



## THE SETHUSAMUDRAM SHIP CANAL: troubled waters ahead for Sri Lanka?

On September 2, 2004, the Indian Cabinet passed a decision on the formation of the Sethusamudram Corporation Ltd, for financing and execution of the Sethusamudram Ship Canal Project (SSCP).

Within 5 days of this statement, the Environmental Foundation Ltd (EFL) pointed out that Sri Lanka had been ignored when carrying out the Environmental Impact Assessment.



The SSCP plans to dredge a channel between India and Sri Lanka, so as to form a continuous navigable route around the peninsula. Supposedly this would save shipping time and costs, promote trade, and rejuvenate the Indian shipping industry, especially in the southern region.

Although the canal passes within just a few kilometres of Sri Lanka, and impinges on a shipping route which currently skirts the island, to date there has been no public recognition at all of the fact that there are two nations, not one, that will be impacted by the Sethusamudram Project. At the same time a number of major environmental, socio-economic and technical issues to do with the project remain unaddressed. They concern both India and Sri Lanka.

Late in the day, and after much protest in both countries, the notion was introduced that the two neighbours should “exchange views on economic and environmental aspects in relation to the proposed project”. An interministerial joint committee was then convened by the Sri Lanka Foreign Ministry and, as a result, the first series of talks between a Government appointed delegation and their Indian counterparts took place in New Delhi in January 2005.

In the ensuing months, the SSCP has moved forward rapidly. At the beginning of July 2005, the project was launched. Making a statement in Parliament on July 7, the late Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar said that the Sri Lankan Government would seek legal redress in an international tribunal only as a last resort if bilateral consultations and friendly cooperation failed to resolve any issues on the SSCP. Minister Kadirgamar further stated that the “Government of Sri Lanka is committed to continue the process of consultations with the Indian Government to ensure that our rights are addressed and negative effects mitigated. The Gulf of Mannar and Palk Straits area is a shared biosphere for both India and Sri Lanka.” However despite a second round of Technical Level Discussions between the two countries, concluded earlier this month in Delhi, the dredging continues.

The whole SSCP remains shrouded in secrecy. The very fact that there has been no public recognition at all (by either the Indian or Sri Lankan governments that the project will impact on the people, economy and ecology of Sri Lanka is absolutely ludicrous on any count. A serious lack of transparency in decision-making, on both sides of the channel, leads us to question the real motives and interests for this project. We cannot but question whether, yet again, the public has been kept in the dark and misled.

## **SETHUSAMUDRAM SHIP CANAL PROJECT: troubled waters ahead for Sri Lanka?**

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### **Environmental Foundation Ltd**

146/34 Havelock Rd

Colombo 5

Sri Lanka

Tel: (+94 11) 250 2609

Fax: (+94 11) 452 8483

Email: [efl@sltnet.lk](mailto:efl@sltnet.lk)

Internet: <http://www.efl.lk>

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## To date ...

It was the poet Barathi in his *Sindhu Nadhein Isai* who boldly suggested connecting Sri Lanka and India by constructing a 'sethu', which literarily means the sea with the bridge. However the poet would never have imagined that, instead of connecting the already existing line of islands between the two countries, the Government of India would actually sever the remains of an ancient link and cut a canal right across it.

### **What does the Project involve?**

Under the Sethusamudram Ship Canal Project (SSCP), the State Government of India will construct a 260 km long shipping canal — one section 120 km long from Tuticorin Port to Adam's Bridge, and another 140 km long from Adam's Bridge (North of Rameshwaram) to the Bay of Bengal. Supposedly, it is to be constructed entirely within the territorial waters of India. The canal will have a depth of 12 metres, enabling 10,000 to 12,000 GRT vessels to pass through. During the dredging (estimated to take up to four years), nearly 84 million cubic metres of sand is to be removed from the area. The projected cost of the SSCP is more than US\$ 1 billion.



Approximate alignment of the proposed Sethusamudram Canal

The whole idea behind the SSCP is — ostensibly — to save on the travel time which is usually required to skirt around the south side of Sri Lanka in order to get from an eastern seaport in India to the country's west coast. According to the Daily Mirror of July 11<sup>1</sup> (which quoted a report in "the Hindu" newspaper) the federal government has projected that savings in fuel costs, once the SSCP is completed, will be between US\$ 1,700 and US\$ 4,100 for vessels with loads of 100-500 metric tonnes. It is estimated by the Indian Government that it will save Indian Rs 2.15 billion (about US\$ 50 million) in foreign exchange in the first year of its operation — in 2008.

It also seems that the project will provide other benefits to India. As stated in the summary technical and economic feasibility report for the project, "the channel will be of very great importance from national defence and security point of view". Furthermore the Hindu report implies that the Indian Government may hold the SSCP as an important defence strategy if the LTTE were ever to gain Eelam in North and East of Sri Lanka<sup>2</sup>.

### **The background**

During the days of the Empire, Great Britain had something of an obsession with planning large-scale civil engineering works, especially those involving water and the sea, in her colonies. The idea of connecting the East and West coasts of India by creating a canal across the Palk Strait through Adams Bridge was first put forward by Commander of the British Marines A.D Taylor in 1860, at the same time that digging on the Suez Canal began in Egypt<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Sethusamudram will slash sailing time, AFP appearing in the Daily Mirror of July 11

<sup>2</sup> Daily Mirror July 11 *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Indian PM inaugurates Sethusamudram, AFP July 2 appearing in the Sunday Observer of July 3



In the years to follow many proposals on creating a short cut from Palk Bay to the Gulf of Mannar across the Palk Straits were to follow.

However even during the time a debate was ongoing regarding the creation of a canal across the Palk Strait, the British Colonial Government was also looking at the possibility of constructing an Indo-Aryan rail bridge to connect Madras with Colombo via Erode, Trichinopoly, Madurai, Remeshwaran and Mannar. It is interesting to note that as the first step to the rail link, tracks connecting Talaimannar or the Mannar Island with mainland Mannar was completed in the early twentieth century, to be followed by a little more than a half a century later by the Indian link through the Pamban Bridge, which linked the Rameshwaram Island with the Indian mainland. By the late 1980s only the part connecting Talaimannar and Rameshwaram needed to be constructed. In the event neither the Sri Lankan Government nor the Indian Government pursued the idea any further, especially as the political climate in Sri Lanka in the North and East was not favourable at that time.

When clearance for the proposed Sethusamudram Canal was given by the Indian Ministry of Environment and Forestry in March this year, many environmentally conscious individuals and organisations alike, in both India and Sri Lanka, were critical of the pace at which the project was pushed through and the shroud of secrecy surrounding it. This, many alleged was because of the Indian Government's unwillingness to look into the negative environmental aspects arising out of the project and the need to bulldoze the SSCP forward, casting aside any concerns the project would have on the fragile ecosystem in place in that part of the region. An environmental protest movement has emerged which is strongly against the SSCP — on social, developmental, political and environmental grounds.

### ***The current status***

The Indian Government commenced dredging on the proposed Sethusamudram Ship Canal Project (SSCP) on July 2<sup>nd</sup> this year with much pomp and pageantry, finally giving birth to a proposal that had hibernated within the confines of Indian bureaucracy for more than a century. While launching the dredging at the Palk Strait end of the Canal, Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh described it as one of the most ambitious projects to be conceived in the Indian ports sector and said that he was certain that "People of this region will, in a few years time, see their lives transformed for the better by this project"<sup>4</sup>.

However, the veracity of Dr Singh's words, along with the merits of the proposed canal, remains to be seen. On this side of the Indian Ocean many 'law abiding' Sri Lankan citizens appear unaware of exactly what the SSCP will entail for them. Despite the fact that the SSCP will pass within just a few kilometres of Sri Lanka, and impinges on a shipping route which currently skirts the island, there has been no public recognition at all that there are two nations that will be impacted by the Sethusamudram Project.

## **Impacts ...**

### ***The inadequacy of project reports***

As a large scale investment, one would expect that the SSCP would have been subjected to detailed assessment and analysis by the proponent (the Indian Government). One would also have expected that some consideration of the project's impacts on Sri Lanka would be given — or at the very least demanded - by the government of that affected country. In reality, there has been remarkable silence on both counts and from both sides.

Very little information about the project is publicly available. Two reports have been released to the general public — both in summary form only. Both were prepared by NEERI (National Environmental Engineering Research Institute) and sponsored by the Tuticorin Ports Trust. These are the Executive

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<sup>4</sup> Sethusamudram Project launched, The Hindu July 2 appearing in the Daily Mirror of July 4



Summaries of the Environmental Impact Assessment and the Technical Feasibility and Economic Analysis<sup>5</sup>.

The whole project appears to be shrouded in secrecy, as no official version of the EIA has been released to the public. Among the executive summary reports in circulation, there is hardly any mention of Sri Lanka, let alone the environmental and economic ripples it is going to cause. In an interview with the Daily Mirror recently<sup>6</sup>, a Sri Lanka expert says that while the (uncertified) EIA hardly mentions Sri Lanka, it is also a rapid EIA - a project of the magnitude of the SSCP needs be done based on a comprehensive environmental impact assessment.

The credibility of these documents (and the conclusions and recommendations they present) must be questioned. Both have been commissioned by the project proponent, the Indian Government. As such it is hardly surprising that they paint a rosy picture of the SSCP, and give little space to any potential problems it may give rise to. Perhaps most notable is the obviously false statement in the Summary EIA that the project will give rise to no significant environmental impacts.

The Technical Feasibility and Economic Analysis Executive Summaries show, interestingly enough, that on the basis of specified costs and benefits, in purely financial terms, the project is unprofitable. It even states that the results of economic analysis “may not compare favourably with the return normally adopted for a development project”. According to the normal economic appraisal measures and techniques used to assess projects, SSCP would not be approved.

From Sri Lanka's point of view, it is quite astounding that there has been no formal or official questioning of the complete absence of consideration of impacts on this country. Although a significant degree of blame must be apportioned to the project proponent who has designed the SSCP without any apparent regard for its neighbour, still worse is the resounding silence from the Sri Lankan government, and its apparent unwillingness to speak out or act in the interests of the nation and the general public.

### **Impacts on a fragile ecosystem**

The canal falls through the Gulf of Mannar, one of the world's richest marine ecosystems which has also been accorded the global designation of a Biosphere Reserve. Even though this is the case, environment

#### **The importance of the Gulf of Mannar**

The Gulf of Mannar in the Indo-Pacific region is considered to be one of the world's richest marine ecosystem. In recognition of this, it has been named a Biosphere Reserve

- Rare Species like sea turtles, dolphins, sea cows, sharks, thorny sea horse, dugongs and whales are already located within the Reserve and if this area identifies as their natural habitat and grazing region is disturbed, it would mean certain death and eventual extinction from the face of the earth for many of these animals. According to R.S. Mohan Lal, a marine biologist attached to the Central Marine Fisheries Institution and working extensively in Mandapam Island for the past fourteen years, large scale sand extraction could muddy the waters and black the sunlight from reaching the sea bottom, effectively snuffing the light and life out of coral reefs, pearls banks sea grass, sea weed as well as bottle nosed dolphins, prawns, lobsters, dugongs as well as a variety of fish living in the region.
- The Gulf of Mannar has 17 different varieties of mangrove species and 3,600 identified species of plants and animals and this alone makes this area one of the most biologically rich coastal regions in the world. Furthermore 117 species of coral belonging to 37 genera have also been identified.
- The region is also steeped in rich maritime history dating back to the prehistoric times with many a myth woven around the existence of a landmass connecting the India and Sri Lanka. In the epic tale Ramayana, reference is given to how the two countries were connected via a line of islands surrounded by the shallow sea. In the more recent past, the British Colonial Government controlled India and Sri Lanka as two colonies owing to the Palk Strait separating the two countries.
- The area under threat of destruction from the SSCP is also known for its pearl banks and for centuries diving for pearls has been the livelihood of certain communities living in Mannar. The quality, texture and volume of genuine pearls in Ceylon were so high that the British Colonial Government levied a special tax on Pearl fishing. The pearls of Ceylon have reached the far corners of the world including the Roman Empire as early as in the first century AD. This region is also known for its production of conch shells, although irrational conch fishing for centuries has severely depleted the stock.
- The GOM also has a chain of shoal, called Adam's Bridge, which is an inlet of the Indian Ocean, between South Eastern India and Western Sri Lanka. Adam's Bridge, which obstructs the navigation in the canal between Sri Lanka and Ramad of India, consists of several parallel ledges of conglomerate and sand dunes, hard at the surface and growing coarse and soft as it descends till it rests on a bank of sand, accumulated by the influence of current at the change of the monsoons. According to *The pre-history of Sri Lanka* by Siran U. Deraniyagala, Miocene Era limestone beds situated under the Adams Bridge connects the Jaffna peninsula in Sri Lanka and Rameshwaram in India.

<sup>5</sup> NEERI, July 2004, [Executive Summary: Technical Feasibility and Economic Analysis of Proposed Sethusamudram Channel](#). National Environmental Engineering Research Institute, Nagpur; NEERI, August 2004, [Executive Summary: Environmental Impact Assessment for Proposed Sethusamudram Ship Canal Project](#). National Environmental Engineering Research Institute, Nagpur

<sup>6</sup> Indian Environmental Impact Assessment hardly mentions Sri Lanka, Daily Mirror, June 3



clearance seems to have been given by Ministry of Environment and Forests in India. With the ecosystem and geology of the Gulf of Mannar at stake, the project would not be just disturbing the Adam's Bridge, the chain of shallow islands between India and Sri Lanka but it would also disturb the water balance of the Jaffna Peninsula, a fact that needs to be taken seriously.

When the first blueprints for SSCP were laid by Commander A.D.Taylor in 1860 and then by Mudaliyar Sri A. Ramasamy, who submitted a proposal and a feasibility report for the project in 1952, no environmental aspects were taken into consideration. This was a serious flaw in the early proposals for the SSCP. To date the version of the EIA that can be obtained with great difficulty in Sri Lanka (which, it should be noted, is not a certified copy) fail to give adequate importance to the enormous amount of environmental damage as well as pollution, that the project could cause to the sensitive marine ecosystem existing within the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve.

All available data from the supposed agencies involved on the Indian side of the SSCP maintain that the project will not pose any serious threats to the natural environment. It appears that the authorities



The rich marine biodiversity of the Gulf of Mannar

have not taken into account biological or archaeological importance of the GOM and the Adam's Bridge area despite the proposed route running right through them. The estimated loss of sea floor in the Adam's Bridge area alone is 6 Km<sup>2</sup>. No account has been taken of the fact that there is a heavy presence of corals along the proposed ship canal alignment in Adam's Bridge area as well as the presence of many ecologically important species. The loss of sea floor will also cause the dispersal of alien species and marine pollution in the proposed alignment threatening the existence of many rare species.

### ***Socio-economic impacts***

In addition to environmental damage, the lost livelihoods and the ensuing socio economic implications of the SSCP on the coastal regions of both India and Sri Lanka seem not to have been addressed at all.

It is estimated that traditional fishing grounds in the Dhanushkody area would be totally destroyed affecting nearly 400,000 fishermen in both countries. There are 138 villages and towns spread in 5

districts through the coastal area from the Gulf of Mannar to Palk Strait in the State of Tamil Nadu while most of the inhabitants in the coast line of Jaffna Peninsula, Puttalam and Mannar are fishermen.



Low-lying settlements in Dhanushkody

A large percentage of the fishing populations in these areas live in poverty while the war in the North of Sri Lanka has kept some of them off fishing and in continued debt. If and when the SSCP is finally implemented, environmentalists fear that people in the coastal region, already battered by the December 26 tsunami, will face further socio-economic problems, and this will give rise to further unemployment in the surrounding areas.



## Issues that are yet to be addressed ...

### ***Exactly how much will be dredged and where will the spoils go?***

Available data, though unconfirmed, suggests that an estimated, 84.5 million cubic meters of sand and spoil would be dredged during the construction of the SSCP, and that this quantity would have to be removed from the project area. Intensive dredging is required to achieve the depth of 12 m across the Adam's Bridge area over a length of 20 km. The total area to be dredged in the Adam's bridge section alone will be about 600 hectares with the estimated removal of approximately 32.5 million cubic meters of materials. Besides the initial dredging, an annual maintenance dredging of about 0.1 million cubic meters of sediment is predicted around the Adam's Bridge area.

It has been revealed that a small part of what is dredged will be discharged in Pamban Island and the remaining in the Bay of Bengal. However, exact locations have not yet been released. The thought of dumping the spoils in the deep sea is somewhat disturbing as the entire region is known for its high density of fish. Attempts have been made to compare the SSCP to the Suez Canal, where a large amount of the dredged soil was dumped at sea. The fundamental factor remains that the Suez Canal was dredged across land to connect the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea and there were no known EIAs conducted at the time owing to the geopolitical climate and the workings of parties with vested interests who pushed forward the project based on the economic and political benefits it was going to bring. The burial at sea of some of the Suez's spoils cannot and should not have any relevance to the SSCP as there is no way of knowing how rich marine life was in the Mediterranean and Red Sea at that time.

Times have now changed. Individual states are given the right to safeguard their territorial waters and protest against infringement, either direct or indirect, by other states. The Gulf of Mannar has been identified as a Marine Biosphere reserve, and the Palk Strait is still not adequately studied. Therefore, it would be a serious mistake if the dredging is to continue without giving due regard to the environmental degradation that could be caused, and transboundary effects it will have, especially on Sri Lanka.

An Indian expert who has been studying the technical feasibility of the SSCP Project for the past several years and has done extensive studies on the post tsunami SSCP, says that it is ironical that dredging has started in the Palk Strait, which is the place least studied by the 'would be' dredgers or the organisation that prepared SSCP Technical Feasibility Report<sup>7</sup>.

### ***A confusion between territorial and ecological boundaries***

The SSCP is supposedly to be carried out entirely within the territorial waters of India. National boundaries, whether terrestrial or sea-based, are defined in law and are mapped exactly. It must however at the same time be acknowledged that any large infrastructure or civil engineering works, or any disturbance or alteration at all, that takes place so close to a national border will affect the surrounding sea area and marine environment. The marine environments, fishing grounds and other resources of the SSCP project area include the territorial waters of Sri Lanka — even if the "project" is sited geographically inside India's territorial waters.

The ebb and flow of the sea, the movement of marine life, and the environmental impacts of the project's construction, operation and maintenance do not mysteriously respect geo-political boundaries: they will impact as much on Sri Lanka as they will on India. It is an absurd notion to think that assessing environmental and other impacts on only one side of this political boundary will present either a comprehensive picture, or can be considered adequate in scientific and environmental (let alone ethical and socio-economic) terms.

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<sup>7</sup> Sethusamudram Shipping Canal Project – Is ignorance Bliss? The Island, May 27



Discussions and cooperation with all relevant stakeholders is the only way to thoroughly discern the potential environmental impact of the SSCP. The EIA must take into consideration the transboundary effects on the area of marine environment which falls within Sri Lanka's jurisdiction.

## The latest developments ...

After the August 2005 second round of Technical Level Discussions between India and Sri Lanka, the Agreed Note issued at the end (signed by both heads of delegation, D.T. Joseph, Secretary to the Government of India responsible for the Department of Shipping and A. Hewage, Advisor to the Ministry of Ports and Aviation of Sri Lanka) stated that "the purpose of the discussion was to develop a common understanding of the environmental concerns"<sup>8</sup>.



**July 2005: amidst much pomp and pageantry, the SSCP is launched**

During this meeting the Indian Authorities apparently produced the detailed Environmental Impact Assessment prepared by NEERI, as well as other detailed project reports and modelling studies. However, at the end of these discussions, the final findings were that further Technical Level Discussions would be required in order to arrive at a common understanding for addressing environmental concerns. The next meeting of these 'experts' is to be held at a "mutually convenient time shortly".

Even after two rounds of discussions, at which nearly every Sri Lankan Government agency concerned with the project was represented, the two countries could not arrive at the common

understanding that the first step towards any solution was transparency in the flow of information. If indeed the Indian authorities have made available authentic copies of key project documents, then the Sri Lankan Government can now release these to the public. This can facilitate an independent study of the SSCP, whereby the Government of Sri Lanka can either request the Indian authorities to change certain aspects of the project or take remedial measures to mitigate adverse environmental impacts.

India on the other hand claims that they have made efforts to take every possible step not to harm the environment (while remaining remarkably silent on the subject of Sri Lanka). Indian Shipping Minister, T.R. Balu, the most ardent campaigner for the SSCP, has especially manipulated and made full use of the media, both state and international, a strategy that is yet to be followed by Sri Lanka.

As such, it appears that the position of Sri Lanka in these crucial talks is now shakier than even before. With the demise of the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, who, despite his excellent relations with the Indian Government, failed to get them to release crucial documents relating to the project for the past six months, Sri Lanka's concerns on the SSCP seem to be going nowhere.

## Just what is the position of the Sri Lankan government?

Sri Lanka and India have a long and complex relationship — often being described as the very closest of bonds. Since Independence each neighbour has displayed an enormous interest in what goes on in the other, leading at times to interventions either direct or indirect. So close is this bond that India offered (and Sri Lanka accepted) a \$100 million line of credit to its Island neighbour in an "hour of need".

<sup>8</sup> India, Lanka to share data on Sethusamudram, The Daily News, August 3, 2005



Quite apart from this very close bond, both countries have ratified the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (UNCLOS); Sri Lanka in July 1994 and India — almost a year later — in June 1995. As Parties to the Convention they are bound under international law to uphold its provisions. Under Article 300 of UNCLOS (which is a universal provision of international law), States are obliged to act in good faith, exercising the rights, jurisdiction and freedoms recognised by the Convention, in a manner which does not constitute an abuse of right. Furthermore, a State cannot give effect to its rights to the detriment of another State, requiring a balance of rights and duties.

In this instance, India seems to be operating on the basis that the project falls solely within its territorial waters and that it will operate without posing an environmental hazard. It also seems to be taking into consideration factors such as national defence and security.

Although Sri Lanka has recognised (albeit late in the day) that there could be implications from the SSCP, not even an authentic copy of the EIA upon which the Indian authorities granted approval for the project has been made available to the public.

Other than for the inter-ministerial committee appointed by the Foreign Ministry, the Sri Lankan Government has neglected to study in detail the implications of the SSCP — or even to request an organisation 'capable' of studying and analysing the SSCP to do so.

So far the only achievement on the part of Sri Lanka is that it has managed to send a coterie of (mostly) 'yes men' to sit at Technical Level Discussions, a waste of taxpayers' money and a criminal waste of time. This has to be seen as a serious let down of 'law abiding', environmentally conscious Sri Lankan citizens, as the implementation of the project last month could spell possible commercial and environment disaster to the country as a whole.

The implications of inactivity on the part of Sri Lanka are far-reaching and potentially destructive to the well-being and interests of its population. The sovereignty of the country and its territorial integrity demand that urgent and effective measures are taken to address the situation. In contrast, the failure to do so would indicate the abrogation of one of the State's most basic responsibilities and to fall short in delivering one of the most basic tenets of the national Constitution — to safeguard the environmental and economic rights of her citizens.



#### Environmental protection: a basic Constitutional Right

Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh during his meeting with President Chandrika Kumarathunga in Delhi on June 4 is said to have stated, "Ecology is what unites us. We will not do anything that will damage ecology in the region. We will be happy to change the Sethu Project's design to satisfy your concerns"<sup>9</sup>. These words will not mean much if the Canal proceeds at the current pace and once it is completed, India and Sri Lanka will truly be separated, not merely by the SSCP but by the world's largest mass grave that has, buried along with it, a part of the world's richest marine life in its depths.

<sup>9</sup> Manmohan tells CBK — "India willing to change Sethu Project", The Island, June 6



## EFL's call for action:

The whole SSCP remains shrouded in secrecy. The very fact that there has been no public recognition at all (by either the Indian or Sri Lankan governments) that the project will impact on the people, economy and ecology of Sri Lanka is absolutely ludicrous on any count. A serious lack of transparency in decision-making, on both sides of the channel, leads us to question the real motives and interests of this project. We cannot but question whether, yet again, the public has been deliberately kept in the dark.

EFL calls upon the Government of Sri Lanka to:

- Respond as to whether it has, behind the 'people's' back, actually **approved** this project and indicated the country's acceptance of it to the proponent.
- Immediately make available to the public, a certified copy of the **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)** upon which the Indian authorities granted approval for the project.
- Make available to the public certified copies of the detailed **project report, the modelling report and any other relevant technical data** upon which this project has been approved by the Indian Authorities.
- Request an **independent review** of the EIA by a scientifically credible organisation which has the required capacity to do so, and has a proven track record in marine conservation.
- Request the Indian Government to **refrain from proceeding** with the project until the EIA is reviewed and the findings made available to the citizens of both countries.



# **Environmental Foundation Ltd (EFL)**

is a non-profit public interest law group, whose mission is the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment through legal means.

Since 1981 EFL has established itself as a driving force in promoting environmental justice for the people of Sri Lanka, particularly poor and disadvantaged communities, through the provision of mediation, representation and advocacy services, and legal and scientific support, in environmental matters.



## **Environmental Foundation Ltd.**

146/34 Havelock Rd,  
Colombo 5, Sri Lanka  
Tel: (+94 11) 250 2609  
Email: [efl@slt.net.lk](mailto:efl@slt.net.lk)  
<http://www.efl.lk>