

**Balancing the Conflicting Interests between the Right to
Development and the Right to a Healthy Environment: An Analysis
of the Colombo Port City Project**

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Environment and human activities are two significant interrelated components in any society. Over the last decade, environmentalists began to evaluate how much human activities impact upon the various components of the earth and the eco-system. Human activities are so pervasive that they are capable of altering the environment in ways that could change the viability of the very processes upon which human and non-human species depend. In such a situation, the environmental impacts associated with large a scale Development Project such as the “Colombo Port City” often raise many socio-economic and environmental concerns. Therefore, it is essential to address the long term impacts on marine resources, and environmental harm that can occur due to the launching of this project even on a revised technical plan of the experts. Although a green light was given to the administration by the project officials on the assumptions that they will bring massive financial returns to the country with thousands of employment opportunities, the financial cost of this project cannot be easily met from the country’s foreign earnings if the project becomes a failure. Although the project assumes substantial economic and social benefits to the country, the environmental harm that may be caused by to this project might badly affect the economic and social fabric of the people. However, it has become clear that unsustainable development practices are themselves proving to be a main source of human rights violation and environmental degradation. Through a qualitative method, the author intends to explore how to satisfy the right to development of an ever expanding human population while at the same time protecting the environment upon which all life depends. The paper takes into account legal aspects as well. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to identify the feasibility of balancing the right to a healthy environment and the state policy for development of the country and to give recommendation to secure a safe environment and to better livelihoods in a sustainable context.

Keywords: Colombo Port City, Economic-environment balance, Development and environment change, Human rights