SMALL ACTIONS,
WHEN UNITED,
CAN CREATE
MEANINGFUL CHANGE.

HELP-O SRI LANKA E-NEWS

2026
AUGUST & SEPTEMBER EDITION

HELP-O Sri Lanka

OUR ORIGIN

HELP-O is a prominent Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) founded in 1992 by a dedicated team of professionals.
The organization was established with a clear commitment to improving the quality of life in Sri Lanka by promoting harmony between people and nature.
Through its diverse initiatives and projects, HELP-O has grown into an important contributor to the social, economic, and environmental development of Sri Lanka.

OUR VISION

"Economic Development, Social Justice &
SaferEnvironment for All"

OUR MISSION

"To identify the need of risks confronted community of Sri Lanka and implement effective solutions through integrated approaches with the participation of stakeholders"

HELP-O SRI LANKA MISSION OF THE MONTHS

To empower women to actively participate in leadership and decision-making, promote equal representation, strengthen their voices, and build inclusive and accountable communities. The initiative will help women develop the confidence, knowledge, and skills needed to take part in community leadership and governance.

It will especially support women from rural and low-income communities by creating opportunities to share their ideas, raise concerns, and contribute to decisions that affect their lives. This will help create stronger communities where women are respected, heard, and valued.

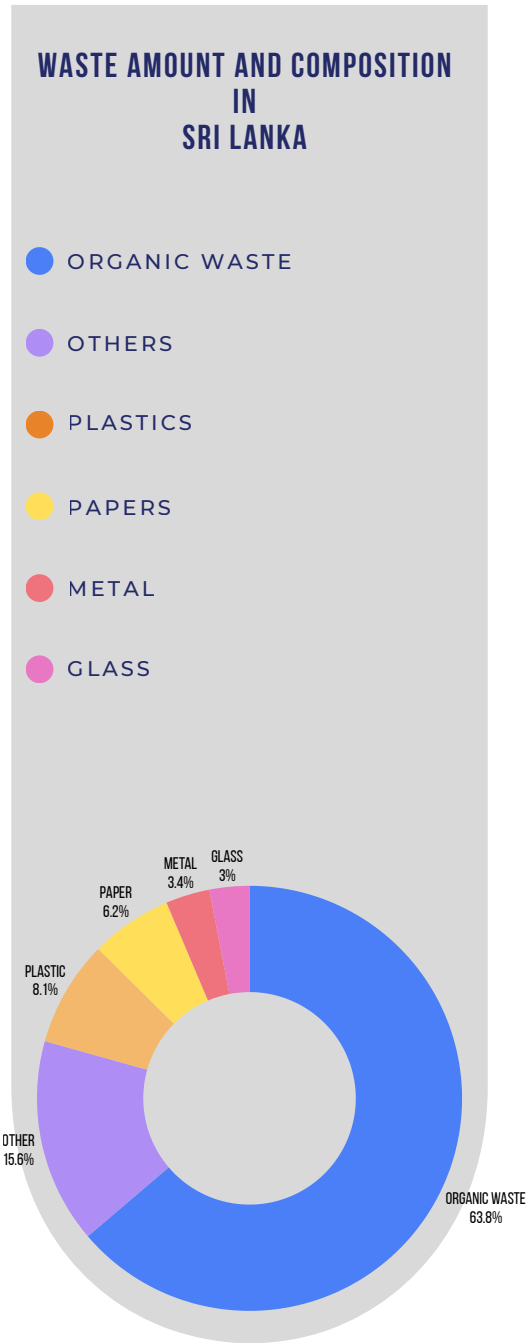




A MESSAGE FROM HELP-O

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At HELP-O, we believe that a cleaner and healthier Sri Lanka starts with each of us. By reducing waste, using resources responsibly, separating waste, and protecting our surroundings, we can make a meaningful difference in our communities and create a better environment for future generations.

WHAT CAN WE DO AS PEOPLE?

As individuals, we can reduce single-use plastics, reuse and recycle materials, separate waste at home, compost organic waste, and avoid dumping or burning waste in public places. By keeping our surroundings clean and encouraging our families and communities to follow good waste-management practices, we can all contribute to a cleaner and greener Sri Lanka.

AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2026 COMPLETED PROJECTS

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As part of the project, HELP-O organized a beach cleanup activity focused on collecting PET bottles and plastic waste from the coastal area. The activity brought together HELP-O volunteers, Japanese students, and students from the University of Ruhuna, working together to clean the beach and reduce plastic pollution.

Team Growth

Growing stronger with dedicated volunteers, passionate students, and supportive community partners, working together to create a lasting impact.



Operations Update

HELP-O continues to bring volunteers and communities together through beach cleanups, PET bottle collection, and environmental activities for a cleaner, greener Sri Lanka.

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eSabha App Training Programme

A training programme on the use of the eSabha App was successfully conducted at the Pasgoda Pradeshiya Sabha, with the participation of Chairman Hon. Wijitha Rangagamage, elected representatives, the Secretary, and senior officers.

The training sessions were conducted by Dr. Chathura Welivitiya, Chief Executive Officer of HELP-O, and Mr. Lahiru Udumalagala, Project Manager.

The programme focused on strengthening the capacity of local government officials to use the eSabha digital platform for the efficient management of citizen complaints and requests, while promoting greater public participation, transparency, and responsive local governance.



AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2026 ON THE GROUND

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South Asia's waste problem is becoming a methane crisis



By Chaturanga Pradeep Samarawickrama

South Asian countries have been urged to move beyond studies and commitments and take immediate, practical action to reduce methane emissions from the waste sector, as unmanaged waste continues to create serious climate, environmental, health and economic risks across the region.

The call came at the Regional Kick-off and Capacity Building Workshop on 'Accelerating Waste Methane Mitigation in South Asia for Climate, Health, and Development Co-Benefits," which commenced on July 15, 2026, at the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) Headquarters in Colombo.

The four-day workshop, funded by the Global Methane Hub and implemented by the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) in collaboration with SACEP, HELP-O and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), brought together government officials, experts, regional organisations, international agencies and other stakeholders to discuss how South Asia can reduce methane emissions from waste.

Methane is a major concern because of its strong climate impact. The workshop report notes that methane has a climate impact 86 times stronger than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period. Globally, the waste sector contributes approximately 20% of human-caused methane emissions.

The challenge is particularly serious in South Asia, where rapid urbanisation and increasing waste generation are putting greater pressure on already limited waste-management systems. The region generates about 70 million tonnes of municipal solid waste each year, while only around 44% is collected. Much of the remaining waste is disposed of through open dumping, burning and littering, creating conditions for methane emissions and contributing to the wider crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

Governments can form policy, but implementation requires the private sector

Dr. Premakumara Jagath Dickella Gamaralalage, Director of the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), who moderated the workshop's high-level panel discussion, placed strong emphasis on the need for coordinated action involving governments, businesses, scientists and communities.

He thanked the Government of Sri Lanka for hosting and inaugurating the first kick-off meeting and recognised SACEP as a long-standing partner since 2019. He also highlighted cooperation with the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Sri Lanka Chamber of Commerce on the role of businesses in advancing circular economy principles and reducing waste.

Dr. Premakumara said that addressing short-lived climate pollutants requires a "whole-of-society" approach involving governments, private industry, academia and scientific communities.

Dr Premakumara, Director IGES - CCET Japan

Director, Help-O Dr. Chatura Weliwitiya

While governments can formulate policies, he pointed out that implementation requires the involvement of the private sector. At the same time, scientists and researchers are needed to produce the data and scientific evidence required to measure progress.

The immediate objective of the project is to develop a regional roadmap with specific targets for South Asian countries to collectively reduce methane emissions from the waste sector. The project will also develop scientific knowledge products and conduct gap analyses using data already collected from participating countries.

Importantly, the proposed roadmap is not intended to create completely new targets. Instead, it will seek to align regional action with existing commitments, including the goal of a 30% reduction in methane emissions under the Global Methane Pledge.

Dr. Premakumara also highlighted a major weakness in waste-sector projects: technologies may be available, but projects can fail once external funding ends. He cited composting initiatives that stopped after project completion as an example.

The workshop therefore focused not only on technology but also on financing, implementation, long-term sustainability and lessons that can be shared between South Asian countries.

We already have enough information to act

Mr. Donovan Storey, Technology and Economic Assessment Panel Manager of the CCAC, warned that pollution is already slowing overall economic progress and becoming increasingly expensive for the region to manage.

He highlighted the wide-ranging effects of greenhouse gases and pollutants on human health, ecosystems, agricultural productivity, monsoon patterns and energy systems.

While acknowledging the importance of better data, Storey said there is already sufficient information to begin taking action. His message was that "actions create data", stressing the need to move from prolonged analysis to practical implementation of proven solutions.

He also pointed out that pollutants such as methane and black carbon do not stop at national borders. Their impacts cross countries, making isolated national approaches insufficient.

Regional organisations such as SACEP therefore have an important role in sharing knowledge and developing "champions of change". Storey also stressed that policies must involve communities directly, including farmers in relation to agricultural emissions and informal-sector workers involved in waste management.

Financing remains a major obstacle

A central issue raised during the workshop was the lack of finance for waste methane mitigation.

The panel argued that waste should not be treated only as a costly public service. Organic waste, in particular, can become a resource and a feedstock for businesses involved in composting, waste-to-energy projects and Black Soldier Fly farming.

However, direct grants alone are not enough to meet the region's needs. The panel called for blended finance, de-risking mechanisms, first-loss guarantees and viability-gap funding to encourage private-sector investment.

Another challenge is the lack of proven and easily replicated business models. Standardised legal, contractual and operational frameworks could help municipalities and private investors develop projects that are financially viable and easier to replicate.

The panel also identified institutional silos as a major problem. Waste-management departments, municipal authorities and national climate ministries often operate separately, making coordinated action difficult.

The workshop stressed the need for stronger bureaucratic leadership, flexible procurement systems, public-private partnership frameworks and regional standards.

Data gaps threaten methane reduction efforts

Reliable data is another major concern.

The panel called for harmonised Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) systems across South Asia. Without standardised data, countries face difficulties in measuring progress, comparing results and accessing performance-based international climate finance.

Participants also highlighted the need for better coordination between countries because both climate impacts and waste-related pollution cross national boundaries.

The workshop's open discussions identified data scarcity, the integration of informal waste workers, political commitment and sustained government support as key regional challenges. Participants stressed that policies must be supported by adequate resources and enforcement.

Sri Lanka's methane challenge

Sri Lanka's own waste sector presents significant opportunities for methane reduction.

The country generates more than 10,000 tonnes of municipal solid waste per day, with an estimated 62% organic fraction. Around 55% of municipal solid waste is disposed of through open dumps, while approximately 20% is treated through composting or anaerobic digestion. Sri Lanka's waste-sector methane emissions were estimated at approximately 0.66 million tonnes of CO_2 equivalent in 2021. Municipal solid-waste disposal accounted for the largest share, followed by incineration and open burning, biological treatment and wastewater treatment.

Sri Lanka has signed the Global Methane Pledge and has set a waste-sector greenhouse-gas reduction target of 20.8% by 2035, comprising unconditional and conditional components.

However, the country faces several barriers, including limited sanitary landfill capacity and gas recovery, inadequate wastewater treatment, weak source segregation, high capital and operating costs, fragmented institutional responsibilities and incomplete data.

The workshop identified the need to strengthen methane monitoring, improve inventory methodologies, develop methane-related regulations, increase access to carbon markets and establish better data platforms.

Priority interventions include sanitary landfills with gas capture, anaerobic digestion and biogas systems, blended climate finance and stronger MRV systems.

From waste to an economic resource

The workshop also highlighted practical examples from Sri Lanka.

On the fourth day, delegates visited the Kaduwela Municipal Waste Facility, which includes a biogas unit, Material Recovery Facility and compost plant. The facility combines biological treatment and resource recovery to divert waste from landfills and reduce methane emissions.

The delegation also visited the Karadiyana semi-aerobic landfill and the Moratuwa Municipal Council Material Recovery Facility.

At Moratuwa, delegates observed waste segregation, recycling and composting operations. Dry waste is sorted into recyclable materials such as plastics, paper, metals and glass, while organic waste is processed into compost.

The visits provided participants from the eight SACEP member countries with practical examples of waste-management approaches being implemented in Sri Lanka. Delegates from Maldives and Bhutan, facing their own challenges linked to land scarcity and waste generation, expressed interest in adapting aspects of the Moratuwa model to their own circumstances.

A regional roadmap

The workshop is expected to lead to the development of a regional methane mitigation roadmap. IGES and SACEP will prepare an initial outline based on discussions, followed by stakeholder and ministry feedback, an online review process and a second technical meeting before the final document is submitted to the SACEP Secretariat for consideration at a ministerial meeting.

The central message emerging from the Colombo workshop was that South Asia cannot afford to treat waste methane as a future problem.

The technology exists. The need for action is clear. But without finance, reliable data, strong institutions, private-sector participation and long-term implementation, methane reduction commitments may remain largely on paper.

For Dr. Premakumara and other participants, the priority is therefore to turn regional commitments into practical projects – and to ensure that those projects continue long after individual programmes and funding cycles end.

Poorly managed waste is creating growing environmental and climate challenges across South Asia, with methane emissions emerging as a major concern. The discussion highlights the importance of improved waste management systems, reliable data, private-sector involvement, and investment in sustainable solutions. For Sri Lanka, initiatives such as biogas production, recycling, composting, waste segregation, and resource recovery demonstrate how waste can be managed not only as a problem, but also as a valuable resource.

What Can We Do as People?

We can all help reduce methane emissions by managing our waste responsibly. Separating food and other organic waste, reducing food waste, composting, recycling, and supporting biogas production can help prevent organic waste from decomposing without oxygen and releasing methane. We should also avoid open dumping and burning of waste, use proper waste-collection systems, and support community-based waste-management initiatives. By making these simple changes and encouraging others to do the same, we can reduce environmental pollution, protect our communities, and contribute to a cleaner and more sustainable future.



AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2026 UPCOMMING PROJECTS

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Empowered Women, Stronger Communities.

HELP-O (Human and Environment Link Progressive Organization) was pleased to hand over our project proposal to the Hon. Governor, presenting an initiative focused on empowering women, particularly those from rural and low-income communities.

The project aims to build awareness of Human Rights, the Right to Information, and Local Governance, while encouraging women to actively participate in leadership, decision-making, and community development.

Through knowledge, confidence, and meaningful participation, HELP-O continues to work towards building more inclusive, accountable, and stronger communities.



Main objective

To empower women with the knowledge, confidence, and skills needed to understand their rights, participate in local governance, and actively contribute to decision-making and community development.

Expected Impact

Stronger awareness, greater confidence, meaningful participation, and increased representation of women in community decision-making.

AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2026 UPCOMMING PROJECTS

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Regional Forum on Circular Economy in South Asia

19TH–20TH OCTOBER 2026 | TAJ SAMUDRA, COLOMBO

The Regional Forum on Circular Economy in South Asia, themed "From International Practice to a Regional Framework and Action Roadmap," will bring together government representatives, business leaders, entrepreneurs, development partners, experts, academia and civil society to discuss practical approaches for advancing a circular economy across South Asia.



SOUTH ASIA'S TRANSITION TOWARDS A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The forum will explore how South Asian countries can build more sustainable, resource-efficient and inclusive economies by addressing growing waste generation, improving recycling and strengthening waste-management systems. It will also highlight successful practices from Japan, ASEAN and South Asia that can be adapted to regional needs

A REGIONAL 2026–2030 ACTION ROADMAP

The second day of the forum will focus on transforming the proposed Regional Circular Economy Framework into a practical 2026–2030 implementation roadmap. Discussions will cover priorities, financing, institutional responsibilities, milestones and regional cooperation, alongside the development of the SAARC-CCI Colombo Declaration on Circular Economy in South Asia.

IGES Institute for Global Environmental Strategies

FCCISL Sri Lanka

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THANK YOU

