

UNDP / UN-Habitat - Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP)
Sustainable Colombo Core Area Project (SCCP II)

CITY PROFILE

Kolonnawa Urban Council

May 2002

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- UN-Habitat (SCP)
 - Government of Sri Lanka (Western Provincial Council)
 - Kolonnawa Urban Council
 - SEVANATHA – Urban Resource Centre (Local Partner Institution)

Introduction

This city profile was prepared as part of the requirement of the Sustainable (Sri Lankan) Cities Programme (SCCP II) which is being implemented in the Colombo urban area during the time period of 2001 – 2002 involving eight urban local authorities (i.e. Colombo Municipal Council, Sri Jayawardenapura Kotte Municipal Council, Dehiwala Mt. Lavinia Municipal Council, Moratuwa Municipal Council, Negambo Municipal Council, Kolonnawa Urban Council, Wattala Mabile Urban Council and Panadura Urban Council). The primary purpose of preparation of a city profile was to understand the current status of environmental resources in the city, the development activities and the nature of interaction between these two factors. It is neither scientific investigation nor a high profile technical report but it is a simple document, which tries to highlight the current problems relating to city development in the concerned area. It also emphasizes on a process of participatory decision making process to solve the identified problems in the city. This city profile can be further updated and improved continuously whereby the local authority staff would be able to improve their skills in preparing documents such as these, which are essential for decision making at city level and influencing the policy making authorities above them. In this context, this city profile may be considered as a first step towards developing a proper database for Kolonnawa town supporting towards better management of its future development activities.

Basic Fact Sheet of Kolonnawa Urban Council

1.0	Province	:	Western Province of Sri Lanka
1.1	District	:	Colombo District
1.2	Local Authority Status	:	Urban Council
1.3	Year of Establishment	:	1930
1.4	Location Interaction to Colombo City	:	Located on the eastern boundary of Colombo city
2.0	Extent of Authority Area	:	10.06 sq,km
2.1	No. of Council Wards	:	11
2.2	Total Population (2001)	:	55285
2.3	Daily Floating Population	:	Not known
2.4	Average Population Density	:	55 person p/h
3.0	Total Approved Cadre (2001)	:	356
3.1	Total Cadre in place (2001)	:	291
3.2	Total ratable properties	:	12,783
3.3	Percentage Rate for Residential Properties:		8%
3.4	Percentage Rate for Commercial Properties:		20%
3.5	Total Budget Income Actual (2001)	:	Rs. 61,893,600
3.6	Total Budget Expenditure (2001)	:	Rs. 61,542,300
3.7	Surplus Income	:	Rs. 351,300

Source: Budget Report 2002, Kolonnawa UC

1.1 Introduction to the Town

History of the Town

Kolonnawa Urban Council came into existence in 1930. It developed as the backyard of the Colombo City, accommodating, mainly the warehousing and service sector activities. It also accommodated the low income working population of the city who were mainly engaged in the port related activities as well as retail trade activities of the main markets of Colombo city. Over the years Kolonnawa has accommodated a large volume of non-residential activities such as stores, warehousing, container yards, electricity substations and an oil storage tank complex etc. which are catering to the country's economy while generating employment opportunities to a large number of people in Kolonnawa area.

Geographical Location

Kolonnawa town is located on the eastern boundary of the city of Colombo. It is bounded by Kelani River to the north, Kotikawatta-Mulleriyawa Pradeshiya Sabha to the East, Kotte Municipal Council to the south and Colombo Municipal Councils to the west.

Most parts of the Kolonnawa U.C. area constitute the flood plane of Kelani river, and about 70% of the land area is said to be below the mean sea level, which is protected by a flood protection bund (known as Harward Bund) which was constructed in 1935 to protect the city of Colombo from flooding of the Kelani River. North of the bund was the unprotected area where development was not permitted and south of the bund was the protected area where development was permitted. Most parts of the protected area too were low-lying land thus restricting the land available for development activities.

Extent of the Area

The geographical extent of the Kolonnawa U.C. area is 10.06 sq. km.

The Urban Council area is divided into Eleven wards as listed below.

- 1 Sedawatta
- 2 Orugodawatta
- 3 Wellampitiya
- 4 Nagahamulla
- 5 Salawatta
- 6 Kolonnawa – North
- 7 Salamulla
- 8 Alubowa
- 9 Kolonnawa Central
- 10 Egoda Kolonnawa
- 11 Meethotamulla

Population of the Town

According to the Population Census of 2001, the population of Kolonnawa U.C. area is 55,285. This shows a decline compared to the population of the area in 1981, which was 57,984. The population has been declined by nearly 2699. There was no clear reason for declining the population, however, observation of the informants of the area relate to the possible insecurity around oil storage tanks as well as the poor environmental and sanitary conditions of the town. This aspect needs further investigation.

Relative Importance of the Town

The location of Kolonnawa to the east of Baseline road and its relationship to the Kandy road and low-level road to Avissawella has made it strategically important for wholesale distribution of goods. Accordingly, the food stores at Chalmers granaries were relocated in a newly constructed wholesale stores complex at Orugodawatta, Kolonnawa in early 1980s. Similarly, after July 1983 communal disturbances, the private sector wholesale traders were provided with alternative land at Orugodawatta to relocate their activities but the effort was not successful. Thus, it has been a preferred location for the construction of stores and warehousing during the past two to three decades. Its economy is very much connected to the activities of the city of Colombo and highly interdependent with the activity pattern of Colombo city. The town also accommodate a large proportion of the working population of Colombo city. It has a large number of environmentally sensitive locations such as canals, low lying areas, Kelani River related eco system which have not been properly identified.

1.2 Details Regarding the Population

Religious Composition of the Population

Out of the total population of 55,285 about 54.6% (30,200) are Buddhists, 21.2% (11756) are Muslims, 16.4% (9069) are Hindus, 7.7% (4246) are Catholics and Christians. Thus, the town exists as a multi religious centre, which is a significant aspect to be considered in developing the city.

Racial Composition

Of the total population, 56.8% (31380) are Sinhalese, 29.2 % (11206) are Sri Lankan Tamils, 1.5% (820) are Indian Tamils, 19.0% (10517) are Sri Lankan Muslims, 1.3% (725) are Malays and 0.4% (246) constitute other minorities. Thus, Kolonnawa is a multi ethnic town where people live in peace and harmony with each other.

Population Distribution According to Wards & Age Profile

Ward	Total Pop.	Below 18 yrs.	Above 18 yrs.
Sedawatta	6758	2373	4385
Weheragoda	1918	629	1289
Wadulla	6471	2363	4108
Meetotamulla	7512	2379	5133
Orugodawatta	5900	1948	3952
Kurunyawatta	3071	1021	2050
Wellampitiya	2296	641	1655
Dahampura	5211	1748	3463
Kolonnawa	2574	684	1890
Salamulla	4049	1245	2804
Sinhapura	3604	1227	2377
Gajabapura	2911	780	2131
Wijayapura	3010	838	2172
Total	55285	17876	37409
Percentage		32.3	67.7

Source: Population Census – 2001

1.3. Urban Infrastructure & Utility Services

Roads

Kolonnawa area is served by a good road network, which connects regional towns and cities of Sri Lanka. Most of the inner access roads in residential areas are narrow (about 10 feet wide) and are not tarred roads. According to the Council, the total length of the tarred road belonging to the council is 15.5 km. Another 4.5 km of gravel roads are owned by the council. The main road network which runs across of Kolonnawa consists of the following roads.



Regional Link Roads	Sub Regional and City Roads
Baseline Road	Kolonnawa Road
Avissawella Road	Meethotamulla Road
	Perera Avenue
	Fraser Road
	Nagahamulla Road
	Ranasinghe Road
	Wijaya Road
	Angoda Road
	Parakumba Mawatha
	Ratnavalie Road
	Kumaradasa Road

The low lying areas which have been recently filled and utilized for housing dwellers do not have a satisfactory road network, even for performing basic services such as collection of solid waste and cleaning the septic tanks. Therefore, poor road accessibility is a major problem of present development of the town.

Water Supply

The area is provided with pipe-borne water supply by the National Water Supply and Drainage Board (NWS&DB). It was revealed that 100% of the area covered with pipe borne water supply (including those premises serviced by common stand posts). The ground water of the area is said to be highly polluted and is rarely used by the city dwellers. Data was not available for total number of premises with individual water connections.

The urban area is also provided with 249 public stand taps and 13 bathing places (mostly shallow wells) by the Urban Council. This shows that drinking water is not a major problem for the people in Kolonnawa town.

Public Health and Sanitation

Part of the Kolonnawa Urban Council area (about 40%) has a underground sewerage network which is being managed by the National Water Supply and Drainage Board. However, the report says the scheme has not been utilized by the people for which no clear reasons were found. In the rest of the area people use

sack nits and septic tanks for disposal of sewerage. In low income communities located particularly in low lying areas do not have proper sewerage disposal methods. It was found that the families in many low income settlements directly discharge sewerage into nearby open drains and canals. Thus, the sanitary conditions of the low income settlements has become a serious threat to the occupants. Some of included;

- Nawalokapura houses adjoining the railway bund.
- Unauthorized constructions at Pothuvil Kumbura
- Unauthorized constructions at Sinhapura
- Unauthorized constructions at Govt. Factory premises.
- Garden No. 82 - Sedawatta.

Due to the absence of basic sanitary facilities in these settlements, the open drains are used as toilets. This has caused incidence of water-borne diseases are common among the people of these communities.

The incidence of water-borne and infectious diseases reported within Kolonnawa U.C. area during the period 1981 – 2000 is given in the following table.

Disease	year-1981	1986	1991	1997	1998	2000
Hepatitis	02	01	19	21	12	14
Bowel diseases	-	10	34	14	20	20
Typhoid	01	-	02	02	02	07
Dengue	-	-	03	02	08	16
Maleriya	-	02	-	02	02	02
Cholera	05	-	02	-	10	-

Source: Kolonnawa U.C. – Public Health Department

The above data shows that there is a increase in the waterborne and infections diseases.

The problem of frequent clearing of septic tanks which are located above the ground level due to the high water table is experienced in the following settlements. The services are provided by the Urban Council free of charge but it has a large costs tot he Urban Council.

- Navagampura Stage II
- Sathamma Watta at Orugodawatta
- Kambikotuwa Watta, Sedawatta
- Wadugodawatta at Meethotamulla.

Drainage

Waste water & storm water drainage has been a problem in Kolonnawa town as most of the reclaimed low-lying areas have no satisfactory gradient to facilitate natural drainage. According to the Urban Council, about 80 % of the low-lying areas have been reclaimed from time to time for housing and other development activities. In the process of land reclamation, drainage canals also have been filled to a great extent, affecting the functioning of the drainage system. Most of the available main drains and canals are not functioning properly due to lack of maintenance and blockage due to accumulation of garbage and sedimentation.



There is a total length of 17.82 km. of drains in Kolonnawa U.C. area out of which 17.07 km. are cement rendered while the balance 0.75 km. are earth drains.

There are several types of road side drains connected with main roads, link roads and service roads providing access to settlements. The local authority is responsible for the maintenance of all these drains, but due to unauthorized constructions and encroachment of these drains, particularly along the service roads, the local authority is unable to carry out the maintenance activities as required. Drains of Majid Place at Avissawella road, drains of land owned by the SLLR&DC at Perera Mawatha, Meethotamulla, drain towards the end of Nagahamulla are some examples of non-functioning drains in the town. During last year all surface drains at Sinhapura, Kolonnawa were constructed under Japanese Government assistance.

It was also found that in some of the housing development areas there were no storm water drains and therefore it has affected the environmental quality of these areas.

- Council houses and SLLR&DC houses at Wadugodawatta
- Nawalokapura houses near the railway bund
- Garden No. 82 at Sedawatta
- Unauthorized houses constructed at Pothuvil Kumbura
- Unauthorized houses at Government Factory premises

Solid Waste Disposal

Kolonnawa had been the backyard of Colombo and over several decades, some parts of Kolonnawa area were used as the dumping ground for the solid waste generated in Colombo, as Kolonnawa has a large extent of low-lying land. Orugodawatta had been a waste disposal site for a very long time. Now most part of this site has been utilized for the relocation of shanty dwellers affected by development activities. The practice of using land in Kolonnawa for the disposal of waste generated in Colombo has now been terminated due to protest by the urban council.



Presently, a site at Meethotamulla is used for the disposal of solid waste generated in Kolonnawa where about 50 tons of solid waste is dumped daily. This site is about 18 acres in extent, is not properly managed as a sanitary land fill site. All types of garbage including leftovers from slaughter houses are dumped in this site creating most unhealthy and insanitary conditions not only within the site but also in the surrounding environment. Due to the collection of garbage over many decades, it is now producing methane gas resulting in fires in many parts of the site.

For the purpose of collection and disposal of solid waste in the urban area, the Council has two tractors, three hand tractors, two tippers and 119 employees including four labor supervisors and three head labourers. Sixty five numbers of metal containers have been installed at various points along the access roads for people to dump garbage which will be emptied by the Council. These bins cover nearly 70% of the council area which is easily accessible. Plastic bins have been provided particularly to those settlements where vehicular access is difficult such as tenement gardens. It was also observed that unemployed youth are engaged in sorting out



garbage at the dumping site to collect those items, which have a market value for recycling. Almost all the entire low income housing areas do not have a regular waste collection service. Hence, indiscriminate dumping of garbage in and around these areas has caused serious health problems to communities. It was also observed that the urban council does not have a proper strategy for managing their solid waste problem.

Present Public Health Facilities Provided by the Urban Council

The insanitary environmental condition in most parts of the town has resulted in the breeding of mosquitoes which eventually leads to many problems of public health. Kolonnawa U.C. area has been divided into 6 parts for the purpose of dealing with the control of mosquitoes and one employee per each part has been deployed for the purpose of spraying of DDT.

The health condition of school children is examined regularly and they are given vitamins, anti-worm tablets free of charge by the public health department of the urban council.

Food Sanitation

Regular inspection of food processing places and places where Food items are sold to the public is carried out by the health staff of the urban council. Steps are taken to cancel the permits of those who produce and or sell unhygienic food items to the public. However, there was no regular awareness campaigns to educate traders on these issues.

Maternity Health Care

Maternity and childcare clinics are held at Vihara Mawatha, Sedawatta and Onugidawatta areas provided free of charge by the urban council and expectant mothers vaccinated. There are maternity and children child care centres run by the urban council.

In addition, free Ayurvedic dispensaries are available at Vihara Mawatha, Sedawatta and Meethotamulla.

Community Services

The urban council in collaboration with several other government agencies and the civil society organizations carry out the following community development activities.

- Arrangements have been made to link up with the environmental task force of the Colombo district, in collaboration with several schools in the area.
- "Shramadana" campaigns launched to clean up the environment in selected areas as a measure to prevent pre-conditions for the spread of 'Dengue' fever.
- Distribution of plastic bins and bags for the collection of solid waste.
- Annual distribution of free exercise books among school children.
- Establishment of community development societies in tenement gardens and mobilize their services in community development work.
- Operating libraries and reading room for the children in the area (one public library and two reading rooms and two community centres are provided by the urban council for public use).

2.1 Nature of Urban Development

Land Use Composition

Geographically most parts of Kolonnawa had been the drainage basin of Kelani River. With the construction of the present flood protection bund in 1935 by the Irrigation Department, a large part of the urban council area was protected from the flooding of Kelani River which facilitated some degree of urban development. But it retained many low-lying areas (land below the M.S.L.) which are subject to water retention and flooding during heavy rains as flood retention areas.

Some of the low-lying areas were reclaimed for development purposes such as housing, public utilities, industries and warehousing, and some other areas which could not be reclaimed were utilized for the disposal of solid waste. There were also some areas which were encroached by poor families who were engaged in informal sector activities in the city of Colombo or in and around Kolonnawa town. This has resulted in large number of squatter settlements coming up in flood prone low-lying areas of Kolonnawa. About 80% of the flood retention areas have now been filled without a proper drainage plan excepting a strip of land north of Heen Ela along the southern boundary of the U.C area and a few isolated pockets including a small area adjoining the solid waste disposal site at Pothuvil Kumbura.

Land Use Plan

A land use plan is not available for Kolonnawa either with the Council or with the Urban Development Authority (UDA). The present land use is of a mixed character having many conflicting uses such as polluting industries co-existing with residential uses. In the banks of Kelani river alone 125 such industries have been reported which include several saw mills. A land use plan prepared by the UDA (GIS Centre) in 1998 based on ICOMOS satellite data indicates the following concentrations of land use activities:-

Storage /Utility Installations/Large-scale Industries

- Petroleum oil storage installations to the North of Heen Ela and East of Dematagoda Ela;
- Kelanitissa Electricity sub station to the West of Baseline Road;
- Water storage installations to South of Pothuvil Kumbura solid waste disposal site;
- Food granaries to the South of Avissawella road and East of Dematagoda Ela;
- J.B. Textiles to the South of Avissawella road and to the North of the flood protection bund;
- United Motors vehicle repair workshop at Orugodawatta;
- Container yard to the East of Baseline road in the unprotected area;
- Warehousing complex to the West of New Kelani bridge (Baseline road) in the unprotected area;
- 'Good Fellows' garment industries located to the North of Dematagoda Ela near Weragoda;
- Greyline garage warehouse complex at Sedawatta;
- Several saw mills and timber depots in the unprotected area to the South of Kelani Ganga;

Most of these installations, warehouses and industries have been constructed on reclaimed marshy lands but the locations are well connected to the main roads such as Baseline road and Avissawella road. The location of these activities have had generated employment opportunities in the area while directly supporting the development of the town.

Residential and Business Premises

The assessment registers maintained by the Kolonnawa U.C. indicates the distribution of residential and business premises according to Council Wards as follows:

Ward No.	Residential Premises	Business Premises
1	1411	55
2	2800	245
3	729	38
4	873	79
5	408	87
6	366	49
7	711	22
8	874	40
9	564	95
10	478	108
11	1352	132
Total	10566	950

The above data indicates that the high concentration of business premises is found in the Ward No. 2 – Orugodawatta , Ward No. 10 – Egoda Kolonnawa, and Ward No. 11 – Meethotamulla. However, it was revealed though discussion with the UC officials that these residential areas do not have required basic infrastructure and community activities.

Agricultural Land

Hardly any agricultural lands exist excepting a few vegetable (green leaves) plots in the unreclaimed low-lying areas. Such areas are rapidly declining due to land reclamation expansion of built up areas.

Open Spaces

The availability of formal open spaces for recreation and amenity are severely inadequate in relation to high density development of residential areas only two small playgrounds are available in the town.

Problems Related to Existing Land Use Pattern

- A complete disorderly and haphazard distribution of land uses based on the vested interests of investors with little or no consideration given to the interests of the citizens of Kolonnawa has been taken place in the town.

- A complete contrast in terms of basic amenities can be found between orderly developed highland area occupied by the middle class and extremely poor conditions of the low income settlements in low-lying areas.
- High density low income settlements with no basic amenities have poor sanitary conditions leading to spread of infectious diseases is a major problem in the town.
- Existence of incompatible land uses such as polluting industries and low income residential areas without adequate reservations or buffer zones has rendered risk of life of the communities.
- Lack of open spaces and amenities for the low income/high density residential areas such as Orugodawatta, Sedawatta, Meethotamulla and Wellampitiya
- Encroachment of the unprotected area (i.e. the area between the Kelani river and the flood protection bund) by industries, warehousing and residential uses has created many environmental problems.
- Encroachment of canal reservations and railway reservations by shanty dwellers leading to problems of public safety and crime.
- Inadequate reservations for the tank farm and installations of the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation and Kelanitissa power station.

3.1 Main Environmental Features of the Town

The environment of Kolonnawa is characterized by the existence about 25% high land and 75% low-lying areas, which had been filled during the last 2 – 3 decades. These low lying areas formed the wetlands and water bodies of Kolonnawa in the past supporting the sustenance of its population and the environment.

The Kolonnawa area is surrounded by water bodies, such as Kelani River to the North, Kittampahuwa Ela and Kolonnawa Ela to the east, Heen Ela to the south, Dematagoda Ela and St. Sebastian Ela to the west. However all these water bodies are highly polluted and are not functioning properly due to sedimentation and lack of regular maintenance.

Within the urban area almost all the wet lands and parts of water bodies have been reclaimed and low income settlements established with no open spaces and green areas.

Industrial pollution has reached its highest levels, due to lack of enforcement of zoning and environmental regulations to ensure safe discharge of industrial affluent. The local authority does not have even an approved zoning plan for the town to be used for approval of building applications. This has resulted in emergence of incompatible land use pattern in the town. Due to the increasing levels of pollution, ecological balance has already been affected resulting in loss of water bodies and green spaces.

3.2 Present Usage of Environmental Resources and the Conflicts between the Environment and Development

As explained in section 3.1 the environment of the city comprising of the internal water bodies, wetlands, canal and drainage network, the river embankments, natural vegetation etc have been seriously affected due to man made activities such as establishment of polluting industries unregulated and excessive land filling and establishment of human settlements. This has resulted in pollution of inland water bodies and wetlands. Apart from the pollution, many houses and other establishment face the threat of flooding. A recent flood which occurred in 1999 had hit a large number of families in Kolonnawa town which was over 4000 families as indicated below.

G.N. Division	No. of families affected
509A Sedawatta	1195
509B Vheragoda	130
509D Wadulla	1010
510 Meethotamulla	656
510A Orugodawatta	792
510B Kuruniyawatta	352
511 Wellampitiya	85
511A Dahampura	600
512A Salamulla	198
512B Sinhapura	116
512D Vijayapura	22
Total:	4156

Source: Divisional Secretary's Office, Kolonnawa

Floods are usually followed by epidemics. Even during the normal times of the incidence of respiratory diseases had been very common in the low income settlements located in the town.

4.1 Particulars Regarding the Availability of Resources and Systems for Environmental Management

Measures/Plans already Adopted by the Local Authority

Adequate measures have not been taken by the local authority to deal with the problems of environment. There was no plan of action adopted by the council to deal with these problems. The local authority does not have the resources or the man power and technical capacity to deal with the current level of environmental problems. It does not have effective control over the outside forces which bring about changes into the urban activity of the town.

However, the Local Government Department of the Western Province, in collaboration with the Ministry of Forestry and Environmental Conservation has formulated a proposal in 1999 for 'Clean River Project' for Kolonnawa Divisional Secretariat Division which includes the Kolonnawa Urban Council are too. The proposal covers following aspects of the development & environmental issues.

- Urban development and plans for the protection of the river embankments
- Solid waste management
- Water supply and drainage
- Control of industrial pollution
- Regulation of sewage disposal and
- Disaster management

The priority need for the formulation and adoption of an urban development plan has been very much recognized in this report. The following long term objectives have been included in the proposed project.

- Definition of the river reservation;
- River reservation be declared as a high environmentally sensitive area and a suitable strategy be adopted to regulate the development of private lands located within this area
- A zoning plan to be prepared in collaboration with the Urban Development Authority for guiding and managing development activities.
- Introduction of a complete ban on new constructions within the river reservation and formulate by-laws to deal with the offenders
- Formulate guidelines for the identification of marshes, and low-lying areas and formulate by-laws to deal with unauthorized land reclamation in such areas
- Identification of unauthorized constructions already in existence and formulate plans and proposals to relocate them in alternative locations, together with budgetary provisions required for same
- Formulate plans for prevention of floods and spread of epidemics and disaster mitigation measures in collaboration with the National Physical Planning Department
- Introduce measures for the conservation of bio-diversity while improvement of the environmental quality in the town.
- Identification of low income settlements /squatter settlements and prepare plans for upgrading or relocating them as appropriate.

Short-term Measures

- Surveying of places in the river bank which are subject to problems of erosion or which may be subject to erosion in the future

- Mapping of the river reservation land
- Preparation of an urban development & environmental conservation plan.
- Coordination and implementation of urban development and river reservation plans
- Institute legal action against unauthorized extraction of sand in Kelani River
- Prevent reclamation of low lying areas and encroachment reservation lands within the town area
- A committee to be established for the formulation of policies and strategies for guiding the city development activities

Policy decision regarding the implementation of these proposals have not yet been made, although the preliminary estimates have been formulated and responsibility centers for the implementation of sub projects identified in the report. .

Whether any Standing Committees Established?

It was observed that there was no any standing committee setup by the Council for dealing with environmental issues in the town. Also, no active Non-Governmental Organizations or community Based Organizations in the town working on environmental issues.

5.1 Conclusions

The Main Environmental Systems of the Urban Area and their Significance for the Present and future Sustainable Development

The environmental system that existed in Kolonnawa area prior to 1980s seem to have maintained a proper balance between the environmental resources such as water bodies, wetlands, paddy fields, marshes, agricultural areas, a system of canals and the human activities in the area.

The pressure of urbanization, particularly due to the impact of the expansion of Colombo after the second world war created the need to accommodate a large number of population and economic activities that are directly related to port oriented activities of Colombo. This has resulted in the reclamation of a large extent of low-lying lands, loss of vegetation cover fauna and flora affecting the ecological balance in the area. This process of environmental deterioration further accelerated during the past two to three decades when the low-lying areas of Kolonnawa was used as the back yard of Colombo, to dispose its solid waste. Due to increasing pressure for land mainly to accommodate the working population of Colombo reclamation of almost all the flood retention areas including some part of the canals were taken over. The areas which were hitherto used as garbage dumps too were subsequently occupied by low-income housing without even the basic amenities. Parallel to this process, there was large scale warehousing container yards, tank farms, utility installations and industrial development which were established in the town has exerted further pressure on land in prime areas resulting in the relocation of low income settlements in areas outside the flood protection bund.

Today, the environmental system of Kolonnawa is on the verge of collapse. There are imminent dangers of out break of epidemics. Health conditions of people have deteriorated. Respiratory problems and skin diseases were very common. It was also observed that social problems resulting from drug addiction by the youth in the area are very common in the town.

Strategies to Overcome the Present Environmental and Development Problems

A strategy framework has already been identified in a document prepared by the Local Govt. Department of the Western Provincial Council. It has already been outlined in section 4.1. It is quite a comprehensive strategy which has been formulated with the participation of all relevant parties. Kolonnawa Urban Council seem to have extended its cooperation in conducting the relevant surveys and investigations for the study.

The basic requirement for the formulation and implementation of a strategy is the setting up of an institutional structure which has the organizational, technical and man-power capacity to carryout this task. As at present the local authority does not have adequate resources and capacity, but could play a major role in this exercise to enlist the participation of the community. An organization, representing the relevant agencies – e.g. CEA, UDA, Western Provincial Council, RDA, SLLR&DC, together with the Kolonnawa U.C. with a clear mandate from the Central Government will be necessary to implement the proposed environmental strategy.

It is also essential to determine, after carrying out the relevant studies and investigations, the sustainable carrying capacity of the eco-system of Kolonnawa particularly in the low-lying areas and determine the optimum size of the population may be in low rise and economic activities it could accommodate. It might be necessary to relocate part of the excess population in flats constructed in the high land, low density areas which have all infrastructure and utilities and the balance in high lands of the adjoining Pradeshiya Sabha

areas. However, for this purpose, proper survey of existing squatter settlements needs to be carried out with a view to formulate strategies to improve their conditions.

List of Persons Involved in the Preparation of the City Profile

1. The Project Support Team (PST) of SCCP II including Mr. D. Premasiri Hettiarachchi, Commissioner of Local Government, Dr. Fahmy Ismail, National Consultant, Ms. Swairee Rupasinghe, Project Officer and all other Members of PST.
2. Hon. V.S. Guththila Silva, Chairman of Kolonnawa Urban Council (UC) and Honorable Council members.
3. Mr. P. Sugathadasa, Secretary, Kolonnawa (Project Director – SCCP) and other officials of the Urban Council.
4. Mr. N.D. Dickson, Former Director General of Urban Development Authority who assisted in preparation of the draft City Profile.
5. Mr. K.A. Jayaratne, President, SEVANATHA who provided his advice and guidance.
6. Mr. H.M.U. Chularathna, Executive Director who was the Coordinator of LPI's activities who prepared the final version of the Profile including summary in Sinhala Language.
7. Ms. Dilrukshi Silva, Office Secretary of SEVANATHA LPI who has tirelessly undertaken the computerization of the report.