

# Annual Report

2019

Directorate of Environmental Health,  
Occupational Health and Food Safety



Ministry of Health

# *Annual Report*

**2019**

*Directorate of Environmental Health,  
Occupational Health and Food Safety*

## *Message from the Deputy Director General (Environmental Health, Occupational Health and Food safety)*

Our technical scope encompasses of 3 nationally important areas namely Environment Health, Occupational Health and Food safety.

Environment Health program is conducted in conjunction with the Ministry of Environment and the Central Environment Authority. Other than many national level activities our unit technically support the health care waste management program in government hospitals in Sri Lanka. During this year Muthurajawela clinical waste facility was started which enabled the Ministry of Health to effectively treat the clinical waste generated in the Western, Central and Southern provinces.

Occupational Health is an area which needs re-visiting to effectively address the current issues. With the limited resources at hand we have tried our best to improve the present structure and function through capacity building of staff and developing review formats etc. This area has been of concern with lots of new industries and work sites coming in the country. Hence a concerted effort is necessary to address some burning issues in this area.

I am glad to see the Food Safety system in Sri Lanka improved a lot during the last year inspire of many challenges. This is a multi-faceted area which involves many organizations working towards a common goal. We were able to complete the national food contaminant survey and identify areas of concern and effectively corrected some issues like Aflatoxin in Chili imported from Asian countries. We were able to improve the food testing laboratory at National Institute of Health Sciences to analyze food items for Pesticides, Heavy metals toxins and many other food contaminants. Recruitment of new chemists to the food laboratories was a major achievement which we had been trying for years. Further we were able to give the chemists foreign training for better performance.

This document highlights the important activities we carried out during the year 2019 under the Deputy Director General (DDG) (Environmental and Occupational Health and Food Safety).

I am thankful to the Director General of Health Services for the fullest support and guidance he provided to achieve our organizational objectives. I also appreciate and thankful to all my staff lead by the Director (E&OH) for the commitment they made throughout the year as a team.

Dr. Lakshman Gamlath,

DDG (Environmental and occupational Health and food safety)

## *Message from the Director (Environmental Health, Occupational Health and Food safety)*

Directorate of Environmental Health, Occupational Health and Food Safety is a leading public health unit of Sri Lanka and consists of Environmental Health Unit, occupational Health Unit and Food control administration unit.

Environmental Health Unit is responsible to provide safe communities with healthier environments by implementing environmental health programme with various policies while Occupational Health Unit is responsible for implementing the National Occupational Health Programme of the Ministry of Health in Sri Lanka. Food Control Administration unit is responsible for coordinating and monitoring regulatory services and providing technical guidance to local authorities in order to ensure the availability of safe and wholesome food for consumers.

Annual report 2019 of Directorate of Environmental Health, Occupational Health and Food Safety is published for the third successful year and includes comprehensive information on performance in the areas of Environmental Health, Occupational Health and Food Safety in the year 2019.

I would like to thank Dr. L.T. Gamlath, Deputy Director General (Environmental Health, Occupational Health and Food Safety) for his advice and guidance and all the staff of the directorate for their tremendous support extended and for their commitments throughout the year 2019.

Dr. V.T.S.K Siriwardana,  
Director,  
Directorate of Environmental Health, Occupational Health and Food Safety.

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## *2. Introduction*

### **2.1 Historical Background**

Directorate of Environmental Health, Occupational Health and Food Safety has emanated a long way up to the present situation. Prior to 1990, there were only five Food and Drug Inspectors (F&DII) covering the entire country who were provided with one-year training leading to RSH Diploma Certificates on Meat and other Foods in the United Kingdom (UK) while the Director Environmental and Occupational Health (D (E & OH)) was Dr. Mohan Rodrigo who was succeeded by Dr. H.M.S.S.D. Hearth. In 1989, the first batch of 24 trainees of F& DII was selected and trained at National Institute of Health Sciences and deployed in 1990. Mr. S.M.B. Perera was the Chief Food & Drugs Inspector at that time who retired from service soon after and Mr. B.E.R. Rodrigo succeeded him. Mr. Rajakaruna oversaw the regulatory division of the Drugs Regulatory Authority.

Food Safety Activities were carried out in the main hall of the Ministry located in the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Inland Revenue Department building where the other clerical staff also functioned and only a chair placed near the chief clerk's table on which Mr. Rodrigo had a makeshift seat on the days he came to collect his travelling claims or attend the Food Advisory Committee (FAC) meetings to Colombo and also to arrange for vehicles to go around the country on inspections. Mr. S. Nagiah joined as the second F&DI in this office. The third FDI to join the team in 1991 was Mr. Weerakkody and the setup took a resemblance of a Unit. Subsequently the Unit was shifted to the ground floor of the current Ministry building known as "Suwasiripaya", formerly known as the Tuberculosis Campaign Building.

There was only one regulation "Food (Miscellaneous) Regulations" published prior to 1990. The Food (Standards) Regulations was the second regulation to be published and the Gazette notification was duly published on 22.11.1990.

Dr. V. Jeganathan and Dr. Manil Fernando became the successive Directors of Environmental and Occupational Health followed by Dr. Dula De Silva then Dr. H.M.S.S.D Herath who was promoted to the post of Deputy Director General- Public Health Services (DDG (PHS)). It was during this period in 2001 that an Imported Food Inspection Unit (IFIU) was established in the Sea Port (and later in the Airport) in a part of the building of the Fumigation Unit with four senior F&DII.

Dr. C.K. Shanmugarajah was appointed as D (E & OH) in 2004 and brought a new impetus to the Unit. He completely reorganized the Unit into three rooms, one for his office, one for the Assistant Director (AD) and Inspectorate and another for the Codex Contact Point placing three MSc qualified graduates in Food Technology. During this period Dr. S. M. Arnold was appointed as the first Consultant Community Physician to the Directorate to look into the area of Occupational Health and Dr. N. Pallewatte Consultant Community Physician for Environment Health. Mrs. Sujeewa Fernando was attached to the Directorate as an Environmental Management Officer from the Ministry of Environment

Dr. Pathirana was appointed as D (E & OH) in 2008. Due to lack of space, the Food Control Administration Unit (FCAU) was shifted to the Anti-Malaria Campaign building in 2010 and later to the building earlier occupied by the Ministry of Economic affairs in 2015.

Dr. Ananda Jayalal was appointed as D (E & OH) in 2011 and Dr Inoka Suraweera was appointed as a Consultant Community Physician to the Directorate in 2011. Dr. L.T. Gamlath was appointed for the post in 2016. In 2015, all units were once again brought under one roof in Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine sub office at the former Ministry of Economic Development. Dr. Sapumal Dhanapala (Consultant Community Physician –Food Safety) worked as the D (E&OH) from 2017.

The Directorate was under the DDG PHS I in the initial stage. Dr. L.T. Gamlath was appointed as the first Deputy Director General Environment Health, Occupational Health and Food Safety on 27<sup>th</sup> of July 2017.



## ***2.2 Present Situation***

Directorate of Environmental Health, Occupational Health and Food Safety is headed by Director (E & OH) under the supervision of Deputy Director General (Environmental health, Occupational Health and Food Safety). There are three units namely Environmental Health Unit, Occupational Health Unit and Food control Administration Unit (FCAU) under his purview. Director is responsible for all the activities carried out by these three units.

Food control activities are mainly categorized as import control, domestic control, national water quality surveillance programme and issuance of Export (health) certificates. Food import control procedure is implemented at the borders to ensure that the food arrives in Sri Lanka are safe for human consumption. Domestic food control system in Sri Lanka is based on the Food Act No.26 of 1980 which was amended in 1991 and 2011. Registration of bottled water manufacturing facility is done in accordance with the Food (Bottled water Registration) to ensure that the bottled water is physically, microbiologically and chemically safe for human consumption. Export certificates for exporting food consignments are issued on request, certifying that the exporting food item is fit for human consumption.

Foods that are imported, exported and those available in the market are tested for physical (adulterants, additives etc.), chemical (heavy metals, toxins etc.), microbiological (bacteria, virus etc.) and radiological parameters by food testing laboratories.

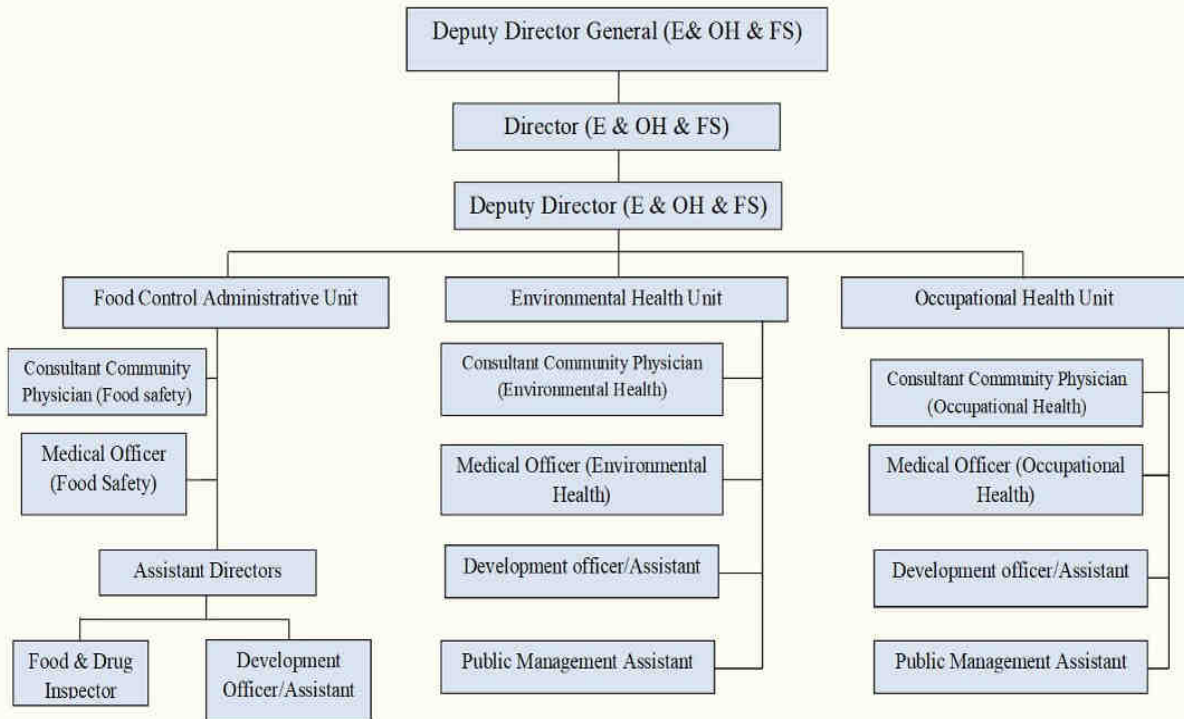
Environmental Health Unit is responsible to provide safe communities with healthier environments. This is achieved by implementing various policies and programs to minimize exposures in air, water, soil, food and other environmental media. National healthcare waste management programme, solid waste management and protecting bio diversity are some of the key programmes managed by the Environmental Health Unit. It is also actively involved in the control and prevention of air pollution and climate change.

Occupational Health Unit is responsible for implementing the National Occupational Health Programme of the Ministry of Health in Sri Lanka. This programme targets occupational health and safety of all workers in all occupational-

The areas of Environment Health, Occupational Health and Food Safety collaborate with other ministries and agencies for effective functioning. These coordination mechanisms were started during 2018 and was strengthened and continued in 2019. Long lasting issues of delay in regulation amendments were sorted out and Food Act and relevant regulations amendment process was expedited in the year 2019. Launching a new website was a milestone in 2019. Food safety weeks were conducted with the support of Health Promotion Bureau and all Provincial Health authorities.

Directorate of Environmental Health, Occupational Health and Food Safety is determined to provide the best possible services to the nation with the limited resources at hand. Annual report 2019 of Directorate of Environmental and Occupational Health and Food Safety is published for the third successful year and includes comprehensive information on the area of Environmental Health, Occupational Health and Food Safety.

## Organization Chart



## Team of the Directorate

Dr. Lakshman Gamlath	-	Deputy Director General
Dr. Thilak Siriwardana		Director
Dr. Usha Jayasuriya		Deputy Director
Dr. Sapumal Dhanapala		Consultant Community Physician (Food Safety)
Dr Inoka Suraweera		Consultant Community Physician (E & OH)
Dr. Buddhika Sudasinghe		Actg. Consultant Community Physician- Food Safety
Dr Himan Galappaththi		Registrar in Community Medicine
Dr. B.D.A. Fernando		Medical Officer – Food Safety
Mr.J.K. Jayasinghe		Assistant Director (FCAU)
Mr. S.T. Aboutthali		Assistant Director (FCAU)
Mr S Jayatheeswaran		Mr S Jayatheeswaran
Mrs. S.Rukshani Semasinghe		Development Officer
Mr. Hiroshan Rathnasiri		Development Assistant
Mrs. Sureni A. Ileperuma		Development Officer
Mr. K.K.L. Jayalal		Food and Drug Inspector
Mr. I.G. Mangala		Food and Drug Inspector
Mr. J.H.M.O.M. Jayaweera		Food and Drug Inspector
Mr. P.D. Nihal Premarathne		Food and Drug Inspector
Mr. H.M. Dayaratna		Food and Drug Inspector
Mr.E.G.S. Kulasinghe		Mr.E.G.S. Kulasinghe
Mrs. H.D.N.T. Kumari		Mrs. H.D.N.T. Kumari
Ms. Waruni Premathilaka		Ms. Waruni Premathilaka
Ms. C. Priyadharshani		Ms. C. Priyadharshani
Ms Arunika Deepanjali		Ms Arunika Deepanjali
Mr Dhammika Jayawardhana		Mr Dhammika Jayawardhana
Mr.M.S.M. Zafeer		Mr.M.S.M. Zafeer
Mr. K.P. Karunarathna		Mr. K.P. Karunarathna
Mr. G.T. Kumara		Health Driver
Mr. Anura Lakshman		Health Driver

Mr. K. Kariyawasam	Health Driver
Mr.S.M. Aberathna Banda	Saukya Karya Sahayaka
Miss Samantha Wijekoon	Saukya Karya Sahayaka
Mr. W. A. Nishantha Fonseka	Saukya Karya Sahayaka
Mr.D.D.I.T. Gunawardana	Saukya Karya Sahayaka
Mr. Prasad Harshana	Saukya Karya Sahayaka
Ms. Sanduni Nisansala	Saukya Karya Sahayaka

***Rank Container Terminal***

Mr. R.S.L Udawaththa	Food and Drug Inspector
Mr. R.D. Sumanarathna	Food and Drug Inspector
Mr. S.D. Wijeweera	Food and Drug Inspector
Mr. R.M.K. Rajapakse	Food and Drug Inspector
Mr. K.Q. Perera	Food and Drug Inspector
Mr. H.M.N. Hearath	Food and Drug Inspector
Mr. R.S.L Udawaththa	Food and Drug Inspector
Mr. S. Kaludewa	Food and Drug Inspector

***Sea Port***

Mr. J Wijesooriya	Food and Drug Inspector
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***Bandaranayake International Air Port***

Mr.A.M.J.B. Wickramasinghe	Food and Drug Inspector
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## *4. Environmental Health*

Environmental Health encompasses the assessment and control of those environmental factors that can potentially affect health. It is targeted towards preventing disease and creating health-supportive environments. There are so many areas of work under this. Air quality, water quality, waste management including the most important healthcare waste management, bio diversity is considered under environmental health. It is very important to identify the role of the health sector in working in these areas since it needs multi stake holder engagement to achieve the objectives. The Ministry of Health liaises closely with the Ministry of Environment, Central Environmental Authority and other relevant stakeholders in working in the area of Environmental Health.

The implementation of Environmental Health activities in the preventive health sector are conducted mainly through the Provincial and District level Health Services via the MOH unit system. The Medical Officers of Health (MOOH) and the Public Health Inspectors (PHII) carry out Environmental Health activities at the grassroots level. Environmental and Occupational Health units have been set up at district level to strengthen the coordination between the Directorate of Environmental Health and Occupational Health and District and Divisional level health staff.

Environmental Health and Occupational Health overlap significantly with each other therefore activities in relation to work environment have been done under Occupational Health.

### ***Vision***

A healthy Sri Lanka free from environmental health risks

### ***Mission***

To improve the health status of all Sri Lankans by creating an environment free from environmental health risks through provision of environmental health services by

- Advocating, collaborating and partnering with stakeholders
- Promoting and supporting health staff
- Empowering people to be leaders in their communities

### ***Objectives***

- To formulate an institutional framework that enables efficient coordination and collaboration of the various sectors and stakeholders that have environmental health related responsibilities.
- To ensure an effective institutional capacity for rendering environmental health services
- To strengthen the capacity of health staff working in the area of environmental health to become efficient agents and catalysts for desired change.
- To adopt a partnership approach with the purpose of facilitating holistic and integrated planning in environmental health.
- To facilitate the development and maintenance of an effective Environmental Health Management Information System.
- To promote community participation and development through empowerment in environmental health, to contribute to promotion of own health.

## **Performance in year 2019**

### ***4.1 Advocacy***

Ministry of Environment has embarked on the development of National Chemicals Policy to streamline the management of chemicals from cradle to cradle. Misuse of chemicals is known to cause health, environmental and social implications and Sri Lanka is no exception. The need to develop a comprehensive policy to address the health issues was highlighted especially covering the vulnerable groups including informal economy agricultural workers. Health experts

highlighted the importance of considering the occupational health, safety and wellbeing aspects of workers using chemicals.

Western Province Waste Management Authority initiated the development of a strategic action plan for the management of waste under Korean assistance. The importance of developing a comprehensive solution for the management of waste was emphasized. Additionally, the importance of finding solutions for the proper management of sanitary pads and diapers collected at household level was discussed.

Electronic and electrical waste (E waste) management in Sri Lanka needs to be strengthened. The Ministry of Environment has been tasked to develop an action plan for short and medium terms to address this important public health issue by the Parliament. Awareness raising and strengthening the collection mechanisms of e-waste was highlighted. The prepared action plan was presented to the Committee on Public Administration (COPA) in the Parliament.

Ministry of Health supported the regulation formulation process initiated by the Central Environment Authority (CEA) on plastic waste management. The need for regulation of open burning of plastic both in the ambient and household environments were highlighted and supported. The Central Environmental Authority published the regulation on burning of plastic waste in 2017. Revisiting of the said regulation was carried out in 2019.

Discussions were initiated to streamline the importation of used clothes by the Central Environmental Authority with relevant stakeholders. Health and social impacts of importation of used clothes were highlighted. The committee decided to recommend the banning of importation of used clothes considering its adverse impacts.

The Central Environmental Authority commenced the revision of guidelines issued for operations of chicken, cattle and goat farms and piggeries. Necessary expert advice was provided and it was decided to finalize the guidelines in 2020 after the final validation discussion.

The importance of developing Indoor Air Quality Guidelines was highlighted by the experts in the Directorate of Environmental and Occupational Health and the process was initiated by the Ministry of Environment. Health implication chapter was written by the experts together with a district level colleague.



Stakeholder consultations were held in Ratnapura district to develop an advocacy package on waste management for inter-sectoral stakeholders, which included Provincial level representation from the environmental authority, representatives from the local governments, hospital directors, hospital staff, PHIs and MOHs. It is expected to develop this package in 2020.

As the focal point for chemical safety under International Health Regulations, experts in the unit participated at the annual review conducted by the Quarantine Unit of the Ministry of Health. Central Environmental Authority, being the major stakeholder too participated at the review. Since chemical safety is an area which needs significant attention in Sri Lanka, it was decided this review to properly assess the chemical safety programme with other stakeholders. The Central Environmental Authority was requested to revamp the chemical accident prevention and preparedness programme with stakeholders.



*Figure 4.1 Images from the stakeholder meeting conducted at Rathnapura*

#### ***4.2 Capacity building for healthcare field staff on air pollution and its health implications***

Air pollution is the leading environmental health risk factor faced by humans and it is a silent killer. The combined effects of ambient and household air pollution cause around 7 million - one in eight - premature deaths every year, largely as a result of increased mortality from stroke, heart disease, lung disease, and cancers. This makes it the world's largest environmental health risk, and among the largest global health risks – comparable with “traditional” health risks such as smoking,

high cholesterol, and obesity. Additionally, air pollution contributes to climate change which is the greatest threat to the survival of the mankind.

An awareness session was carried out for the Medical Officers Non Communicable Diseases (NCD) in all districts on environmental health risk factors at Hector Kobbekaduwa Research Institute in Colombo. Air pollution and its management at individual, divisional, district, provincial and national level were highlighted.

Public health staff in Polonnaruwa, Ratnapura, Ampara, Galle, Matara and Gampaha was trained on management of environmental risk factors and around 175 personnel were trained.

#### ***4.3 Establishment of district level platforms with multi sector actors to reduce the adverse health effects due to air pollution and climate change***

A two day advocacy session at district level was conducted and resource persons were identified from health, environment and other key stakeholders. The initial one and a half days were spent on awareness raising, sharing of experiences, identifying district level best practices and development of a district level plan to empower people in managing air pollution and climate change related health issues. The participants for this session were selected from health, local government, environment, education, agriculture, community leaders and leaders of community based organizations.

The last session of the second day was used to validate the plan made at the advocacy session. Nine such platforms were established in Anuradhapura, Kalutara, Hambantota, Jaffna, Kurunegala, Kegalle, Monaragala, Kandy and Batticaloa Districts with WHO funding. Around 500 multi stake holder personnel in these districts were empowered and they are expected to empower communities in their respective localities. This activity was highly appreciated by the participants. Officers from Ministry of Environment participated as resource personnel for all programmes.



*Figure 4.2 Sessions conducted in Hambanthota*



*Figure 4.3 Sessions conducted in Kalutara*



*Figure 4.4 Sessions conducted in Kegalle*



*Figure 4.5 Sessions conducted in Monaragala*



*Figure 4.6 Sessions conducted in Rathnapura*



*Figure 4.7 Sessions conducted in Anuradhapura*



*Figure 4.8 Sessions conducted in Batticaloa*



*Figure 4.9 Sessions conducted in Jaffna*



*Figure 4 10.: Establishment of district level platform to manage adverse health effects due to air pollution and climate change conducted in Batticaloa District*

#### ***4.4 Health Care Waste Management (HCWM)***

Health Care Waste Management is a major national programme of the Ministry of Health under Environmental Health. Healthcare Waste Management has been identified as an important area needing significant attention. Improvement of sewerage & waste water management becomes very important for smooth functioning of healthcare facilities without polluting the environment, it enables to obtain Environment Protection License as well. A proposal was developed to seek funding for Liquid waste management in Base and above healthcare institutions in the Line and Provincial Health Ministries. This was submitted to the Planning Unit and is being processed.

Five Incinerators and 20 Metamizers have been installed under the Australian project as follows. Tripartite agreement between the Ministry of Health, Sisili Hanaro Encare Pvt Ltd and Central Environmental Authority (CEA) to manage the healthcare waste of the government health institutions in Western, Southern and Central Provinces was signed to better manage healthcare waste. An improved centralized facility in Kerawalapitiya was commissioned in the year 2019.

***Table 1 Incinerators and Metamizers installed under the Australian project***

	Province	Metamizer sites	Incinerator sites
1	Northern	BH Thellipalai	BH Thellipalai
2		PMCU Ormanthei	MOH Office Ormanthei
3	Eastern	BH Trincomalee	BH Batticaloa
4		TH Batticaloa	
5		PGH Ampara	
6		BH Akkareipattu	
7		BH Kalmunei North	
8		BH Kalmunei South	
9	Central	PGH Badulla	PGH Badulla
10	Sabaragamuwa	PGH Rathnapura	
11		DGH Kegalle	
		BH Karawanella	
		BH Embilipitiya	
12	North Central	TH Anuradhapura	DGH Polonnaruwa
13		DGH Polonnaruwa	
14	North Western	TH Kurunegala	
15		BH Kuliypitiya	
16		BH Chilaw	
17		BH Marawila	
18	Uva	BH Moneragala	



#### ***4.5 International Consultative meeting/workshop on implementation of Health related articles of the Minnamata Convention***

A consultative meeting and a two day workshop was conducted by World Health Organization (WHO) international experts with relevant stakeholders in Sri Lanka on the implementation of Health related articles of the Minnamata convention. The workshop was attended by 20 participants representing different specialties and levels of healthcare institutions in the country. Group discussions were held to analyze the current status and implementation strategies. Information gathered was used by the WHO consultant to produce a WHO publication on this aspect.

#### ***4.6 Undergraduate and Post Graduate Training***

The following activities were conducted to support the activities conducted by the university of Colombo. Environmental health lectures were conducted to under graduate students of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo. Students attached to Post Graduate Institute of Medicine, Colombo following MSc in Community Medicine and Diploma in Disaster Management were trained on Environmental Health.

#### ***4.7 Conducting media seminars***

Media seminars were conducted in collaboration with the Health Promotion Bureau on two important environmental health issues. A media seminar was held to aware the public regarding the danger of increasing temperatures and the management of heat health issues. Another media seminar was held to raise awareness on air pollution and management of health issues. These topics were very timely since these were done during the periods of prevalence of such risk factors. Many newspaper articles, discussions in television and radio were conducted by the journalists and TV presenters with resource from the Environmental and Occupational Health Unit.

#### ***4.8 Increasing the visibility***

The unit participated at the Blue Green Era exhibition organized by the Ministry of Environment and had a stall to highlight the management of environmental health risk factors for better living of humans. Students and public visited the stall and awareness was created among them on this important subject area which was appreciated by them.

#### ***4.9 Revision of the curriculum of the Public Health Inspectors***

Environmental health module for basic training of Public Health Inspectors was revised. Important environmental health issues such as climate change were included.

#### ***4.10 Inter-Agency Collaboration***

Technical guidance was provided to other ministries, relevant agencies and awareness was created among the general public in the area of Environmental Health. Inter-ministerial coordination activities were carried out in the areas of Climate Change, Bio Diversity, Cleaner Production, air quality and Solid & Hazardous Waste Management.

Following steering committees of the Ministry of Environment and Mahaweli Development were represented and provided with necessary technical expertise.

- Minamata Steering Committee  
Sri Lanka has ratified the Minamata Convention and hence need to phase out mercury containing thermometers and sphygmomanometers by 2020. Minamata Initial Assessment was carried out in Health Sector to identify gaps and recommendations for mercury management in the health sector.
- PCB (Polychlorinated Biphenyl) Management Steering Committee

## ***5. Occupational Health***

Occupational Health Unit of the Directorate of Environmental and Occupational Health is responsible for implementing the National Occupational Health Programme of the Ministry of Health in Sri Lanka.

Occupational Health is about workers' health. A healthy workforce is considered an asset for any country and Sri Lanka is no exception. The National Occupational Health Programme targets all workers in all work settings and Occupational Health services are provided at the grass root level by Public Health Inspectors (PHII) together with the Medical Officers of Health (MOOH) through the District and Provincial Health systems.

### ***Vision of the Occupational Health unit***

A healthy workforce contributing to sustainable development of Sri Lanka

### ***Mission of the Occupational Health unit***

To contribute to the attainment of highest possible levels of health of all workers through provision of comprehensive, sustainable, equitable and quality Occupational Health services in a supportive and worker friendly setting leaving no worker behind.

### ***Objectives***

- To promote and maintain the highest degree of health among workers in all occupations.
- To prevent adverse effects on health among workers caused by working conditions.
- To protect workers from occupational risks resulting from factors adverse to health.



- To adapt work to workers and workers to work.

### *Our role*

Provision of occupational health and safety to workers in Sri Lanka needs a concerted effort of multiple stakeholders. The Ministry of Health is considered a very important stakeholder in the provision of occupational health services. Curative, rehabilitative, preventive and promotive occupational health services are provided by the Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine.

The Occupational Health Unit of the Environmental and Occupational Health Directorate is the focal point for Occupational Health in the Ministry of Health in Sri Lanka. The unit is responsible for planning, co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation of the National Occupational Health Programme. It is responsible for capacity building of Public health staff, curative health staff as well as other staff categories in the Ministry of Health on Occupational Health. Trainings are conducted for undergraduate and post graduate medical students. The unit involves in awareness creation and research and development in the area of occupational and related environmental health issues. Additionally, the unit liaises with other important stakeholders such as the Ministry of Labour and Trade Union Relations, Ministry of Environment and Central Environmental Authority in implementing the National Occupational Health Programme of the Ministry of Health.

All workers in Sri Lanka have access to free health services at the curative, rehabilitative as well as preventive health services. Treatment of occupational diseases and injuries and rehabilitation of occupational injuries are integrated into the existing curative health system. Occupational medical problems are taken care of by the medical units, occupational surgical problems by the surgical units and rehabilitation by the physiotherapy and rehabilitation units. Occupational accidents affecting significant number of workers and surrounding communities are considered as disasters and curative sector response is carried out immediately.

The implementation of occupational health activities in the preventive health sector are conducted mainly through the Provincial and District level Health Services via the MOH unit system. The

Medical Officers of Health and the Public Health Inspectors carry out occupational health activities at the grass root level. Environmental and occupational health units have been set up at district level to better facilitate the implementation of the National Occupational Health Programme and to strengthen the coordination between the Directorate of Environmental and Occupational Health and the grass root level.

## **Performance in 2019**

### ***5.1 Advocacy***

Global strategy on Health, Environment and Climate Change was presented to the World Health Assembly in May 2019 and the experts in the Directorate of Environmental and Occupational Health highlighted the importance of developing a comprehensive strategy considering work environments as well. Additionally, it was proposed to develop a regional action plan based on the Global Strategy on Health, Environment and Climate Change in the intervention read by Sri Lanka.

Technical guidance was provided to develop the regional strategy on Health, Environment and Climate Change to World Health Organization/ South East Asian Regional Organization (WHO SEARO) office in July 2019. Experts in the Environmental and Occupational Health Directorate highlighted the need of developing programmes to address health of vulnerable worker groups such as informal economy agricultural workers and healthcare workers due to their increased vulnerability to occupational risks at the Regional Committee meeting held in New Delhi India in September 2019. The importance of developing national strategic plans by member states on Health, Environment and Climate Change was emphasized.

#### ***5.1.1 Development of a National programme on occupational health, safety and wellbeing for health care workers***

Ministry of Health and Indigenous Medicine of Sri Lanka decided to develop a national programme on occupational health and wellbeing for health workers.

It was decided to develop this programme in line with the World Health Organization/ International Labor Organization (WHO/ILO) global framework for the development of national programmes for occupational health of health workers and according to the specific needs of the national health system. The programme is expected to cover all workers in all health facilities at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

In this context, it has been decided to

1. Carry out a review of the current situation regarding the protection of occupational health and safety of health workers in the country,
2. Develop a national occupational health, safety and wellbeing programme for health workers in consultation with the relevant stakeholders
3. Build critical core capacities for training in workplace improvement in health care facilities

As a first step in developing the National programme for Occupational health, safety and well-being for health care workers, a two day consultative meeting was conducted with the participation of a variety of stakeholders consisting of medical and non-medical experts in Colombo in August 2019. Team Lead on Occupational Health and Safety, from the WHO head quarters in Geneva, Dr Ivan Ivanov participated and provided technical guidance. Further consultations on this were planned for the year 2020.



***Figure 5.1: Images from the 2 day workshop for the development of national programme on occupational health, safety and wellbeing for health care workers***

### ***5.1.2 Formation of National steering committee on Environmental and Occupational Health***

A steering committee was formed to further strengthen the activities of the Directorate and the first meeting was held in July 2019 to further strengthen the National Occupational Health Programme and other environmental health related issues.

The stakeholders comprised of representatives from Department of Labour and Trade, National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety, Ministry of Environment and Mahaweli Development, Central Environmental Authority, Ministry of Finance, Board of Investment, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Legal Draftsman, Ministry of Internal and Home Affairs, Provincial Council and Local Government, Department of Animal Production and Health, NWSDB, Ministry of Plantation, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, Faculty of Medicine, Colombo, Faculty of Medicine Sri Jayawardhanapura etc.in addition to the representatives from the Ministry of Health.

### ***5.1.3 Capacity building of National, Provincial and District level Health Staff on Occupational Health***

Occupational health and safety is a specialized area and therefore building a critical mass of human resources in this area was identified as a priority in 2019 too. Public health staff needs to be trained first, for them to carry out the activities of the national programme. It is intended to address occupational health issues of the informal sector as well as small scale industry workers through them. A two day occupational health and safety training workshop for Medical Officers of Health, Supervising Public Health Inspectors (SPHII) and Public Health Inspectors (PHII) was conducted in Ampara. Thirty five were trained on theoretical and practical aspects of occupational health.

Occupational Health module for Medical Officers of Health (MOOH) and Additional Medical Officers of Health (AMOOH) were carried out in National Institute of Health Science (NIHS) as a part of the MOH training course. Conducting the occupational health module for trainee Public Health Inspectors following basic training was carried out in Kadugannawa and around 45 PHII trainees were trained.

Workers need to be empowered to look after their own health. In service training becomes very important for different categories of health staff to look after their own health. Occupational health and safety training was conducted for diet stewardesses and for officers in Para medical services as a module in their basic training and around 75 were trained. Stress management training for healthcare staff at Castle Street Hospital for Women (CSHW) and a single day programme on occupational health and safety for Junior Health Staff was conducted in Matara Regional Director of Health Services (RDHS) region. Around 50 and 75 were trained in these respectively.



*Figure 5.2: Images of the training conducted for the junior health staff at Matara*

#### ***5.1.4 Post graduate training***

Training of MSc and MD Community Medicine students attached to the Post Graduate Institute of Medicine Colombo on Occupational health and safety was supported.

### ***5.1.5 Training of staff attached to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) hazard management units***

Officers attached to CBRN units of the Sri Lanka Army and Sri Lanka Air Force were trained on biological and chemical hazards.

### ***5.1.6 Revision of the curriculum of the Public Health Inspectors***

Occupational health module for basic training of Public Health Inspectors was revised.

### ***5.1.7 Awareness rising on occupational health among different categories of workers***

Occupational health and safety awareness was done for workers and supervisors in Katunayake Board of Investment Zone (BOI) zone and Biyagama BOI zone. Around 120 participants attended these sessions carried out on two days.

### ***5.1.8 Incorporating occupational health component in to the Personal Medical Record (PMR)***

Regular screening of workers for non-communicable disease risk factors and other occupational risk factors becomes essential in improving their health. Occupational Health related components were included to the newly developed PMR. Several rounds of discussions were held in BOI zones in Biyagama and Katunayake to introduce these to the workers.

## ***5.2 Monitoring & Evaluation***

### ***5.2.1 Conducting reviews on occupational health and safety activities among healthcare workers at district level***

Review meetings were conducted at District level to monitor the progress of activities and to further strengthen the National Occupational Health programme.

These reviews provide a platform for discussion of concerns and issues identified by the staff while executing duties and to provide feasible and effective solutions from the National focal point. The reviews are intended for appraisal and further improvement of the services rendered by the staff and not a fault finding process.

The district reviews were conducted in 3 districts; Trincomalee, Hambantota and Nuwara Eliya, in the year 2019.



***Figure 5.3: Images from the District review held in Trincomalee***



***Figure 5.4: Images from the District review held at Hambantota***

### ***5.2.2 Intersectoral collaboration and provision of technical guidance***

Strengthening inter-sectoral collaboration is essential in the field of occupational health and environmental health. Technical guidance was provided for Ministry of Environment and Mahaweli Development, Ministry of Labour and Trade Union Relations, Central Environmental Authority and relevant stakeholders to strengthen Occupational & Environmental Health in other policies, action plans and projects.

- Provision of technical expertise for Basel Technical Meetings
- Technical Advisory Committee on Management of Industrial Chemicals (TACMIC)  
Decisions were taken to allow the usage of ethylene oxide only in carefully selected healthcare settings such as the National Hospital of Sri Lanka under strict monitoring
- National Advisory Committee Meeting on Basel Rotterdam Stockholm and Minnamata Conventions
- Greening the informal economy e waste collectors
- Provision of technical expertise for the development of SLSI standards for masks for traffic police officers and incense sticks



## ***6. Food Safety***

Director General of Health Services (DGHS) is the Chief Food Authority (CFA) of Sri Lanka. Food Control Administration Unit which comes under Directorate of Environmental Health, Occupational Health and Food Safety is responsible for coordinating and monitoring of regulatory services, and providing technical guidance to local authorities in order to ensure the availability of safe and wholesome food for consumers.

The Deputy Director General of Environmental Health, Occupational Health and Food Safety is the contact point for International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) and is also the designated National Codex contact point for Sri Lanka.

### ***6.1 Vision of the Food Control Administration Unit***

A healthier nation through provision of safe food for all.

### ***6.2 Mission of the Food Control Administration Unit***

Protect consumer's health and build consumer trust by ensuring that food consumed, distributed, marketed or produced meets the highest standards of food safety and hygiene.

### ***6.3 Objectives***

- To protect consumers from preventable health risks.
- To provide information to consumers to enable better consumer choices.
- To protect consumers through a fair and effective, science-based food regulations that support competitive markets.
- To coordinate national food surveillance, enforcement and food recalls.
- To support food safety at ports of entry.

## ***6.4 Our role***

Food Control Administration Unit is responsible to protect consumer's health by ensuring that food imported, produced, marketed, distributed and consumed meets the highest standards of food safety and hygiene. Food Act No. 26 of 1980, its amendments and various regulations implemented under the Food Act is the legal basis for the food control activities in the country. The Food Act provides adequate powers to authorized officers for the purpose of discharging his functions under the Food Act to ensure food safety.

Advocacy, formulation of regulations, inspection, enforcement, testing and coordination between different stakeholders at national and provincial level are all important areas in food safety that is required to be accomplished by FCAU of the Ministry of Health at national level while the Regional Directors of Health Services are designated to supervise and coordinate food safety at district level. Local Authority and the Medical Officer of Health are the Food Authority to ensure food safety at the divisional level with the support of the Public Health Inspectors.

Food Advisory Committee is formed under the Food Act to advise the Minister on matters arising out of the administration of this Act and to carry out other functions assigned to it under this Act. Coordination and management of the interfaces between different departmental responsibilities are through the Food Advisory Committee. Within ministry, there are defined chains of command and powers and accountabilities of authorized officers.

The Food Control Administration Unit has taken into consideration the recommendations of the two external assessment reports, "Review of the Food Safety Control Systems in Sri Lanka" by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in March 2016 and the "Assessment of Food Safety Laboratories" by WHO in June 2016 and have been incorporating these recommendations to the national program in a stepwise approach.

## ***6.5 Performance in 2019***

Food Act No. 26 1980 and various regulations implemented under this is the legal basis for the food control activities in the country.

Food control activities are broadly categorized into following activities

Import control

Issuance of Export (Health) certificates

Domestic control

National water quality surveillance

Import control activities are carried out by Food and Drug Inspectors in sea port, airport, and container terminals. Inspection of documents, foods and food sampling according to the sampling plan are done by the staff at the entry points. Imported food is categorized by food safety risk (on the basis of high risk, medium risk and low risk) and compliance history. Export certificates for exporting food consignments are issued on request by FCAU certifying that the food is fit for human consumption. Exporting company must be registered at the FCAU as a prequalification for issuing a health certificate for its products. The Food Control Administration Unit is also entrusted under the bottle water regulations to register natural mineral water and bottle/package drinking water and according to the iodization of salt regulation the registrations for salterns, iodization premises, salt transport and bulk storage.

### ***6.5.1 Import control activities***

Food import control procedure is implemented at the borders by FCAU of Ministry of Health to ensure that the food arrives in Sri Lanka are safe for human consumption.

Food Control Administration Unit regulates all food items imported to the country. But for the following categories of food, respective departments help the FCAU to exercise its control activities.

1. Live animals, raw meat and feed : Department of Animal Production and Health
2. Plant products: Plant Quarantine Office of the Department of Agriculture.

Any food item could be rejected at the border if it does not comply with the provisions of the Food Act No. 26 of 1980 or relevant regulations published under this Act. However consignees can appeal against any rejections.

All food items imported should comply with Food (labelling and advertising) Regulations 2005 and Food (shelf life for imported food items) Regulations 2012. The above two regulations apply in addition to the specific regulation(s) governing the product if any such regulation(s) exist for the product. For e.g. Common salt should comply with “Food (Iodization of salt) regulations in addition to the above two regulations.

Further, if a standard has been adopted under the “Food (Adoption of Standards) Regulations for a specific food product that product shall comply with the adopted Sri Lankan standards. There are 101 food products currently regulated by this regulation.

Food control system has joined with the custom single window system- ASyCuDa world system to handle e-document with the help of other regulatory authorities and to ensure an effective import control system at the Rank Container Terminal (RCT)

**Table 3: Food Inspection activities at Airport**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
1	Number of consignments received and inspected	3595	4201	3765	4126
2	Number of consignments referred to FCAU	00	16	05	04
3	Number of samples sent for analysis	42	00	01	06
4	Number of consignments destroyed under supervision	-	-	01	01
5	Number of consignments rejected	-	-	03	02

**Table 4: Food Inspection activities at Rank Container Terminal (RCT)**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>1</b>	Number of consignments inspected	35,096	36,520	40,459	41,135	36,911
<b>2</b>	Number of consignments rejected	01	33	03	163	76
<b>3</b>	Total number of samples sent for analysis	8,349	6,809	6,494	10,314	11,637
<b>4</b>	Number of samples sent to Atomic Energy Authority	6,315	4,783	4,649	4,869	4,543
<b>5</b>	Number of samples sent to ITI	363	177	201	192	277
<b>6</b>	Number of samples sent to NIHS	1,091	1,673	1,644	2,859	2,796
<b>7</b>	Number of samples sent to other laboratories	580	176	-	2394	3,641
<b>8</b>	Total Number of samples unsatisfactory	04	76	60	311	96

**Table 5: Food Inspection activities at seaport**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>1</b>	Number of consignments registered	1415	1188	1812	2559	3483
<b>2</b>	Number of samples taken	60	19	20	18	04

During 2019, total 1041 canned fish consignments were imported to Sri Lanka. Of them, 1227 samples were obtained by the Food Control and Administration Unit (FCAU) and tested at Food laboratory, National Institute of Health Sciences for the presence of parasites. In addition to FCAU, imported canned fish consignments are inspected by Sri Lanka Standard Institute (SLSI) under the import inspection scheme to ensure adhering to the standard. FCAU and SLSI conducted joint testing for 54 canned fish consignments during 2019 and 31 were rejected. Total 73 (7%) consignments were rejected in 2019 due to presence of parasites. All the positive consignments were either re-exported or destroyed. The import food surveillance operated at ports of entry made sure that only canned fish meeting the standard was released to the market.

### **6.5.2 Export Certification**

When exporting food items, the importing country requests for a health certificate from the food authority of the exporting country, certifying that the product is suitable for human consumption. This is called "export certificate" or "health certificate". Usual procedure for issuing a certificate is that, a sample is taken by the FCAU officials from the exporting food consignment and is tested at a laboratory, recognized by the FCAU before issuing the certificate. Different countries request different parameters to be included in the certificate.

Health certificates are issued for following export food items by the FCAU.

Tea, Coconut and coconut products, Rice and rice based products, Cereals and cereal based products, Spices and condiments, Processed and semi processed foods, Dried fish, Food packaging materials – e.g. cans, wrapping papers, tags, porcelain products and any other food items requested by the exporter.

A team comprising of a medical officer and a FDI, inspect the facilities and necessary actions will be carried out before registering export food factories. Inspection of the export food factories, those who do not require health certificates, are also carried out. It is important to have a proper system with the support of the Divisional and District level authorized officers to ensure food safety of these food factories.

**Table 6: Export control activities of the unit**

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>1</b>	Number of Health certificate issued	9868	11320	10848	12,334
<b>2</b>	Number of food factories newly registered	76	49	55	06
<b>3</b>	Total Number of factories registered as an export food factory at FCAU	748	797	853	859
<b>4</b>	Number of factories visited	35	17	31	31

### **6.5.3 Domestic control**

#### **6.5.3.1 Routine Activities**

There are 61 Food and Drug Inspectors at District level and about 1650 Public Health Inspectors ensuring food control activities throughout Sri Lanka. They are involved in obtaining food samples, prosecution and seizing when needed under Food Act and its regulations and conducting awareness programmes in the community.

#### **6.5.3.2 Bottled water registration Activities**

All bottled or packaged natural mineral water and bottled or packaged drinking water have to be registered under the bottled or packaged water regulation 2005. Factory inspections were carried out by an expert team before issuing registration for products in 2019 and legal actions were taken against two companies, which did not meet the criteria.

**Table 7: Data on registration of Bottled or Packaged Water Manufacturing facilities**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
1	Total number of factories	120	133	153	166	145
2	Number of bottled drinking water facilities newly registered	03	13	13	14	13
3	Number of mineral water facilities newly registered	00	00	00	00	01
4	Number of bottled drinking water facilities registration renewed	39	50	50	31	40
5	Number of mineral water facilities registration renewed	00	02	02	00	01
6	Total number of factories visited	39	52	52	36	60
7	% of facilities visited for new and re registration	92.8%	82.5%	82.5%	80%	100%

### **6.5.3.3 Iodized salt regulation Activities**

All premises used for iodization of edible common salt or transportation of non-iodized common salt are registered under the Iodization of Salt regulation 2005. Inspection of the facilities are done prior registration of the products. Renewal of edible salt license is done annually. All imported common salt samples were checked for meeting the standard. A surveillance study by Medical Research Institute (MRI) revealed that the iodization levels of some products in the market were inadequate. This issue needs to be addressed to ensure that the iodization program is made a success.

**Table 8: Issue of permits for common salt**

	<b>Activities</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>1</b>	Number of new permits issued	14	20	19	26	38
<b>2</b>	Number of factories registered at FCAU	14	20	19	26	38
<b>3</b>	Number of factories visited	14	20	19	26	35
<b>4</b>	Number of factories newly registered	0	06	00	06	05

### **6.5.5 Regulatory Activities**

Regulatory activities include,

- Regulation formulations
- Review and amendment of regulations
- Regulatory activities with regard to labelling and technical aspects

The relevant food legislation is the Food Act No.26 of 1980 with its regulations published in terms of section 32 of the Food Act. Food Advisory Committee (FAC) has been setup under the Food Act and has regular meetings every month.



The following sub committees under the FAC facilitate the functions and activities of the FAC

- Food Advisory (Regulation Formation) Sub Committee
- Food Advisory (Health Claims) Subcommittee
- Food Advisory (Technical) Subcommittee
- Food Advisory (Laboratory Services) Subcommittee
- Technical Advisory Subcommittee on Food Safety

The following regulations were gazetted in 2019.

- Food (Colour coding for Sugar, Salt and Fat) regulation
- Food (Registration of premises) regulation
- Food (Preservative) regulation
- Food (Additive General) regulation

Stake holder consultations were conducted for the following regulations

- Food (Cereals and Pulses) regulation
- Food (Registration of products)
- Food (Special dietary uses)
- Food (Special medical purposes)
- Food (Meat and Meat products)
- Food (Tea, coffee cocoa and their products)
- Food (Fish and Fish Products), Food (Oils and Fats)
- Food (Coconut products)

The following regulations were drafted in the year 2019

- Food (Fruits and Vegetables)

The following regulations were reviewed in the year 2019

- Food (Milk and Milk Products) regulation
- Food (Amendment of Labeling and Advertisement) regulation
- Food (Bottled or packaged water) regulation
- Food (Iodization of salt) regulation

- Food (Food for special dietary use)
- Food (Food for special medical purposes)
- Food (Registration of products)

**Table 9: Number of Food Advisory committees and Food Advisory subcommittees conducted**

<b>Name</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
Food Advisory Committee	11	12	12
Food Advisory Sub Committee (Technical)	13	12	12
Food Advisory Sub Committee (Health claims)	11	12	12
Food Advisory Sub Committee (Regulation Formation)	14	54	55
Food Advisory Subcommittee (Laboratory)	-	02	02
Technical Advisory Subcommittee on Food Safety Programme	-	02	-

### ***6.5.6 Capacity Building of the staff***

- ***Local training***

Authorized officers need to have a sound knowledge on food safety management through entire food chain. Therefore, it is important to conduct capacity building programmes for these officers.

**Table 10: Summary of local training activities**

<b>Name of the training</b>	<b>Number of programmes conducted</b>	<b>Number of officers trained</b>
Two-day Training programmes on newly published regulations for PHI/SPHI	14	1400
Awareness programme on genetically modified food for higher officials in ministry (in collaboration with UNIDO)	01	50
Awareness programme on genetically modified food for authorized officers (in collaboration with UNIDO)	01	60
Two days training programme to understand & to strengthen the National Codex structure for members of all relevant institutions, organizations & ministries	01	85

### **6.5.7 World Food Safety Day celebration**

United Nations declared 7<sup>th</sup> June every year as the World Food Safety day from 2019. This day is declared to draw global attention to the health consequences of contaminated food and water. It was celebrated with the theme “Food Safety is everyone’s business” with the participation of Minister of Health at BMICH. Several activities took place on this day.

- Launching a new website for the directorate
- Appreciation of the service of members of the Food Advisory Committee
- Creating awareness on published food regulations among authorized officers
- Dissemination of the survey findings of the national food surveillance done in 2018



### ***6.5.8 National Food Safety Reviews***

Two National Food safety reviews were held in 2019. The first review was held at BMICH with the participation of authorized officers all over the country. Distribution of Food thermometers to all MOH areas and distribution of official identity cards for 52 authorized officers for institute proceedings and conducting prosecution under the Control of Pesticides Act No.33 of 1980 was taken place at the same day.

The second review was held at Kurunegala with the participation of authorized officers

### ***6.5.9 Food Safety week***

It is very important to ensure food safety before festival seasons. Hence, Food Safety weeks are carried out in early April and in mid-December with the support of the authorized officers at Provincial, District and Divisional levels.

A food safety week during festival season; in early April 2019 was conducted. The following activities were carried out national wide with the theme “No touch”.

- Inspecting the food establishments and grading of food establishments
- Destroying food not suitable for human consumption
- Conducting awareness programmes for general public and educating food handlers on the food safety

At national level with the support of Health Promotion Bureau, FAO and UNIDO; posters, wall charts and stickers on food safety were printed in Sinhala, English and Tamil Medium. These materials were distributed to all MOH areas across the island and were to be displayed at all the food handling establishments.



*Figure – Health Education Materials developed with the support of Health Promotion Bureau, FAO and UNIDO*

### **6.5.10 Water Surveillance**

Water surveillance continue to be done based on the circular but the quality of data and actual need for the surveillance needs to be revisited. Currently due to poor monitoring of this program at national level and District level no meaningful comparison or interpretation can be made. The Summary of the returns sent by District is given in the table below.

**Table 11: RDHS's Monthly Consolidated Return on Water Quality Surveillance Chlorine Testing 2019**

RDHS area	Public water supplies sampled				Private water supplies sampled			
	Bacteriological		Chemical		Bacteriological		Chemical	
	Number of samples taken	Number of samples satisfactory	Number of samples taken	Number of samples satisfactory	Number of samples taken	Number of samples satisfactory	Number of samples taken	Number of samples satisfactory
Ampara	207	106	6	-	86	25	17	2
Anuradhapur a	2597	382	85	29	160	50	21	11
Badulla	1426	749	228	1404	209	78	36	21
Batticaloa	274	101	42	8	480	70	32	31
CMC RD	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Colombo	288	94	8	3	141	64	17	6
Galle	1087	413	47	15	630	299	65	59
Gampaha	124	42	4	3	43	25	3	2
Hambantota	822	234	26	10	136	26	9	3
Jaffna	2504	1496	26	5	378	216	35	22
Kalmunai	209	132	3	4	123	45		
Kalutara	370	205	20	8	133	74	10	2
Kandy	275	92	16	12	78	33	38	13
Kegalle	306	35	79	26	37	10	21	8
Kilinochchi	289	413		4	181	55	9	2
Kurunegala	616	191	95	34	319	83	55	21
Mannar	1213	504	18	22	58	31	7	3
Matale	318	159	753	1343	47	7	21	2
Matara	907	266	35	10	575	183	34	16
Moneragala	386	209	38	7	136	64	1	2
Mullaitivu	199	80	72	9	98	73	24	18
NIHS	6	6	-	-	6	6	-	-
NuwaraEliya	721	205	38	22	56	21	10	6
Polonnaruwa	372	161	26	8	126	55	6	6
Puttalam	519	274	827	164	165	67	66	34
Ratnapura	655	97	394	150	84	27	1	
Trincomalee	454	191	16	4	370	677	10	7
Vavuniya	240	49	31	13	233	64	61	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,784</b>	<b>6886</b>	<b>2933</b>	<b>3317</b>	<b>5088</b>	<b>2428</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>309</b>

**Table 12: Reporting rate of PHI Monthly Report Book (H631) in 2019**

Name of RDHS	Number of the reports received	Number of reports expected	Percentage of reports received	Number of reports received on time	Percentage of reports received on time
Colombo	984	1416	69.5	266	18.8
Kalutara	382	708	54	21	3
Gampaha	306	1536	19.9	7	0.5
CMC RD	0	564	0	0	0
NIHS	0	276	0	0	0
NuwaraEliya	504	504	100	222	44
Kandy	748	1032	72.5	49	4.7
Matale	172	492	35	11	2.2
Hambantota	756	756	100	174	23
Matara	947	948	99.9	117	12.3
Galle	1228	1236	99.4	272	22
Kurunegala	1253	1356	92.4	70	5.2
Puttalam	465	672	69.2	44	6.5
Kegalle	815	816	99.9	194	23.8
Ratnapura	892	1128	79.1	47	4.2
Badulla	658	732	89.9	156	21.3
Moneragala	153	384	39.8	49	12.8
Polonnaruwa	431	456	94.5	42	9.2
Anuradhapura	795	864	92	50	5.8
Mannar	215	216	99.5	4	1.9
Kilinochchi	179	180	99.4	65	36.1
Jaffna	942	948	99.4	274	28.9
Mullaitivu	215	240	89.6	22	9.2
Vavuniya	181	204	88.7	27	13.2
Trincomalee	456	504	90.5	57	11.3
Batticaloa	558	720	77.5	188	26.1
Ampara	228	336	67.9	74	22
Kalmunai	310	576	53.8	69	12

### ***6.5.11 Launching a website for the directorate***

A website was designed for the directorate and launched in the year of 2019. It provides the following facilities.

- Provide information on import and export control procedures.
- Provide information and procedures for registration of Bottled or Packaged Water Manufacturing facilities
- Provide information and procedures for export certification.
- Provide all gazetted food regulations and directives in all three language

### ***6.5.12 Analytical Capacity***

Foods that are imported, exported and those available in the market are tested for physical, chemical, microbiological and radiological parameters. There is a network of seven food laboratories which continued to support in testing food and water samples for surveillance and contamination. Four come under Ministry of Health, namely Food Microbiology Laboratory at the MRI, Food Laboratory at National Institute of Health Science (NIHS) Kalutara, Food Laboratory at Anuradhapura, Provincial Food Laboratory at Kurunegala, while Government Analyst, City Analyst Colombo and City Analyst at Kandy, too support the Ministry of Health in testing food and water samples during food surveillance.

Microbiological samples (both solids and water) are tested at Microbiology laboratories at MRI and NIHS. Outbreak investigations are done in enteric reference laboratory (Feces and vomitus) of the MRI. Chemical food laboratory of the NIHS has the capacity of testing aflatoxin levels in food items and Food laboratory at Anuradhapura test heavy metals of the food samples.

Directorate in collaboration with UNIDO is in the process of strengthening and accreditation of food laboratories-ISO 17025:2017(2) since 2017. Preliminary and mid assessments were done for all food laboratories in 2018. Food laboratory at MRI was accredited from 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2019. Other food laboratories are in the final stages of accreditation.



### ***6.5.13 Activities of Codex /World Trade Organization- Sanitary and Phytosanitary (WTO-SPS) contact point***

#### ***Codex activities***

The Codex Alimentarius is a collection of internationally adopted food standards and related texts presented in a uniform manner. These food standards and related texts aim at protecting consumers' health and ensuring fair practices in the food trade.

Directorate of Environmental Health, Occupational Health and Food Safety is the National Codex contact point for Sri Lanka. It was strengthened with the appointment of two Development Officers. One officer was trained in modern technology used in Codex work in Geneva, Switzerland. Awareness workshop for 80 officers from other relevant ministries and agencies on Codex activities was done in 2019 and steps were taken to appoint National Codex Sub Committee chairs and members.

National Codex Manuel was prepared by the national Codex committee. These Codex Sub Committees and the National Codex Manuel were approved by the Food Advisory Committee held on March, 2019. The following preparatory meetings were held at the directorate.

- Meeting on review of proposed Codex Standards for online Commenting
- Preparatory meeting on Codex Committee on Nutrition & Foods for special dietary uses, Germany
- Preparatory meeting on Codex Alimentarius Commission, Switzerland
- Two Preparatory meetings on Codex Committee on Pesticides Residues, China
- Preparatory meeting on Codex Committee on General Principles, France
- Preparatory meeting on FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia, India

### *WTO-SPS Notifications*

Following draft food regulations were notified to the WTO member countries for comments.

- Draft Food (Cereals, Pulses, Legumes & their Derived Products) Regulations 2020
- Draft Food (Mycotoxins) Regulations 2020
- Draft Food (Meat & Meat Products) Regulations 2020
- Draft Food (Fish & Fish Products) Regulations 2020

A follow up meeting was conducted in the Month of April, 2019 to strengthen the WTO/SPS & Codex activities

### ***6.5.14 Food safety Policy and Strategic plan.***

Development of a Food safety policy and strategic plan was identified as an important activity for 2019 and the following meetings were held as an initial activity.

- i. A Stakeholder consultative workshop on Validation of the situation analysis report of the Food Safety Control System in Sri Lanka.
- ii. Two small group discussions on Food Safety Policy & Strategic Plan with Sri Lanka Accreditation Body, Sri Lanka Standard Institute, other certified bodies, product development partners, Department of Fisheries , NARA, Coconut Development Authority, Tea Board & Consumer Affairs Authority.
- iii. Small group discussions on Food Safety Policy with Food testing Laboratory officers
- iv. A Stakeholder consultative workshop to discuss the first draft of the National Food Safety Policy.
- v. A discussion Meeting with field level officers regarding the Food Safety Authority implementing models
- vi. A Stakeholder Meeting to discuss the view on the establishment of the National Food Safety Authority, Sri Lanka.
- vii. Three stakeholder consultation meetings with field level officers involved in Food safety (Agriculture & Animal Health Sectors) regarding responsibilities of stakeholders in implementing the Food Safety Policy in Sri Lanka & the proposed National Food Safety Authority

### ***6.5.15 International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN)***

The International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) is a global network of national Food Safety authorities, managed jointly by FAO and WHO with the secretariat in WHO. Directorate of Environmental Health, Occupational Health and Food Safety is the National Emergency INFOSAN contact point for Sri Lanka.

INFOSAN assists Member States in managing food safety risks, ensuring rapid sharing of information during food safety emergencies to stop the spread of contaminated food from one country to another. INFOSAN also facilitates the sharing experiences and tested solutions in and between countries in order to optimize future interventions to protect the health of consumers.

All the INFOSAN alerts received by the directorate in 2019 was inspected and reported accordingly.

### ***6.5.16 Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)***

The European Union (EU) has one of the highest food safety standards in the world – largely thanks to the solid set of EU legislation in place, which ensures that food is safe for consumers. A key tool to ensure the flow of information to enabling swift reaction when risks to public health are detected in the food chain is RASFF. Created in 1979, RASFF enables information to be shared efficiently between its members and provides a round-the-clock service to ensure that urgent notifications are sent, received and responded to collectively and efficiently. Vital information exchanged through RASFF can lead to products being recalled from the market. A robust system, which has matured over the years, RASFF continues to show its value to ensure food safety in the EU and beyond.

The importance of following up on the notifications to ensure food exported meets the necessary standards of the exporting country should be ensured. The need to have the health certificate from the FCAU or relevant authorized agency should be mandatory for compliance in future.

**Table 13: Summary of RASSF Alerts in received and investigated in 2019**

<b>Product Category</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Operators</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Cereals and bakery products</b>	11/11/2019	2019.3961	unauthorised use of colour E 110 - Sunset Yellow FCF in snack from Sri Lanka	Renuka Agri Foods PLC	Sunset Yellow is Permitted in Sri Lanka.
	28/11/2019	2019.4185	aflatoxins (B1 = 15.6; Tot. = 19.0 µg/kg - ppb) in roasted red rice flour from Sri Lanka	Leela Export & Import	Investigation done. Necessary actions taken to prevent the recurrence of the incidence
<b>Fruits and vegetables</b>	10/7/2019	2019.2496	aflatoxins (B1 = 11.6 µg/kg - ppb) in crushed chillies from Sri Lanka	Leela Exports & Imports	Investigation done. Necessary actions taken to prevent the recurrence of the incidence
	25/10/2019	2019.3736	high count of Escherichia coli (up to 4000 CFU/g) in betel leaves from Sri Lanka	Inexco	Investigation to be done by Department of Plant Quarantine
<b>Herbs and spices</b>	16/05/2019	2019.1807	aflatoxins (B1 = 11.5 µg/kg - ppb) in dried chillies from Sri Lanka	Leela Export & Import	Investigation done. Necessary actions taken to prevent the recurrence of the incidence
	9/10/2019	2019.3530	aflatoxins (B1 = 11.67; Tot. = 12.47 µg/kg - ppb) and ochratoxin A (63.1 µg/kg - ppb) in chilli powder from Sri Lanka	Nelco foods product (Pvt) Ltd.	Investigation done. Necessary actions taken to prevent the recurrence of the incidence

### ***6.5.17 Post graduate training***

Training of MSc and MD Community Medicine students attached to the Post Graduate Institute of Medicine Colombo on food safety was supported.

## 7. Financial and physical progress

### Budget of DDG E,OH&FS Unit, Ministry of Health Received on (31.12.2019)

No	Vote particulars	Activity/ Project	Allocation 2019 (Rs.Mn.)	Financial Targets (Rs.Mn)				Expenditure as at 2019/12/31 (Rs.Mn)	Physical targets (%)				Physical progress as at 2019/12/31		Output	Responsibility
				Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4		Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q4	In Words	%		
1	2001(12) Building	Food Surveillance	10,000,000.00	25	25	25	25	3,954,738.34				100%		100%	100%	
2	2102 (12) Furniture	GH Ampara	5,000,000.00					1,817,193.31				100%		100%	100%	
		Office equipment (E&OH)		1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1,448,792.66				100%		100%	100%	
3	2401 (12) Training	Training on food premises regulation	2,000,000.00					1,500,000.00				100%		100%	100%	
		Training of Lab staff (NIHS)		0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	Nil					Nil			
4	2401 (12) Training	Training of staff	2,000,000.00	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	682,117.00				100%		34%	34%	
<b>Total</b>			<b>19,000,000.00</b>					<b>9,402,841.31</b>								

2509 (11) Environmental & Occupational Health	Conducting Media seminar	100,000.00					Nil							
	Conducting stakeholder meeting	200,000.00					99,800.00			100%		50%	50%	
	Training health staff	500,000.00					491,900.00			100%		98%	98%	
	OH district reviews	500,000.00					181,500.00			100%		36%	36%	
	<b>Establishment of District level platforms with multi sector actors to reduce the adverse health effects due to air pollution and climate</b>	<b>1,550,942.14 (WHO)</b>					<b>1,474,517.71</b>			<b>100%</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	





	Codex subcommittee meetings	100,000.00					Nil							
	Biannual reviews (FS)-1	400,000.00					249,935.00			100%		62%	62%	
	Food safety provincial reviews	700,000.00					131,300.00			100%		19%	19%	
	Factory inspections for regulation purpose	200,000.00					Nil							

## ***8. Way forward***

### ***8.1 The way forward for Occupational Health in 2020***

The highlight of 2020 would be the development of the National Occupational Health and Safety and Wellbeing Programme for Healthcare workers. Streamlining the workplace survey by issuing necessary circular instructions, capacity development of health staff together with monitoring of the programme with district level reviews too will be carried out in the forthcoming year.

### ***8.2 Way forward for Environmental Health in 2020***

Strengthening of the National Healthcare Waste Management Programme with special emphasis on waste water management will be carried out. Circular instructions will be sent on phasing out of mercury containing health equipment in accordance with the Minamata convention.

### ***8.3 Way forward for Food Safety in 2020***

Development of National Food Safety Policy was initiated in 2019 with the collaboration of all relevant stakeholders. It is expected to complete the National Food Safety Policy with strategic areas, activities and indicators. This will be a milestone in ensuring food safety in our country.

The Food laboratories provide analytical reports with greatest difficulty due to lack of analysts and other staff. It is important that the cadres be filled early to ensure analytical services are further strengthened-