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Nearly seven million people in the Dry Zone were severely affected by the unexpected changes in the monsoon pattern, said Environment Minister Champika Ranawaka at the inauguration of the 18 Asia Pacific Federation of the Environment Journalists (APEJ) world congress in Colombo on Monday.

The minister said the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that if "developed countries continued business as usual, without cutting their Green House Gases such as carbon dioxide emissions, world's hope for food security would fade, especially in developing countries." He said as many as 1.2 billion people in Asia would face severe water shortages, from reduced rainfall and melting glaciers.

Minister Ranawaka hinting that global warming and climate change would have contributed to aggravate the unexpected changes in the monsoon, added that developing countries justifiably were demanding substantial emission cuts from developed countries. The minister making clear the Sri Lankan stand on the Climate Change negotiations to be held in Copenhagen by year end, said developed countries should reduce their domestic green house gas emissions by 49 percent by 2020 below the 1990 level. He said developed countries were historically responsible for global warming by emitting GHG gas such as carbon dioxide since the industrial revolution.

Minister Ranawaka pointed out the necessity to set up an effective funding mechanism which is adequate and predictable for adaptation techniques to climate changes in developing countries. "The adaptation fund under the Kyoto Protocol is not sufficient," he noted.

He said developing countries need financial grants of one percent GDP for the adaptation strategies from the Annex 1 countries to the Kyoto protocol, i.e., the developed countries which are parties to Kyoto Protocol.

The Kyoto Protocol had been signed and ratified by 184 countries. The Kyoto Protocol that sets targets for emission cuts for Annex one countries until 2012, referred to as the first commitment period. Countries will meet in Copenhagen in December to agree on emission cutting targets for developed countries which are parties to the Kyoto Protocol.