

**AN APPEAL FROM THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT IN VIEW OF THE
WORLD WETLAND DAY 2017**

World Wetland Day is celebrated internationally each year on 2 February. World Wetland Day was first celebrated in 1997. Since then Government agencies, non-government organisations and community groups have celebrated World Wetland Day by undertaking actions to raise public awareness of wetland values and benefits and promote the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

THE THEME FOR THE WORLD WETLAND DAY 2017 IS

“WETLANDS FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION”.

World Wetland Day 2017 is an opportunity to raise awareness around the theme of wetlands for disaster risk reduction. The frequency of disasters worldwide has more than doubled in just 35 years – driven by climate and weather related hazards like flooding, cyclones, and droughts. We can't stop natural disasters from occurring but in some instances, we can reduce the impact of flooding. We can manage wetlands so they act as a natural sponge, absorbing and storing excess rainfall. During periods of low rainfall, the stored water helps maintain ground water levels delaying the onset of drought. Similarly, coastal wetlands act as a natural protective buffer while mangroves bind the shoreline and help reduce storm surge.

Steps to protect wetlands

- Do not throw garbage into wetland
- Do not pollute the wetland with sewage water
- Do not clog the wetlands with plastic waste
- Do not harm the wetland birds and plants
- Do not build houses and other habitation in wetland floodplain

On this World Wetland Day, I urge all to take responsibility for joining hands with common people, Government agencies, NGOs, and people of all the community to enhance public awareness towards the significance of wetland. To celebrate this event, variety of programs like seminars, lectures, nature walks, sampan race, poster exhibitions, video films screening, slide shows based on the wetland, art and quiz competitions, painting competition, photography exhibition, community cleanup, interviews on radio and television and etc can be organized at many places.

I once again urge all citizens to join us to achieve this year's theme.