



Institute of National Security Studies

Round Table Discussion on

ESCALATION OF PLASTIC POLLUTION; A THREAT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

Post-Event Press Release

The Institute of National Security Studies (INSS), the Ministry of Defence's premier think tank on national security, hosted a Round Table Discussion on "Escalation of Plastic Pollution; A Threat to Environmental Security" on Thursday, August 3, 2023, from 1400hrs to 1600hrs (IST) via Zoom. Mr S.M. Werahera, Director, Environment Pollution Control and Chemical Management Division, Ministry of Environment; Ms H.P.S. Jayasekara, Director, Solid Waste Management Unit, Central Environment Authority; Prof. Rangika Bandara, Professor-Department of Zoology and Environmental Management, University of Kelaniya; and Ms Dilshani Edirisinghe, Assistant Vice President-John Keells Holdings PLC were the event's four distinguished Guest Speakers. The session was moderated by Rear Admiral Dimuthu Gunawardena, RWP**, RSP, VSV, USP, nswc, psc, hdmc, Acting Director General and Director (Communications & Publications) of INSS. The audience included ministry officials, academics, researchers, policymakers, and Sri Lanka Armed Forces representatives. The moderator began the proceedings by elaborating on the impact of plastic pollution in the current context of Sri Lanka, which threatens the entire world and jeopardises human security and health security.

Prof. Rangika Bandara first spoke on "Plastic Pollution: Assessing Environmental Damages, the Urgency for Conservation, and Responsible Technological Interventions." She claimed in her speech that the output of plastic has increased by 10% since 1970 due to its simplicity of usage. She went on to say that the problem is that two-thirds of used plastics are thrown away, the majority of which are one-time-use plastics. Second, under the title "Industry Responses to the Escalation of Plastic Pollution: Balancing Sustainability and Economic Viability," Ms Dilshani Edirisinghe discussed the value creation process, beginning with waste collectors and ending with Material Recovery Facilities (MRF) Centres, recycling, and upcycling. She went on to describe particular measures undertaken by the private sector to reduce plastic pollution. Ms H.P.S. Jayasekara then discussed the topic "Legal Frameworks and Challenges in Addressing Plastic Pollution: Local and Global Perspective," pointing out the existing legislative framework in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, she stated that some of the recognised problems in building an eco-friendly atmosphere are issues in attitudes and behaviour, a lack of a legislative framework to manage health, environmental concerns about plastic chemicals, and insufficient infrastructure. Finally, Mr S.M. Werahera spoke about "Government Strategies for Addressing the Escalation of Plastic Pollution: Safeguarding Environmental Security." He also emphasised the importance of altering individuals' behaviour in reducing plastic pollution. He also addressed the government's measures to eliminate plastic pollution in Sri Lanka.

The moderator led a good Q & A session in the final 30 minutes of the programme, allowing the presenters to react constructively with the required information to the audience's queries. Finally, Ms Kalpani Gunethilaka, INSS Research Assistant, offered the Vote of Thanks, bringing the Round Table Discussion to a close.