

## Combined effort to conserve Sri Lanka's largest natural fresh water lake

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*Aravinda Perera, Managing Director, Sampath Bank PLC, exchanges signed agreements with Mangala P. B. Yapa, Secretary General / Chief Executive Officer, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce signifying the launch of the Bolgoda Wetland Conservation project.*

Sampath Bank, a responsible corporate citizen in the country, reiterated its commitment towards a sustainable greener tomorrow for Sri Lanka with the initiation of the Bolgoda Wetland Complex Conservation Project. Launched in partnership with Biodiversity Sri Lanka (the Sri Lanka Business and Biodiversity Platform of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce), the official agreement for this project was recently signed by Aravinda Perera, Managing Director, Sampath Bank PLC and Mangala P. B. Yapa, Secretary General/ Chief Executive Officer of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce. Technical assistance to the project will be provided by the Sri Lanka Water Partnership which is hosted by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI).



Commenting on the bank's latest CSR initiative, Aravinda Perera, Managing Director, Sampath Bank PLC, said, "The Bolgoda Wetland Complex (BWC) is the largest natural freshwater lake in the country, and is a crucial part of the Kalu river basin. However, it is facing various threats due to urbanization, and there is a dire need for immediate action to conserve its vital biodiversity and watershed services. We at Sampath Bank consider it is our responsibility to safeguard Sri Lanka's natural resources so that our future generations have the opportunity to enjoy them as we have. As such, we look forward to working together with Biodiversity Sri Lanka in taking all necessary steps to enhance the protection and conservation of the Bolgoda Wetland Complex."

The Bolgoda Wetland Complex (BWC) is the largest natural freshwater lake in the country. The lake which covers 400km<sup>2</sup>, comprises of two vast fresh water bodies, namely, the Bolgoda North Lake and the Bolgoda South Lake, which are connected by the river Weras. The main objective of this project is to assist in restoring the degraded areas of the Bolgoda Wetland Complex to conserve biodiversity, maintain watershed services and increase its resilience to climate change for the benefit of local communities, agriculture and industry. The programme will host awareness sessions amongst stakeholders that will carry out appropriate actions including conducting biodiversity assessments to identify high risk activities damaging the environment. This initiative will also focus on developing a vulnerability index and an indicator map, and emphasise on creating awareness amongst adults and children particularly in the immediate vicinity of the Bolgoda Wetland Complex.