Immediately make all projects started under the Urban Development Authority which are stalled to become successful revenue generators – COPE Chairman recommends

Date : 10-06-2022

Take measures to make projects initiated, developed and funded under the Urban Development Authority, which are currently stalled, to be successfully completed converting it to a revenue earner for the country, the Chairman of the COPE Committee, Hon. (Prof) Charitha Herath, Member of Parliament instructed the officials of the Authority.

The instructions were given when the officials of the Urban Development Authority were summoned before the Committee on Public Enterprises (COPE) recently (07) to discuss the Auditor General's reports for the years 2017 and 2018 and their current performance. It was revealed that a number of projects under the supervision of the Urban Development Authority are not in a successful position. Accordingly, the COPE Chairman pointed out several projects including the Hambantota Development Project, the Meethotamulla Rejuvenation Project and the project to acquire 812 acres from the Millewa Estate to build an industrial park.

In particular, the expenditure incurred on the construction of the Ruhunupura International Conference Hall under the Hambantota Development Project Plan and the expenditure incurred on maintaining this as a surcharge from 2017 to 2019 were also discussed. Furthermore, it was stated that Rs. 75,889,769 had been spent on this as an expenditure from 2017 to 2019 and the revenue received from this from 2017 to 2019 was Rs. 15,896,360. Officials representing the Urban Development Authority stated that this is one of the components of the Hambantota Urban Development Plan. However, he said that the project was not successful as the plan of the major development project was not implemented. He also said that as this continues to be a loss, the management of two companies will be transferred to make a profit. He also said that the construction of the Ruhunupura International Conference Hall was done with foreign assistance and that the Urban Development Authority had only consulted for this purpose. The officials said that the money belonging to the Urban Development Authority was not spent for this.

The COPE Chairman said that the matter should be investigated and action should be taken to the revenue level.

269.5 million has been provided to a private company in the year 2020 for the application of a blanket layer leveling 30 to 12 meters for the stabilization of garbage dumps and for the installation of greenhouse gas emission units.

Pertaining to the Meethotamulla Rehabilitation Project after the Meethotamulla Garbage Landslide in 2017 and its performance was taken into discussion here. However, it was revealed that the location of the stabilized garbage is currently without proper management and supervision. Accordingly, the COPE Chairman recommended that an inquiry be conducted into the matter and a report be submitted within two months.

Furthermore, attention was drawn to the holiday resorts under the Urban Development Authority and

the members present said that the existing resorts in all the districts under the Urban Development Authority are located in the most scenic location in that district. Therefore, they pointed out that action should be taken to increase government revenue in awarding tenders. The Members of Parliament who were present at the committee meeting also pointed out that the those who take these resorts on rent sometimes obtained it on political affiliations. It was also stated that these resorts are in a dilapidated condition due to improper maintenance. Discussions were also held on the operation of these resorts belonging to the Rest House Company established in the year 2011.

Accordingly, the Chairman of the COPE recommended that a plan be submitted within a month to include a plan for the renovation of these resorts.

In addition, discussions were held on increasing the number of parking spaces in Colombo daily and increasing the facilities required to cater to the sanitary needs of the people who visit Colombo City daily.

Discussions were also held on providing a long-term lease to a private company for development of the rood to 2 Acre 2 rood 2 21.4 perch land bordering Wijewardena Mawatha, Colombo. The COPE committee also pointed out that the Authority's failure to formulate and implement an urban land use policy.

Minister Hon. Mahinda Amaraweera, Members of Parliament Hon. Mahindananda Aluthgamage, Hon. Patali Champika Ranawaka, Hon. Jayantha Samaraweera, Hon. (Dr.) Sarath Weerasekera, Hon. Indika Anuruddha Herath, Hon. Sagara Kariyawasam, Hon. Rohitha Abeygunawardena, Hon. Shanakiyan Rasamanickam, Hon. Madhura Withanage and Hon. SM Marikkar were present at this committee meeting.

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