

RESTORATION OF COLOMBO CANALS

A substantial development programme has been launched by the Sri Lanka Land Reclamation and Development Corporation (SLLRDC) for the restoration and re-development of the Colombo canal network. One of the key objectives of this development programme is poverty alleviation for a considerable section of the poor in our society, removing once and for all the stigma of 'shanty-dweller' or 'slum dweller' attached to them.

A number of serious health and social problems have arisen as a result of the deterioration of the many canals in Colombo city and its suburbs. Shanties have come up in thousands on the banks and reservations of these canals. Dwellings have encroached on the canals and marshy land. Waste from factories, work places and domestic places flow into the canals. The canal waters are very often stagnant. As a result, as should be expected, the canals and the areas on either side of them have become reservoirs of disease.

Flooding of a large area of Colombo occurs following a shower of even normal intensity, and the incidence of Dengue Fever, Cholera, Diarrhoea and Dysentery have, from time to time become acute problems the city is called upon to face.

This is the first instance in a long time that these problems have been considered. A collective and an overall solution is now available.

The following canals are proposed to be restored under the present programme:

Wellawatta Canal	-	1750	M.
Kirillapone Canal	-	2700	M.
Kotte Canal (North)	-	1525	M.
Kotte Canal (South)	-	725	M.
Heen Ela Canal	-	2700	M.
Canal linking Kotte North			
Canal to Heen Ela	-	1710	M.
Mahawatta Ela Canal	-	1725	M.
Canal linking Mahawatta Ela			
To Heen Ela	-	350	M.
St. Sebastian Canal (North)	-	1930	M.
St. Sebastian Canal (South)	-	2008	M.
St. Sebastian Canal (East)	-	1295	M.
Dematagoda Canal	-	3345	M.

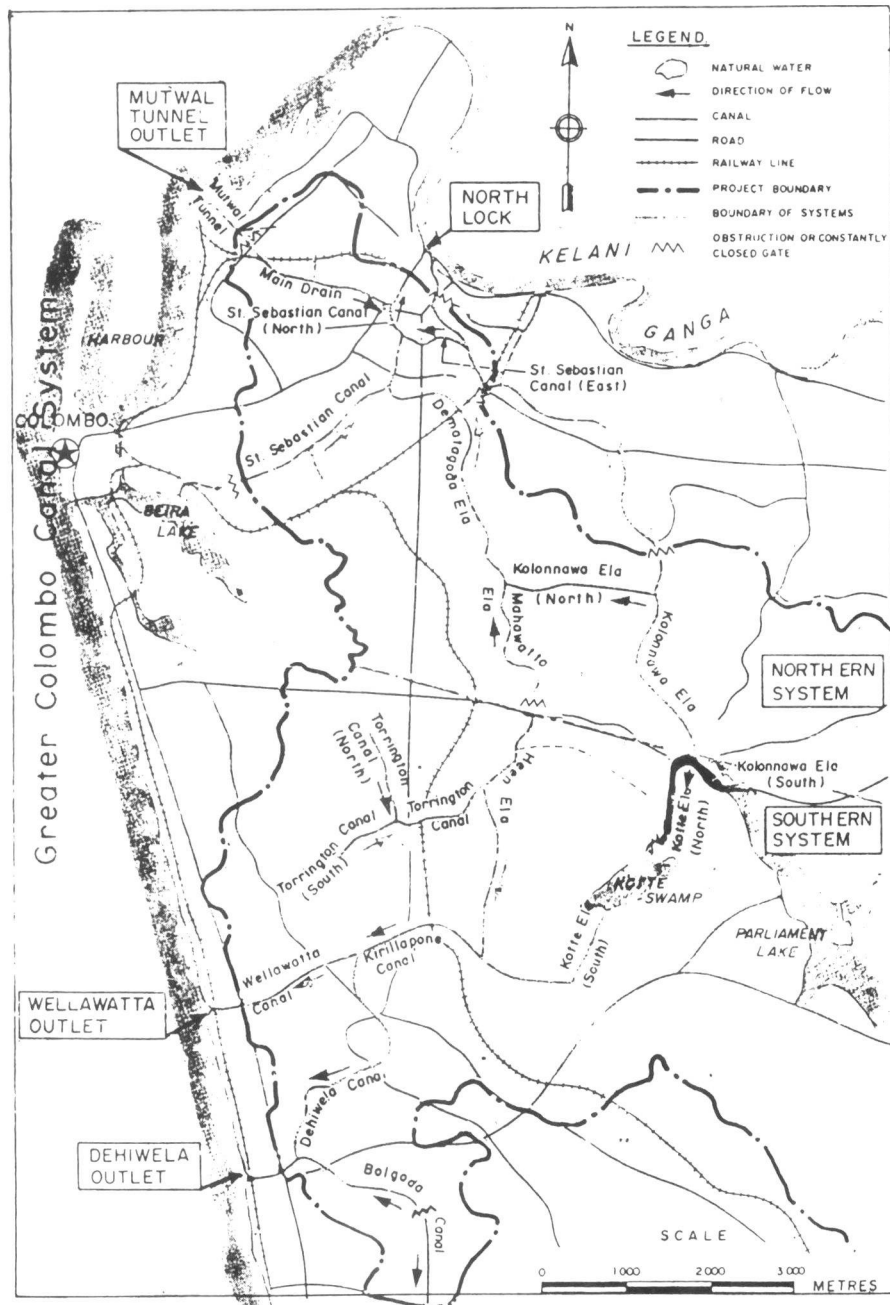


Kolonnawa Canal	-	2185	M.
Kolonnawa Canal (North)	-	1580	M.
Kolonnawa South	-	614	M.
Dehiwela Canal	-	3880	M.
Main Drain	-	1570	M.
Canal linking Main Drain to			
Bloemendhal Marsh	-	400	M.
Bolgoda Ela Canal	-	1700	M.
Torrington Canal	-	765	M.
Torrington Canal (North)	-	981	M.
Torrington Canal (South)	-	771	M.
Madiwela East Diversion			
Canal	-	7187	M.

The total length of canals to be restored under the programme is approximately 45 km. In addition to this, the construction of two new canals with a total length of 9,247 M. and the demarcation of 380 hectares of retention area, fundamental to the good working of the canals, are to be undertaken.

For the implementation of this large project, the Japanese Government have made available credit for the final design programme. The design, technical assistance and planning services required are being provided by Nipon Koei Co. Ltd of Japan, WS Atkins International Ltd of the United Kingdom and Resources Development Consultants Ltd of Sri Lanka. The Japanese Government is considering the provision of credit facilities of around 4000 million rupees for the final implementation of the project.

In specific terms some of the important benefits of this project are:



- * Reducing the need to incur considerable heavy expenditure regularly on repair of flood damaged property.
- * Prevention of the disruption caused by flooding to the schooling of children and to the day to day activities of the people.
- * Reduction in the mechanisms for the spread of disease so promoting improved health.

The families living in shanties do not own the plots of land they are living on. As such, we have the important objective of giving land ownership to these deprived families. According to the

present programme each family will receive a plot of land at least 2.5 perches in extent, on re-settlement. A family can also obtain a loan of Rs. 20,000/- from the National Housing Development Authority to build a house. Many acres of land have been reserved for the rehabilitation of shanty dwellers. Residents of seventy six (76) shanty settlements will receive these benefits.

When this development programme, embracing an area of 82 square kilometers is completed Colombo city will certainly take on an enhanced environment which will be reflected in many aspects of the lives of the people.

(by the courtesy of Sri Lanka Land Reclamation Development Corporation)