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## Editorial

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### National Policies and Plans for Mitigation of Air Pollution

The various ramifications concerning the occurrence, impact, and abatement of air pollution and ambient air quality are discussed in this number of Vidurava. There is no doubt, that despite emission control measures, air quality has been deteriorating at an unprecedented pace in recent times mainly due to increasing vehicular traffic. The impacts of air pollution on the health of the people, and in consequence, the well being of the nation as shown by the contributors to this edition of the Science Magazine are astonishingly revealing.

It is however, significant to note that unorthodox mechanism for mitigation of air pollution through the use of ecosystem sciences have now drawn the attention of scientists and environmentalists. This approach though may be seen as a novelty must be recognized, was a tradition that our ancestors had consciously and conscientiously resorted to in order to ensure a cleaner living environment.

In the year 2002, in response to the concerns aired by all segments of society, the then Ministry of Forestry and Environment established under its purview the Air Quality Management Centre, in order to co-ordinate air pollution mitigation activities. Among the early measures initiated

by this Centre included the formulation of a National Policy on Air Quality Management. It also gazetted mobile air emission standards, fuel quality specifications, and vehicular specification standards for importation of vehicles, and finalized the so-called “Clean Air 2007 Action Plan”.

In addition, regulation needed for gas emission tests and clearance for all motor vehicles before the issue of revenue licenses which came into effect from November 2008, were indeed positive steps towards curtailing noxious emissions.

The Ministry of Environment also took the decisive step to ratify international conventions relating to these issues. Under these conventions, the use of leaded petrol was banned in 2002, while regulations for reduction of sulphur contents of auto diesel from 1.0g per litre to 0.5g per litre were also implemented.

It is thus clear that the relevant state agencies have already taken the correct initiatives to mitigate air pollution, but more needs to be done, and hopefully their efforts to ensure a healthy living environment for the people, will become a reality in the near future.