Sectoral Oversight Committee on Environment, Natural Resources & Sustainable Development recommends the Central Environment Authority to ban the use of lunch sheets considering the serious damage caused to health and environment

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Sectoral Oversight Committee on Environment, Natural Resources & Sustainable Development which met on 05.12.2023 under the Chairmanship of Hon. Ajith Mannapperuma, Member of Parliament, further discussed regarding the reduction of plastic and polythene use and the development of the recycling process in Sri Lanka.

A group of officials representing the Ministry of Environment, Central Environment Authority, Sri Lanka Customs and Department of Agricultural Development were called before the committee held recently.

There was a discussion at length regarding the environmental damage caused by the use of lunch sheets in this country as well as the effect of phthalates, a carcinogen, on human lives. Accordingly, the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Environment, Natural Resources & Sustainable Development gave recommendations to the Central Environment Authority considering the serious damage caused to health and environment, to ban the use of lunch sheet by giving a grace period of 6 months to remove it from use and introduce alternatives. The officials of the Ministry of Environment pointed out that lunch sheets are not used in any country in the world and pointed out to the Committee the importance of not using lunch sheets.

The officials stated that the amendments currently presented for the purpose of being amended under the Environment Act were considered in the Committee and several special points have been proposed to reduce the use of polythene and plastic. The Committee suggested that the responsibility of re-collecting plastic bottles for recycling should be given to those who produce and distribute them. Accordingly, the officials stated that it is expected by amending the Act to prepare a system to find out whether the plastic bottles distributed for various consumption needs are recollected and added to the recycling process by using QR codes using new technology. The Committee emphasized that in order to make the returning process of the plastic bottles for recycling more efficient, a considerable amount should be given to the empty bottles.

Moreover, the Chair of the Sectoral Oversight Committee instructed the officials present to identify the single-use plastic equipment and materials currently being imported to Sri Lanka, list them and submit a report in this regard to the Committee.

Members of Parliament Hon. Jayantha Ketagoda, Hon. (Dr.) Thilak Rajapakshe, Hon. Waruna Liyanage, and a group of officials representing the Ministry of Environment, Central Environment Authority and Sri Lanka Customs were present at the Committee meeting held.

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