

## Messages for the 50th Anniversary of Water Resources Board

Messages received from the Hon. Minister, Hon. State Minister, Secretary and Chairman of Water Resources Board are as follows.

### **Message of Hon. Gamini Wijith Wijayamuni Zoysa, Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources Management**

As the Minister of Irrigation & Water Resources Management, I am proud to send this message at this juncture, the Water Resources Board improving their services rapidly since 2015 under my guidance and celebrating its 50th Anniversary.

“Water & Job’s” the world water day theme is mainly focused and under the leadership of His Excellency the President Hon. Mithripala Sirisena, all measures has been implemented through Water Resources Board to control the ground water contamination. The availability of clean water is fundamental to the survival of present and future generations as well as for social and economic development. Surface water is important but on a global scale one third of the world’s population depends on groundwater. Groundwater is less understood due to its presence being concealed underground. Nonetheless groundwater should be well managed and conserved in terms of quantity and quality as a reliable source for drinking water in urban as well as rural areas. Groundwater also plays a significant role in agriculture with an increasing portion of groundwater being extracted for irrigated agriculture.

In Sri Lanka the water sector is dominated by surface water sources. However, there is growing demand for groundwater that is facilitated by low cost drilling, improved pumping technologies, and government subsidy for groundwater development for small scale agriculture that was introduced in the early 1990’s. Impacts on groundwater are often long term and irreversible and as such requires that the precautionary principles must be used when making decision about groundwater.

Uncontrolled and increasing abstractions of groundwater has resulted in the deterioration of groundwater quality due to sea water intrusion, the high concentrations of nitrogen compounds as a result of the application of large quantities of inorganic fertilizer, and also the rapid decline of water levels in the areas where a large number of agro-wells intercept the shallow aquifers.

The potential effects of climate variability and change on our water resources are well recognized and as such climate change is a major issue facing the availability of groundwater resources in the world.

Given the complexity of these factors influencing the sustainability of groundwater resources in Sri Lanka, it is urgent that we develop and implement sound groundwater management policies and make wise decisions.

In concluding, I wish all a very successful future for Water Resources Board and its management.

Hon. Gamini Wijith Wijayamuni Zoysa  
Minister of Irrigation & Water Resources Management

Message of Hon. Vasantha Senanayake, State Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources Management

It is a great pleasure to remark the services rendered by the Water Resources Board by providing the water needs of the people of this country during the past two decades.

Water Resources Board has strengthened its capacities with the expertise of Hydrogeologists and supporting technical staff including recently equipped high end scientific equipment for their research and rendering service to the society in national importance under support of Ministry of Irrigation & Water Management.

The Board is accomplished in comprehensive groundwater exploration techniques for deep tube well constructions, wind mill constructions, facilitating consultancy service, groundwater resources development for water supply schemes, assessment of spatial and temporal groundwater quality and quantity distribution of aquifer in Sri Lanka through various studies for sustainable water management, providing IEE, EIA & SEA report on national level development projects as well as commercial entities throughout the country where having significant economical importance. In addition, the Board has managed to maintain valuable information of groundwater resources in the country through their studies and projects carried out in the past for planning and sustainable water management.

The Board has implemented in the development of groundwater supply schemes at Katunayake Export Processing Zone (KEPZ), Koggala Free Trade Zone, Bandaranayake International Airport, hospitals, schools and various industries immensely contributed to the countries

development.

The Water Resources Board is facilitated to provide safe drinking water through planning and sustainable management of groundwater resources to the nation as a national responsibility for enhancing the well-being of the society thus enabling the improved livelihoods, which are of prime importance on the aspect of rapid development of the country.

The Water Resources Board was established and functioned as an advisory Board under Act No. 29 of 1964 and it has flourished under various ruling governments as an institution at present where embraced immensely on the nations development. I take this opportunity to express my heartiest greetings for the service rendered by the institution and wishing all the success in future endeavors.

Mr. Vasantha Senanayake  
State Minister Irrigation & Water Resources Management

Message of Eng. R M W Ratnayake Secretary, Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources Management

I am extremely happy to send this message to this paper supplement publish to mark the occasion of Golden Jubilee anniversary of Water Resources Board as the secretary of the Ministry.

The Water Resources Board was established as an advisory body to the Minister on matters concerning the control and utilization of the water resources in Sri Lanka. In 1978, Ground Water sub division of the Irrigation Department was amalgamated to the Water Resources Board to provide extended services in the sector and expand its activities to a broad spectrum in order to commence development activities for the betterment of ground water sector and the rural community of Sri Lanka in general. The Water Resources Board Act was later amended and passed by the Parliament in enabling the water resources Board to pay more emphasis on matters pertaining to groundwater development in Sri Lanka.

During this period of spanning more than fifty years, the Board has conducted very fruitful research and engaged in collecting information on groundwater, and was able to establish a versatile data bank on groundwater with enormous information. The board also provides services to the public and private individuals for matters such as analyzing water samples, deriving chemical composition, contamination of bacteriological and other substances like heavy

metals etc. in groundwater.

It is noteworthy to mention here, the contribution made by the Water Resources Board on water quality study done in the areas in the Dry-zone, where Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) prevails. The findings on these researches will be immensely helpful for decision makers who are tirelessly engaged in finding a lasting solution to this health menace.

I hope that the Water Resources Board will remain in the water sector, providing services to the nation for another fifty years or more, and wish the Board all the best in its future endeavors.

R M W Ratnayake

Secretary, Ministry of Irrigation & Water Resources Management

Message of Eng. A.C.M.Zulificar - Chairman of Water Resources Board

This year the Water Resources Board celebrating its 50th Anniversary with sustainable development Agenda to control groundwater contamination and improve groundwater quality, quantitatively.

The World Water Day highlights the essential interconnected role of water. We rely on water for public health and equitable progress. The onset of climate change, growing demand on finite water resources from agriculture, industry & cities, and increasing pollution can only be addressed by imposing proper management & controlling mechanism.

To address the many challenges related to water, the Water Resources Board is the only Government Regulatory Body with the power of parliamentary Act 1964 & 1999.

Although, Water Resources Board celebrates its 50th Anniversary, the vested power is not imposed with proper way, hence since 2015, under the guidance of His Excellency the President Maithripala Sirisena & Hon. Gamini Wijith Wijayamuni Zoysa – Minister of Irrigation & Water Resources Management, I have proposed on set of rules & regulations which will be gazetted soon to control water contamination & misuse.

The Water Resources Board presently has the capacity of handling any kind of activities related to water.

Also, the studies carried out by the Water Resources Board are very valuable, & only WRB has bulk of data on different terrains & sensitive areas of Sri Lanka.

The on-going studies are very useful to maintain quantitative & qualitative of groundwater, & WRB is above to establish its long waited dream of monitoring network to monitor & to collect real time data on groundwater.

Our sustainable future is also jeopardized by climate change & contamination, which is why WRB is working hard to improve groundwater related activities.

To address the many challenges related to water, we must work in a spirit of urgent co-operation, open to new ideas and innovation, and prepared to share the solution that we all need for a sustainable future.

Therefore, I am proud to send this message at this juncture and I wish all success on future.

Eng. A.C.M. Zulfikar  
Chairman  
Water Resources Board