The National Action Plan for Reducing Human-Elephant Conflicts is presented to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Sustainable Development

Date : 09-12-2023

- **The solution to the human-elephant conflict is to build community-based electric fences and temporary electric fences to protect paddy fields - the creators of the Elephant Human Conflict Action Plan inform the committee.**

The National Action Plan for Reducing Human-Elephant Conflicts was presented to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Sustainable Development. That was presented when the said committee met in Parliament on 28.11.2023 under the chairmanship of Hon. Ajith Mannapperuma, Member of Parliament. Dr. Sumit Pilapitiya, chair of the committee appointed to facilitate and supervise the implementation of the National Action Plan to reduce human-elephant conflicts, and wildlife scientist Dr. Prithiviraj Fernando presented this plan to the committee.

It was revealed in the Committee that 433 wild elephants have died in Sri Lanka in the year 2022. The officials pointed out that wild elephants have spread in an area of 62% of the country's land while presenting facts before the Committee. The officials pointed out that the construction of electric fences should be done experimentally to reduce human-elephant conflicts. Accordingly, it was pointed out that the construction of electric fences as community-led rural electric fence and temporary electric fence to protect paddy fields as the most appropriate solution in preparing the national action plan to reduce human-elephant conflicts.

Accordingly, the Committee Chair pointed out that before the construction of these elephant fences, awareness programs should be implemented for the people in the respective areas about the behavior of elephants and the changes that should be made in the behavior of people. The Chair of the Committee requested the wildlife and environmental organizations to inform the Committee about the programs they can do to educate the community. The representatives of wildlife and environmental organizations said that if the areas where the human-elephant conflicts are correctly identified, they can contribute to the relevant awareness.
Expressing views at the Committee, Hon. Sajith Premadasa, Leader of the Opposition, said that a national plan of utilizing lands is needed to reduce human-elephant conflicts. He pointed out the importance of correctly identifying the areas where elephants roam at the rural level and the importance of identifying the divisional secretariats where elephant-human conflict is severe. He also mentioned that the purpose of conducting an elephant census is not to export extra elephants.

Members of the Committee Hon. Varuna Liyanage, Hon. Tilak Rajapaksa with the permission of the committee chair, Hon. Chandima Veerakkodi, Hon. Chinthaka Amal Mayadunne, and many officials including the director general of Wildlife Sri Lanka and activists of several wildlife and environmental organizations also participated at the meeting.

phant Conflicts is presented to the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Sustainable Development