



# COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT



Many of the developing countries of the world today are increasingly facing a paradoxical situation in their attempts to seek solutions to the major problems associated with achieving economic development for their peoples. In their pursuit of food, shelter, clothing and employment for the million in need of these basic requirements, these countries are now compelled to exercise severe pressure on available resources. A major problem that confront these countries, in this context, is the difficulty of trying to balance their drives for an increase in national material output and at the same time attempting a conservation and renewal of their renewable natural resources. Sri Lanka is very much one such country.

The problem stemming from the unplanned and ruthless exploitation of certain sections of the country's coastal belt is a striking example of this dichotomy. Two other such local examples are the unplanned and unchecked denudation of Sri Lanka's forest cover to make way for rural agriculture and irrigation and the rapid pace of urbanisation with its attendant environmental imbalances. It is therefore vital that the entire concept of environmental and natural resources management is clearly understood and appreciated at the present juncture and we therefore come back again to this subject in a 'Special Report' of the 'Review'. In November 1980 we dealt with the subject of Coast Conservation, but since then much new knowledge and experience have emerged and today the subject is viewed from the broader perspective of Coastal Zone Management.

A special Authority has been set up by Government to deal with the entire coastal zone and the following papers, written by key personnel of this agency, emphasise that to ensure the availability of renewable resources to future generations, resource management should be directed towards a sustained utilization of natural resources.

In numerous ways these papers vividly illustrate how many problems of degradation stem from a narrow, single-purpose approach and how the unmaaged growth of competing demands for coastal space can produce over-exploitation conflicts among uses, and ultimately loss of the economic assets of the coastal resource base itself.