Plantations: 11%
- Imports: 10%
- Other: 8%
National Forest Policy Objectives

• To conserve forests for posterity, with particular regard to biodiversity, soils, water, and historical, cultural, religious and aesthetic values

• To increase the tree cover and productivity of the forests to meet the needs of present and future generations for forest products and services

• To enhance the contribution of forestry to the welfare of rural population, and strengthen the national economy, with special attention paid to equity in economic development
Thank You