



**MINISTRY OF MEGAPOLIS AND WESTERN DEVELOPMENT
CABINET MEMORANDUM**

CABINET MEMORANDUM NO:
Min Ref No: MMWD/D/UD/SW/CP-17

Handing over the Solid Waste Management Activities

PREVIOUS REFERENCES:

Cabinet Paper No 14/1030/503/087 of 01.08.2014, decision on 14.08.2014
 Cabinet Memorandum No 17/0012/724/001 of 24.12.2016, Decision on 10.01.2017
 Note to cabinet No: 17/0327/724/001-1 dated 09.02.2017 and decision on 21.02.2017
 Cabinet Memo No. 17/0863/724/030 of 23.04.2017 and Note to Cabinet No. 17/0863/724/030-1 of 04.05.2017 and decision 16.05.2017
 Cabinet Paper No 17/1348/724/001-III of 23.06.2017, decision on 05.07.2017
 Cabinet Paper No 17/1943/724/001-v of 25.08.2017, decision on 26.09.2017
 Cabinet Paper No 17/2386/724/001-vi of 17.10.2017, decision on 08.11.2017
 Cabinet Paper No 17/2765/724/001-VII of 30.11.2017 and Note to Cabinet No. 17/3026/724/001-VIII of 29.12.2017 and decision 17.01.2018
 Cabinet Paper No 18/0621/724/029 of 21.03.2018, decision on 11.04.2018
 Cabinet Paper No 18/1122/819/008 of 21.05.2018 and Observation for Cabinet dated 11.06.2018 and decision 22.06.2018
 Cabinet Paper No 18/1250/819/008-1/TBR of 04.06.2018, decision on 27.06.2018
 Cabinet Paper No 19/0305/116/017/TBR of 09.01.2019, decision on 13.02.2019

1. INTRODUCTION:

Collection and disposal of municipal solid waste (MSW) has long been a major problem in the country. A number of efforts taken in the past by various government and private sector agencies with different technologies of varying scales to manage the MSW have been failed due to a various of reasons.

As the management of MSW in the Colombo district, particularly the environmental safe disposal, became a burden to Sri Lankan Government, Ministry of Megapolis & Western Development (MMWD) and Urban Development Authority have been assigned the task of finding permanent solution by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Management (CCEM) at a meeting held on 12th March 2015. Accordingly, the MMWD has made necessary arrangements to identify long-term solutions for Western Province.

Until such time long-term solutions are in place, as an interim measure to control the improper disposal, the MMWD has taken steps to inform the concerned Authorities on 20th May 2015, 6th September 2016, 21st December 2016, and vide Cabinet decision granted on 10th January 2017 to stop further dumping of waste at Meethotamulla Dump site, as it has over capacitated to accept any more waste for disposal.

In view of continual disposal of MSW at Meethotamulla dump site in spite of several intimations to not to do so, it was collapsed by way of a waste slide on April 14, 2017 claiming the lives of 32 people, leaving 8 people missing, destructing nearly 79 homes, affecting the lives of 264 families' livelihood and rendering several families losing their valuable properties

2. INVOLVEMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF MEGAPOLIS AND WESTERN DEVELOPMENT IN SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT (SWM):

A) Ongoing initiatives;

i. Waste Park at Kerawalapitiya

Following dramatic accident happened in the Meethotamulla dumpsite as stated in the foregoing, the Sri Lanka Land Reclamation and Development Corporation (SLLRDC) undertook the task to find a prior short term solution to manage the MSW by promoting a) recycling of non-biodegradables and b) composting of perishable waste collected and handed over by several Local Authorities in Colombo & Gampaha District including the Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) at Kerawalapitiya Waste Park operated by SLLRDC. From July 2017 to March 2108, proper waste collection method, segregation of waste, recycling of waste had been scientifically handled by SLLRDC and our ministry after we were selected by the Cabinet.

However, in the absence of a proper disposal method, the comingled (mixed) waste were dumped in the adjoining temporary marshy land next to the Compost Plant with the hope of transferring into a proper landfilling site, once it is made available. Currently, the Kerawalapitiya temporary dumping site has nearly

reached its fullest capacity and leaving only a little space probably up to the end of next April 2019. piled up co- mingle shown as a waste mountain.

ii. Sanitary Landfill Project at Aruwakkalu, Puttalam

In 2014, the first initiatives have been taken by the then Ministry of Defense and Urban Development Authority to establish a sanitary landfill at Aruwakkalu using the abandoned limestone worked-out pits to dispose about 1000 Metric Tons of MSW per day. The Cabinet of Ministers has also given the approval on 14th March 2014 to allocate a sum of Rs 14,017 million from the consolidated fund. This project was, however, later abandoned (Feb, 2016) in the environmental evaluation process due to several reasons, the positioning of the site within the Buffer Zone of Wilpattu National Park being the major reason.

In view of the potential of the worked-out pits for a long term waste disposal solution, the MMWD has taken steps to set-up Metro Colombo Solid Waste Management (MCSWM) Project and to reactivate the Sanitary Landfill project with an entirely new approach in 2016, which consists of four components; a) waste loading transfer station at Kelaniya, b) unloading transfer station at Aruwakkalu, c) construction of sanitary landfill at Aruwakkalu with a capacity of 1200 Metric Tons per day and d) improvements of rail transportation with necessary equipment and machineries .

However, the implementation of MCSWM Project, which was initially planned to be implemented over a period of three years from 2017, was fast tracked to 18 months as a means of providing an expeditious and long-term solution for the grave national issue of waste disposal aggravated by the sudden collapse of Meethotamulla waste dump.

Since the effective land capacity of the temporary landfill at Waste Park, Kerawalapitiya was dwindling fast due to continuous disposal of mixed MSW resulting in considerable negative impacts to the surrounding environment, the Ministry took a decision to proceed with a Design and Build Contract in such a way that part of the Sanitary Landfill would be ready for disposal of at least 600 Metric Tons of MSW per day (called partial Completion) within the first 10 months of execution of the Contract so that the burden on the Kerawalapitiya temporary dump site could be relieved by transferring mixed waste to Aruwakkalu using by-road transportation.

The Contractor [a consortium between M/S China Harbour Engineering Corporation(CHEC) and M/S South Western Municipal Engineering Design and Research Institute of China (SMEDRIC)] is expected to complete and make ready part of the sanitary Landfill to accept waste from 15th March 2019, though there is delay in full partial completion of the sanitary landfill as per the Contract.

iii. Awareness Programmes for the General Public & Other Stakeholders:

The MSCWM Project of this Ministry has taken initiatives to conduct a large number of education and awareness programs from 2017 on the different aspects of SWM such as media conferences, technical presentations, residential training programs, group discussions, site visits at Dompe Sanitary Landfill, distribution of education material and pamphlets etc, targeting a variety of stakeholders, giving utmost priority to Kelaniya and Wanathawilluwa, Puttalam areas. The stakeholders so made aware include *i.e.* National & Regional Political leadership, Religious Leaders of all religions, Government Officers, Local Authorities, Non-Governmental Organizations, Community Based Organizations, School Children. A complete list of awareness programs conducted is given in the *Attachment I*.

iv. Waste to Energy Project at Kerawalapitiya - Gampaha District

With the facilitation of this Ministry, the M/S. Western Power Company Pvt. Ltd., is to setup a waste treatment facility at Kerawalapitiya using the waste to energy technology to treat about 500 Metric Tons of MSW per day. The commercial operations are expected to be commenced by 2019/20 as Public Private Partnership (PPP) Project with the Colombo Municipal Council.

3) Issues and Bottlenecks

The MMWD took the initiatives on the planning and implementation of long-term waste management solutions on the invitation of the government, though the legal mandate of doing so is vested with other government entities. Accordingly, this ministry has been performing well in a satisfactory manner with the support and cooperation from the other agencies till recent time.

The MCSWM Project envisages transport of 1200 metric tons per day of solid waste - mainly collected in the Metro Colombo Region in specially made containers loaded in to train carriages to the Sanitary landfill at Aruwakkalu after being compressed at a transfer station in Kelaniya. In view of the fact that the sanitary landfill is located in Aruwakkalu (a site located in Puttalam District), a decision was taken to give priority to the Local Authorities in Puttalam District to dispose its residual waste in this Landfill once the partial completion is accomplished by 15th March 2019.

However, from the recent time, especially from the establishment of the Local Authorities after the Local Government Election in February 2018, protest and resistance launched by the several groups of the Puttalam & Wanathawilluwa area.

Considering the national importance of this project, government should intervene and educate the people living in this area.

4. APPROVAL SOUGHT

In view of the circumstances given above approval of the Cabinet of Ministers is sought to

- i. Direct Ministry of Provincial Council & Local Government, Ministry of Mahaweli Development & Environment, Provincial Council and relevant organizations to launch awareness programmes on waste management to all social groups.
- ii. As Kerawalapitiya temporary waste dump site reached its full capacity and now SLLRDC land at Kerawalapitiya is being destroyed, after April 2019, SLLRDC will be not in a position to accept the garbage and relevant authorities should pay for the destruction of 25 acres of land caused by exercising garbage dumping.
- iii. This Ministry has taken initial steps to form a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for waste management and relevant authorities to take over the operations of sanitary land fill & transfer station at Aruwakkalu and Kelaniya after commissioning.
- iv. Assign the ongoing solid waste management project activities to a suitable government entity mandated with the subject of solid waste management with immediate effect.



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