

Editorial

Togetherness

The liberation of the North, now unfolding before our very eyes, brings with it manifold challenges to both the State and the people of Sri Lanka.

The restoration of democracy, revival of civil administration, holding of free elections and reconstruction of damaged infrastructure constitute some of these challenges in the post-conflict scenario. Equally challenging to the State, as a key policy objective, is the inculcation of the spirit of unity and togetherness among the people of this country. This must be made the bedrock of inter-communal relations.

The schools provide an ideal training ground for such purpose. Intra-school camaraderie between children of various races and religious backgrounds, and inter-regional exchanges between schools in conflict-affected areas and the rest of the nation, should be encouraged. The friendly cricket match played between the school cricketers from the East and the South in Galle to mark International Day of Peace is a good pointer to what could be achieved when the invisible barriers are broken down.

In addition to playing together, it is also important for the younger generation to learn together and think together. Another initiative of the Peace Secretariat for the International Day of Peace was support to the Learn and Lead programme of the Business for Peace Alliance, which gives students from deprived areas an opportunity to study for their Advanced Level qualifications in leading Colombo schools. Learn and Lead, in association with Sri Lanka UNESCO and the Weeramantry Centre, arranged a discussion on peace at which lively ideas were put forward in all languages. Such exchanges, involving disagreement but understanding of common ideals, are essential if the pluralistic spirit of this country is to find fulfillment.

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Editors

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Playing Together

Galle played host to a team of young cricketers from the East recently. The Peace Secretariat organised a friendly match between the visitors and their Southern counterparts to mark the International Day of Peace on September 21st. It was a symbolic event, that proved its worth both in itself and as a model for peace-building activities with youth in the future. Sport really does bring people together.

The Easterners had plenty to say about their first trip down South. 'We haven't felt any difference – it's just like our village. We hope this same feeling of camaraderie is to be found throughout the island,' they declared.

It was a very encouraging message. The Peace Secretariat has adopted the idea of establishing bonds of friendship between the regions under its concept of 'Sport for Peace'. The trip was the first by an Eastern youth team to the South, but it came in the wake of another event involving Colombo schools and a Northern youth team.

Galle took on a festive atmosphere to welcome its visitors from the East. Streets were adorned with buntings and banners of greeting were displayed too, to send a powerful message about the desire for harmony between the communities.

The Eastern team arrived on Friday 19th to an enthusiastic welcome by officials of the Southern Provincial Council. After net practice on the 20th morning, the Easterners joined in a Hindu religious pooja at the Sri Kathiravalayuda Kovil in Kaluwella, Galle. Mr. Shan Wijayalal de Silva, the Chief Minister of the Southern Province, and a large number of Tamil devotees participated as well. Addressing the ceremony, the President of the Galle Jewellery Merchants Association highlighted the unity prevailing amongst the various communities in the area. The majority community has made sure that this Hindu kovil could hold its Deepa Aradanai or the light pooja daily without interruption even during the July 1983 riots, he said. The Chief Priest then honoured the Southern Province Chief Minister with a golden shawl. The Easterners were impressed to find three Hindu kovils in Galle. 'We are very happy! Seeing really is believing – we never thought that we would find a kovil in this Southern city,' they said.

Ven. Kandamuldeniye Chandima Nayaka Thero, the Chief Incumbent of the Galle Buddhist Vihara, invited the visitors to the International Buddhist Centre at Kaluwella, Galle, for the chanting of 'seth pirith' and the tying of the holy string ('pirith noola'). The Tamil youths paid their respects to the monk in the traditional manner and the Buddhists gathered were delighted with their humility. Mr. Shan Wijayalal de Silva the Southern Province Chief Minister described it as an historic occasion. Hundreds of students attending religious classes at the Buddhist Centre surrounded the Tamil youths, shaking hands to demonstrate their friendship.

Playing.....

On Saturday 20th evening, there was a press conference attended by members of both teams. Mr J M Nizam, Deputy Director (Social Affairs), Peace Secretariat said the visit showed the world that the majority community did not suppress minorities and deny their rights as was claimed by some groups abroad. It served as an eye opener to the true situation in the country.

Mr de Silva, the Chief Minister, honoured the teams with a dinner, also attended by local religious and community leaders, followed by a cultural pageant featuring Southern song and dance artistes.

The game itself was held on the morning of Sunday 21st at the Galle International Cricket Stadium. Before the action got underway, the Southern Province Chief Minister, Mr T Navaratnarajah, Acting Chief Minister of the Eastern Province, and the teams were brought through the streets of the town in a procession led by five of the top school bands. The Sri Lankan flag was run up and the players of both sides were introduced to the VIPs.

Winning the toss, the Eastern team called upon the Southerners to bat first. The Southern team, which included a number of star performers, scored 156 runs in their allotted overs. In reply, the visitors were able to score only 92 runs since they had difficulty in getting used to the turf pitch.



On Sunday evening, Mr. Namal Rajapaksa, head of the Tharunyata Hetak (Tomorrow for Youth) Organisation and son of the President, presided over the awards ceremony. The trophies were donated by Tharunyata Hetak. The Southern Provincial Council also presented mementos to all of the team members. Mohanan, Captain of the Eastern team, said they did not consider it a defeat, it was an encouragement to do better.

Mr. Namal Rajapaksa led a meeting with both teams later on Sunday 21st. Immediate solutions were found to issues faced by the Eastern cricketers. Tharunyata Hetak promised to develop the grounds at the Hindu College in Trincomalee in the next couple of months. The Southern cricketers had ample opportunity to present issues of concern to them as well.

Learning Together



On 22nd September 2008 a Young Leaders International Peace Day Programme was held at the Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process, in collaboration with the Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO and the Business for Peace Alliance (BPA). This brought together a variety of enterprising school children to exchange ideas on peace. The core group for this exercise were the 'Learn and Lead' scholars of the BPA programme to provide opportunities for youngsters from deprived areas to obtain high quality education in Colombo schools.

Currently 'Learn and Lead' scholars from Trincomalee, Anuradhapura and Badulla study at Ladies College, Holy Family Convent, Bambalapitiya, Methodist College, S Thomas' College, Mt Lavinia and St Benedict's. Students from Bishop's College and St. Bridget's Convent also participated in the programme.

Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, former UN Under Secretary General for Disarmament Affairs, delivered the keynote address on the role of youth in promoting peace and building leadership. Prof Rajiva Wijesinha, Secretary General SCOPP, Mr C S Poolokasingham, Deputy Secretary General SCOPP and Ms Manique Mendis, Secretary General, BPA highlighted the importance of pluralism in promoting peace, in discussing issues related to the current peace process in Sri Lanka. Prof Wijesinha stressed that working together and playing together were vital to ensure the development of attitudes that would ensure sustainable peace.

Mr. Prithi Perera, Secretary General Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO, addressed the gathering on the importance of the culture of peace and stressed the importance of preventing conflict. He said that disorder and confusion in society shaped the innocent minds of children, so there was a need to rear peace in the hearts of children and to develop peace-related disciplines such as value education, moral education, global education, etc.

Mr. Dhanapala in his keynote address reiterated the importance of the role of youth in providing leadership. "Human Rights are essential to peace, many people in the world see their Human Rights violated. We therefore have to depend on your generation to usher in peace for all ethnic and religions groups."

The subsequent panel discussion saw many students pose questions on different perspectives of peace, with clarifications sought on positions taken by the Government relating to the peace process and possible future scenarios.

Learning.....



More information about Learn and Lead could be obtained from:-

www.bpalearnandlead.blogspot.com

www.bpa-srilanka.com

<http://lead.gdcci.com/learn>

Following the presentation of books and certificates to the participants, an interactive group exercise on perceptions and recommendations related to the peace process was conducted by Pushpi Weerakoon, 'Learn & Lead' Project Manager, along with facilitators from the Weeramantry International Centre for Peace Education and Research. There was active participation by all students, including the eight 'Learn and Lead' scholars who came from faraway areas such as Anuradhapura, Badulla, Muttur, Trincomalee, Welimada, Hatton and Kebithigollawa. Ms Mendis noted at the end that their ability to work together in teams, despite such different backgrounds, sent a strong message with regard to developing relationships to ensure peace.

As Project Manager Pushpi Weerakoon said, "The Learn and Lead project, designed for Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation through a positive and productive contribution to bright, underprivileged adolescents, acknowledges structural inequalities caused by the conflict in all parts of the country that restrict opportunities for quality education, Since decision making historically has been the preserve of leaders produced from Colombo based schools, this has contributed to huge cleavages and regional disparities. Learn to Lead looks into strengthening a next generation leadership that is diverse and drawn from all regions, rather than being Colombo-centred and favouring a centralized structure of leadership."

Having seen how the first set of scholars have benefited from not only educational opportunities but also well structured extra-curricular development, Pushpi invites institutions, organisations and individuals to join hands with them to help more bright students from the regions to fulfil their aspirations while becoming leading citizens in efforts to promote development and co-operation throughout the country.

Fathima Nuzha, Learn and Lead scholar at Methodist College, said, "We had an opportunity to meet students from other schools. I think that it is possible to build peace and take the message of peace through such programmes."

Prof Wijesinha was appreciative of the active involvement and also the confidence of the provincial students in terms of participation. "It was a good opportunity for them to meet people like Jayantha Dhanapala and Prithi Perera who have done so much internationally," he said, stressing that peace will come only when people interact with each other and work together with confidence and mutual understanding.

The Spirit of Pluralistic Learning in Jaffna

C.S. Poolokasingham
Deputy Secretary General,
Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process



Jaffna Hindu College was established in 1890 when the Hindu revival movement was led by Shri Arumuga Navalar. Hindu Colleges all over the North and East as well as in the Hill Country were coordinated by Hindu Boards of Management with the financial assistance of well wishers from the community such as Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan.

Jaffna Hindu College had hostel facilities for students from various parts of Sri Lanka. Even though it was a Hindu managed school, it had Muslim students too. It was probably the only school in Sri Lanka with a school anthem emphasizing the importance of learning all the national languages, namely Tamil, Sinhala and English.

Wherever we are whatever the suffering
We will not forget the goodness
Of thee our alma mater
May God favour thee to live forever and ever
English sweet Tamil and Aryan Sinhala
It is the centre to learn them
This is the great cradle of learning
Guarded with affection by those of learning
This is the centre of light
This is the centre of elevation
And the centre of life.



The College Crest

(Translated extract from the College Anthem)

Some of those who established this school were from Christian families but they nevertheless assisted in promoting Hindu culture and traditions through Hindu schools.

We had a Sinhalese teacher named Amarasinghe from Matara who taught us the Sinhala language in Grade 6. A part time teacher is generally not included in the staff list, but he was accepted as a staff member and his name was placed on par in the pay sheet. This indicates how a Sinhala language teacher was accommodated in the interests of the progress of the school as staff members were given due hearing in respect to all the developmental activities of the school.

The Spirit.....

The teaching of the Sinhala language was associated with the idea of improving the four language skills, reading, writing, speaking and listening. Mr. Amarasinghe discharged his duties with utmost dedication and commitment. Sadly, in 1956, when the Language Bill was introduced, there was a commotion that made the few Sinhalese living in Jaffna leave. When Mr. Amarasinghe also left, it caused us much concern but we never thought that he will not come back. We thought he was leaving us due to the disturbances and that he will come back once the situation subsided. But he never returned and we lost a golden opportunity of learning Sinhalese while in school.

The school anthem that places an emphasis on the importance of learning the Sinhala language constitutes part of the fundamental pluralistic view of the Jaffna people and it also reflects the wisdom and far sightedness of the founding scholars. This outlook helped the students who studied in the pre-conflict era to think and live as people of one country.

Jaffna Hindu College had regular contact with the South by arranging for students to visit all historical and tourist sites in the island twice a year and the students were well looked after and accommodated by other schools in Anuradhapura, Hatton, Matale, Galle and Kandy. The school had an annual cricket match with Maliyadeva Vidyalaya, Kurunegala and taking turns each school had the opportunity of visiting the other in alternate years and this arrangement continued until the early 1980s.

Our pluralistic outlook was also reflected in the activities of the Cadet Corps and the Scout Movement. Only three schools from the North, ie St. Patrick's, St. John's and Jaffna Hindu

College were represented by Cadet platoons in the annual inter school cadet competition held at the Diyatalawa Military camp. The participation in this event provided an opportunity for our cadets to meet and interact with cadets from other schools in the South as well as with Officers of the military establishment.

Prominent Muslim families were happy to send their children to Jaffna Hindu College as it was well reputed for its high educational standards as well as non discrimination on matters relating to religion and culture. For several years the Junior and later the Senior Cadet Corp was commanded by a senior student Mr. Ashroff who hailed from Nuwara Eliya. Originally the command and the instructions for the military drill of the Cadets were in English but later the medium of command was switched to Sinhala. No one looked at these developments adversely. The school Cadets had their regular training every day in the playground and in the roads and lanes adjoining the College.



Mr C S Poolokasingham (front centre) with fellow prize winners

The Spirit

Moulding students with the broader aspect of a pluralistic outlook made us support and subscribe to the divergent political ideologies prevalent at that time. For example, when I was Secretary of the History and Civic Association of our College the first person to visit Moscow from the Communist Party of Sri Lanka was the late Mr. V. Ponnambalam. I invited him to address our Society despite the opposition of our patron and a relation of mine who became in later years our Principal. He objected to a Communist Party member addressing the students as he was partial to the political views of the Tamil Congress Party. But even though he objected, he nevertheless allowed Mr. V. Ponnambalam, the Communist party member to share with us his impressions of his visit to Russia, rather than on the doctrinaire aspects of Communism.

I should also note that, though the younger generation took up arms later, in the middle of the temporary peace in 2002 when I was invited to be the Chief Guest at the annual School Prize Giving, the School Principal in his introductory speech when referring to my wife, made some insightful remarks which I would like to set out below, as they provide an idea even at this late hour of the stance of the school and its management in respect to adopting a pluralistic approach towards nation building.

The Principal said, "You have the honour of informing the characteristics of the lives of Tamils in beautiful Tamil language.... You have achieved humility and depth with proficiency in Sinhalese, Tamil and English which are the languages of our country. I am delighted that you have come to the alma mater which moulded your husband giving dignity and stature to him. Born in the Neduntivu island (Delft Island) which produced several eminent persons, you have traveled up to the United States engaging in service to Tamils and the religion. You have rendered much service both here and abroad through the Seva Vanitha making use of the knowledge and experience gained in the Government Service for more than 15 years".

Still I remember the packed hall of over 2000 students, teachers and many parents of the students as well as old boys including at the time the political campaigner of the LTTE, Mr. Yogi, and some of his colleagues. I was thinking of talking to them after the Prize Giving and the lunch but they were not available. I would like to point out that one of the salient points I made in my speech was that my success in life was due largely to the solid foundation I had in Jaffna Hindu College. My success cannot be attributed purely to studies and my abilities but also in learning the other two languages, all the more the Sinhala language, the language that every Jaffna man needs to know for his progress, understanding and peaceful co-existence beyond Elephant Pass. My emphasis on the importance of studying Sinhala was even at this juncture not sidelined by the gathering assembled on that occasion.

The wisdom and insights enshrined in the school anthem constituted the inspiration and wellspring of future progress for several youth who were educated in this School. In later life they became eminent educationists, Economists, Scientists, Doctors, Engineers, Diplomats and leading politicians.

Finally I would like to pinpoint an incident relating to the name board of 'Kalajothi Community Centre' which was established in 1949. It is situated a short distance from Jaffna Hindu College. The name board had the institutional name written only in Tamil since 1949. When I was an Assistant Treasurer of this Centre in 1963, when we wanted to change the name to 'Kalajothi Youth Organisation' and effect an extension to the building, this name was inscribed in cement in all three languages and the name board placed on the top of the building.

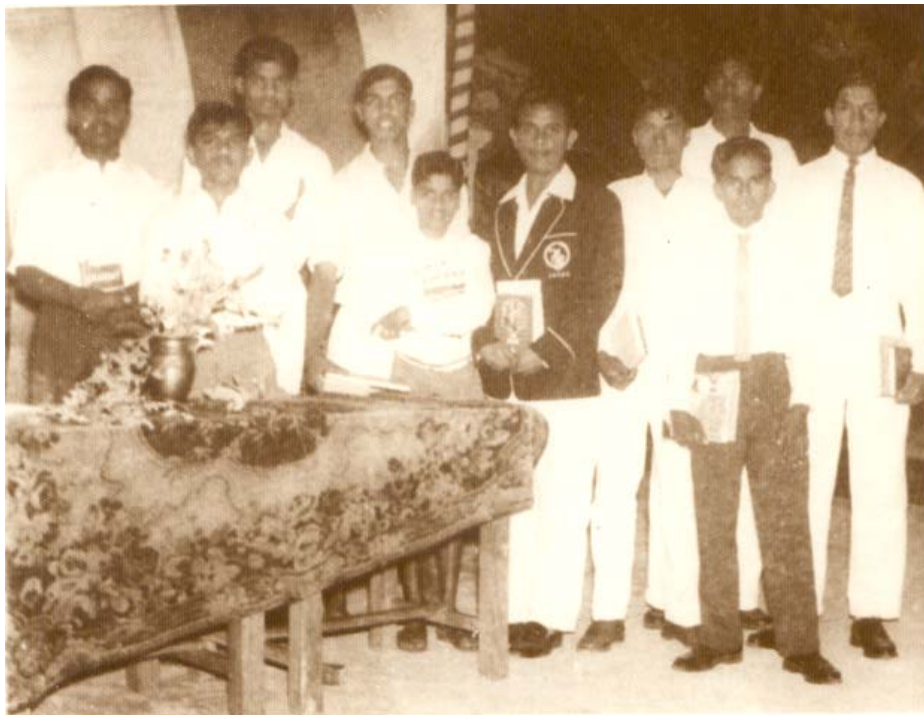
The inscription of the name in Sinhala was opposed by a powerful local resident who was supportive of the then Federal Party. He declined to give his regular assistance to us at the time when we were organizing 'Dan Sal' for the devotees of the 'Nallur Festival' who pass

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through this centre after coming from all over Jaffna. He went to the extent of requesting the late Mr. Amiththalingam not to participate in the festivities on the 25th day at the end of the 'Nallur Festival' where we conduct a Religious competition. When we heard the news that Mr. Amiththalingam might decline our invitation to be the Chief Guest at the function, four of us proceeded on push bicycles all the way to his home nine miles away from Jaffna town. When we met him we were very much surprised by the reply given by the late Mr. Amiththalingam.

Mr. Amiththalingam said, "You are doing the right thing. My supporter is wrong. You have every right to put the name of the organisation in all three languages and I will come as the chief guest," and he attended the function, made a speech and gave away the prizes. Though at times the late Mr. Amiththalingam may have propagated a Federal solution or advocated autonomy for the North and East in eloquent Tamil touching the feelings of the Tamil masses, he was against all forms of racial discrimination.

It is interesting that, when Jaffna was retaken by the Government Security forces, the Army had appreciated seeing this board in all three languages. Also interesting is that, even during the period Jaffna was under LTTE control, the LTTE had not taken steps to erase the Sinhala wording and it would seem this organization has a positive policy when it comes to languages.



Mr C S Poolokasingham (fifth from left) together with fellow prize winners after the school Prize Giving ceremony.

Chief Minister sets agenda for the East

With the liberation of the East, the administration of the province was entrusted to representatives of the people chosen through local government and provincial council elections. The people had lost touch with participatory democracy since the area had been in the grip of the LTTE for nearly 20 years and the administrative functions had been discharged by the Governor and the office of the Government Agent. Unaware of the lengthy administrative processes of the Central and Provincial Governments, the people expect their newly-elected representatives to come up with immediate solutions to the myriad problems they face.

The Peace Secretariat facilitates this work by helping the new institutions to link up with development partners, NGOs and the private sector. In an effort to work out a strategy to meet rising expectations and identify areas needing urgent action, a discussion was organised recently under the chairmanship of Mr. Sivanesathurai Chandrakanthan, Chief Minister of the Eastern Province. Provincial Council Ministers and Councillors, representatives of the Board of Investment, the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies and an American NGO the Humpty Dumpty Institute also participated.

Get former cadres to work

The Chief Minister spelt out the range of problems faced by the people as well as himself. He noted that people expected a lot from them as their representatives, and it was their duty to help the people. Recalling the past, the Chief Minister said that they were engaged in an armed struggle for nearly thirty years. They joined the democratic mainstream having realised that using violence to achieve political ends was a futile exercise. Their cadres laid down arms in the belief that there would be no need for them again.

The Chief Minister said that around 5,000 cadres are now idling at home without an income. 'It is three months since we assumed office. We do not have plans at present except ad hoc measures to solve problems. There is no doubt that short-term, mid-term and long-term plans will bring about development in the East. We will extend our fullest cooperation to such efforts. But the priority now is the immediate needs of the people of the East, and principally to help the cadres who remain unemployed,' he said.

End the culture of dependency

After the tsunami, NGOs provided generous assistance to the affected people. The sadly negative effect was that they got used to receiving things free. With a view to preventing the entrenchment of such lifestyles and particularly among the young, the Peace Secretariat urged that the people should be weaned away from a life of economic dependence and made to face life's challenges. They should be shown the way to sustain themselves on their own, making use of the credit facilities offered by banks that are willing to help them.

The Chief Minister said, 'We are thankful to NGOs which serve the people in many ways. However, their assistance should be in the form of permanent livelihood initiatives. It is no use to provide a sewing machine to someone who does not know how to sew. Furthermore, such humanitarian gestures would have no impact if there are no fabrics and market openings to sustain such activities.'

Various initiatives are now underway

Mr. Alam Hisbullah, Provincial Council Minister, explained the activities being implemented under the Village Awakening Programme. He said that each month a village will be revived. The first such initiative was launched at Vakarai in August.

The Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies has been involved in relief activities throughout the East. Mr Hashim, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, explained that they are currently focusing on education and training, and plans have already been drawn up to obtain assistance from Southeast Asia. The Korean and Singaporean Ambassadors have shown an interest in arranging jobs in their home countries for migrant workers from the East. One CHA member is an American NGO called the Humpty Dumpty Institute. It has been involved in mine clearance work in the Jaffna peninsular and is offering its services to the East. Once areas are safe for people to return, the Humpty Dumpty Institute runs programmes to help them to develop new livelihoods. Ms Jean Samuel, Country Director, said that dairy farming had been successful in the North and could be tried in the East too.

The Board of Investment has various major projects lined up for the East. Smaller businesses are also in the process of finalising their plans. Mr P Naguleswaran, Manager BOI Trincomalee, explained that they could provide basic infrastructure to complement activities by NGOs. For example, houses and associated facilities are under construction in Echchilampattu and Kallady in Trincomalee under the Integrated Village Investment Plan.

Conduct a needs assessment

The Peace Secretariat stressed the need to conduct a survey to ascertain the difficulties faced by former cadres and women. For example, there are many widows in the Eastern Province and programmes such as training in food processing and traditional embroidery could be introduced to provide employment. The Peace Secretariat could collate information and proposals and share them with the relevant authorities.

The Provincial Council agreed to provide a list of the urgent needs of the people and the names of those requiring assistance. The organisations present agreed to take this into consideration. It was also mentioned that there were about 13,000 school dropouts due to the conflict in the Batticaloa district, and it was decided to undertake surveys in the other districts as well.

Documentation is a priority

Former cadres will need documentation to be considered for employment. The Provincial Council stressed the need for Birth Certificates, National Identity Cards, Passports, etc. to be issued promptly. A number of immediate steps were agreed upon. The Peace Secretariat undertook to make arrangements for a mobile documentation service to be extended to the Eastern province. In addition, they would take the matter up with the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs.



Peace in Jaffna through Economic Development

Recent research reveals that the Northern Province contributes only 3% to the national GDP of the country. With the liberation of the Northern Province which is in progress now, this geographical area has the potential to quadruple in the near future. The logic for the economy quadrupling in the Northern Province is based on the experience we saw during the period between 2002 and 2004 where the GDP growth increased by 12.6%. In fact by the end of 2005 the economy grew up by 14%. This growth was fuelled by the agricultural and fishing sectors that expanded the economy of the Northern Province by 32%.

One of the key areas of focus was the development of the Dairy Industry in the Northern Province, mainly Jaffna. It has been confirmed through different studies done that the Dairy Industry has the potential of eliminating poverty and enhancing the quality of life whilst developing social fabrication in a society.

Sample Project of Vavuniya

Oxfam GB which specializes in advising and providing technical support has developed a model project in the Vavuniya District. There were four areas that the project focused on;

- (1) Developing a collective social mobilization system that will improve herd quality and cattle management practices at an individual level.
- (2) Developing and strengthening the local dairy cooperative system to integrate the rural communities into the dairy farming industry.
- (3) Strengthening the supply mechanism by improving milk collection and selling system.
- (4) Promoting market oriented demand through processing milk and value added products through innovative marketing strategies.

Project Management and Approach

The multi dimension project that Oxfam championed together with local stakeholders helped develop the dairy industry through a '*Stakeholders advisory group*' which functioned as the decision making and coordinating body at village level. This was an unique partnership approach as it gave ownership and responsibility to stakeholders of a typical village that helped develop the very essence of the social fabric in that community. It was also a way of providing sustainability to the project in the long term.

This community partnership led to consultation with local people where home grown developmental models such as CO3 hybrid grass was grown which provided high quality fodder for the local cattle feed. This provided the likelihood



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of development in the area and hence economic development by way of an approach of expanding the economy.

This model will perfectly fit the Jaffna peninsular given that most communities have been torn during past years due to the war. Hence, in one way the Dairy Farming development programme by way of the stake holder approach can be a key approach to not only drive the economy but also to foster networks between communities that live in particular geographic areas.

Oxfam GB also supported the dairy farmer's capacity building and transferring of technical expertise from developed markets around the world through a train the trainer programme in conjunction with the department of Animal Production and the Health Ministry. Presently these farmers are serving as "village animators" for the phase II developmental programme in the Vavuniya district. The training includes quality control procedures and skill enhancement modules which once again can be modeled in Jaffna.



The results speak of the success that was achieved which has increased to 25-30 bottles of milk per cow. The programme is now endorsed by the Ministry of Livestock Development and supported strongly by the breeder cooperative society. The latest addition to the scheme is the financial incentive programme that was introduced to spruce up capacity development in the district.

Way Forward

Unemployment rate is around 13% in Northern Province and projects like Dairy Industry development initiatives can help to reduce the unemployment rate and

also to involve the female community in economic expansion in the Northern Province.

This in turn can help arrest falling social indicators, in particular with regard to the health of children. Whilst the advance of the forces to liberate the Northern Province too proceeds satisfactorily, we need also to move forward soon on livelihood development projects so that the people will benefit swiftly from the opportunities being revived for them by the removal of the tight controls and limitations on entrepreneurship imposed by the LTTE.

Prospects for a lasting Peace in the East

Reflections of a Muslim peace activist

Mr. Javed Yusuf is no stranger to public affairs in Sri Lanka. He is an ardent campaigner for the streamlining of political parties on a non – sectarian footing. He opposes communal political parties. He sees the inherent danger and potential for aggravated conflict. He prefers to direct his appeal to all sections of the Sri Lankan community. He is admired for both his forthright comments and moral courage; increasingly by those who are on the other side of the ethnic and religious divide.

Mr. Yusuf has served as Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and as Senior Advisor to the late Foreign Minister Mr. Lakshman Kadirgamar. An Attorney at law, he was the founder Secretary General of the Peace Secretariat for Muslims, former Principal of Zahira College, Colombo and a member of Sri Lanka's first National Human Rights Commission.

In an exclusive interview with SCOPP Quarterly, he aired his views on a range of topics as follows:

Rising Opportunities as East opens up

Mr. Yusuf said that the Provincial Council Elections have created new opportunities. The sensitive nature of inter – communal relations require developmental projects to be executed with care. The prevailing mistrust must be eliminated through prior consultation with various communities. The community leaders in particular need to be informed beforehand of the projects. Such steps would eliminate unnecessary suspicion. The East, well governed, may well become a shining example to the rest of the country.

Rule of Law

He further emphasized the rule of law. The law enforcement machinery needs



to be strengthened. Any person, be they Sinhala, Tamil or Muslim, needs to be able to visit the law enforcement agencies without fear to have their complaints recorded and investigated. When taking steps to ensure security, minimal inconvenience should be caused to the public and their livelihoods should not be adversely affected. Adequate notice would prevent the conduct of the state security forces from being misconstrued.

The administration must be depoliticized. There must be a balanced and proportional representation in employment of the three communities, observed Mr. Yusuf.

Land distribution

Issues of resettlement and distribution of land to the dispossessed due to the conflict must be made the subject of immediate attention. The owners of land should be given back their land and allowed to cultivate without any harassment. Mr. Yusuf proposed the appointment of a Representative Land Commission to deal with land issues in the East.

A continuous dialogue between the administration and the public would facilitate the smooth transition of the Eastern Province into a vibrant and representative democracy, observed Mr. Yusuf.

‘Welfare of IDPs is a foremost consideration in Government plans to liberate the North’ - Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara

“Innocent civilians are placed in a very vulnerable position with the rapid escalation of battles. They are forced to pay a heavy price both physically and psychologically despite not being a direct party to the conflict. The numbers of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) are increasing. They have no place to go to. Only a handful of them have even some one known to turn to. Notwithstanding the mammoth nature of the task in receiving and finding accommodation for these IDPs, we are confident that we will be able to tackle the problem without great difficulty”, said Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara, the Military Spokesman, in an interview with SCOPP Quarterly.

Speaking further, Brig. Nanayakkara said that there has been an increase in the number of IDPs after the Security Forces dropped leaflets from aircraft appealing to the civilians to flee to the Government held areas. Civilians from Kilinochchi and adjacent areas sail to Mannar in the night, having embarked from a point in the North West coast. On arrival in Mannar, the IDPs are required to first register with the Security Forces and with a representative from the respective GA's office and ICRC. The main purpose in this endeavour is to ascertain their true identity.

Safe Corridor

In the last few weeks the Government took steps to demarcate a ‘safe corridor’ for civilians fleeing areas of heavy fighting. Brig. Nanayakkara claimed that civilians were advised to take the route east of the A9 going south towards Vavuniya, which will now function as a relief hub to accommodate the civilians.

The IDPs are then taken to nominated IDP welfare camps. Currently there is one IDP camp in Mannar, one in the Pariharikandal area and three more in Vavuniya, in Manik Farm, Irattaperiyakulan and Karuwalaperiyakulan.



IDP camps

Explaining the day to day schedule in the IDP camps he said that the basic requirements like food and education are facilitated by the respective GA's. While round the clock protection is provided by the Police and Army. Commenting on the freedom of movement in the IDP camps, he pointed out that the people were allowed to seek employment outside the camp according to their preference. The school going children are also enrolled in the schools as deemed appropriate.

Extending Government services and supplies to fellow citizens in uncleared areas

An interview with the Government Agent of Kilinochchi



The Government of Sri Lanka is committed to the well being and protection of the people of the country irrespective of their ethnic and religious backgrounds, and their place of residence, ie whether they were in 'cleared' or 'uncleared' areas. Though the LTTE had controlled chunks of territory in the Wannu, now rapidly shrinking in size, which were referred to as 'uncleared' areas, the Government had continued to provide food, medicine, education and public health services to people living there, and had run a civil administration which entailed the payment of salaries to public servants (and pensions to the retired), whilst facilitating and monitoring their work.

Mr. Nagalingam Vethanayahan, Government Agent of Kilinochchi, is along with his counterpart in Mullaitivu the most important of such public servants. Despite the danger and vulnerability of occupying the 'hottest seat' in a conflict affected zone, he has continued courageously to make every effort to ensure the delivery of essential supplies and services to his people, including those virtually entrapped by the LTTE in danger areas and not permitted to leave them.

Currently his biggest challenge is the provision of food and shelter to the internally displaced streaming into Kilinochchi from surrounding areas. "We have many people coming to us from the previously uncleared areas in the north of Mannar and from parts of Mullaitivu as well, and we must respond to their requirements for food and shelter," which he said was being accomplished with the assistance of the UNHCR. He added that the IDPs are currently living in schools. This situation cannot continue for long. Therefore with the assistance of UN agencies and INGOs he has made arrangements for temporary shelters to be constructed to house the displaced people as schools would need to be vacated shortly so that children could resume their studies in the 3rd term.

Mr. Vethanayahan is also faced with another acute problem, ie scarcity of senior officers. There were few Additional GAs, SLAS officers or technical officers to provide assistance. In the circumstances he is forced to juggle with the time and resources of only 3 Additional GAs to meet the needs of the IDPs.

Despite all these difficulties, Mr. Vethanayahan has been able to sort out many problems affecting the public with the assistance of the Jaffna and Vavuniya Commanding Officers and the GAs in Mannar, Vavuniya and Trincomalee.

Mr. Vethanayahan has an interesting academic and work related background. He had his early education at Thellipalai Mahajana College and then obtained his BSc in Bio Science from the University of Jaffna in 1985. After a stint of teaching at the University, he entered the public service as Assistant Government Agent for Delft Island in the

Jaffna district after successful completing the SLAS competitive examination in 1990. His present tenure as GA in Kilinochchi began in May 2007. However he had valuable work experience from the past, having served in AGA divisions and as Acting Divisional Secretary in Sandilipay up to 2002, and then as Additional GA of Kilinochchi district from 2003.

He is thus no stranger to Kilinochchi district, and his motivation to remain stems from a sense of affinity. Recalling the untroubled times in this District, he says "It was very peaceful and pleasant than, and I never expected a war like situation to arise, as prevails now." He adds that he wants to assist Government programmes to raise the living conditions of civilians who have fallen into dire straits due to collapse or stagnation of their means of earning a living. He has identified three main development areas, housing construction and reconstruction of the internal road network and of the irrigation channels which will enable them to resume agricultural activities.

Mr. Vethanayahan has initiated many micro projects related to agriculture and fishing which constitute the main sources of livelihood of people in Kilinochchi. He recalls how he

managed to run several resettlement camps from Jaffna to Chavakachcheri and how he established several housing schemes in partnership with institutions such as the National Engineering Research and Development (NERD), resulting in the construction of about 1500 houses. Sadly, this rebuilding effort has now come to a standstill in the wake of renewed fighting. With the fighting escalating each day, his tasks and challenges will increase, but he is sure of the dawning of a lasting peace in

which he can continue his services to a happy and prosperous population.





Sri Lankan delegation meeting the Heads of the International Organization for Migration

“Sri Lanka will look after its own, to the best of our ability”- Peace Chief

Statement of Prof. Rajiva Wijesinha, Secretary to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights, responding on behalf of Sri Lanka in the General Debate on ‘Human Rights situations that require the Council’s attention’.

Sri Lanka is deeply touched by the concern expressed by countries of the European Union for the human rights situation in some countries in Asia and Africa. We hope that, with advances in globalization, such concern will soon be universal. As others here have pointed out, the moral stature this Council should command requires consistency. Though we know this is not easy, we hope all of us will strive to achieve it in time.

Sri Lanka also appreciates understanding of the fact that “internal conflict is a breeding ground for violations of human rights”. A more illuminating description might have been that terrorism breeds such violations, as indeed has been graphically illustrated in so many theatres recently. In this regard, it should be noted that internal conflict is less corrosive when democratic governments are mindful of the rights of their own citizens, on whose approval their mandates rest. Elsewhere, where there is no such sense of responsibility, and where “Othering” occurs, violations as we have seen can be worse.

The same thing applies with regard to the work of humanitarian organizations. Much is made of the fact that Sri Lanka had to impose restrictions on international organizations for their own safety. Indeed, the pomposity of the pronouncements regarding the international community, can sometimes be painful. However, just yesterday, when the government guaranteed safe

passage to NGOs to proceed to Kilinochchi, where the LTTE had its headquarters, they would not take the risk, claiming – and I quote – ‘In these kind (sic) of situations the humanitarian agencies tend to err on the side of caution’. It will not surprise our friends in this august assembly that representatives of national NGOs did proceed, and of course, kept safe. The ICRC, we should note, has been asked to continue in place, and does so dutifully.

In short, Mr. President, Sri Lanka will look after its own, to the best of our ability, and with the assistance of our friends who care about our people, including the dedicated workers of several UN agencies. Given the caution of the international NGOs, even when the government was able to offer safe passage, it is clear that the best assistance the international community can offer is to persuade the LTTE to let our people go, to the safety of government controlled areas from where - as UNHCR testified with regard to the Eastern Province last year - we can ensure return and restitution as soon as possible.

Whilst most countries spoke with circumspection, and as conspicuously in the case of Japan with productive understanding, we regret the assertion of Ireland that the peace process has terminated. We have explained to the Irish Foreign Ministry in Dublin that the peace process continues, and that terrorism should not be rewarded by being treated as the sole arbiters of peace when other democratically pluralistic Tamils are keen on negotiations and a political solution.

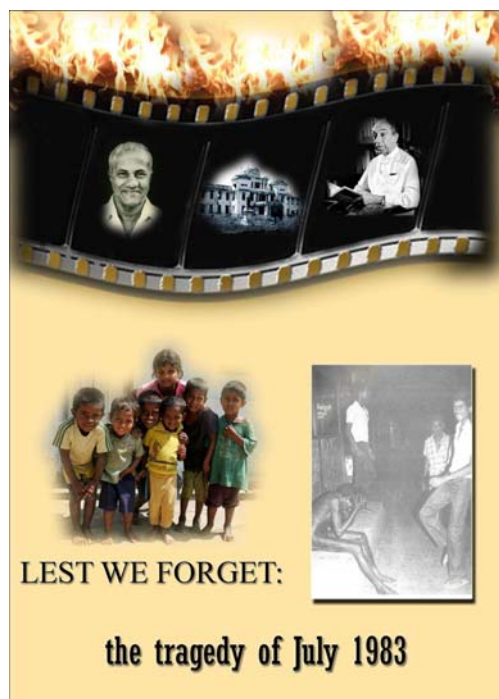
With regard to the aspersions cast on Sri Lanka by others, Mr. President, I have responded elsewhere. Here let me reiterate that it would help the work of this Council if those who spoke here in the spirit of finger pointing were required to register the sources of the funding they enjoy that facilitates and explains their performances. I am not talking of Amnesty International which, with a few aberrations, tries to fulfill its original ideals. But transparency in the case of more hysterical criticism of Sri Lanka would, Mr. President, soon make clear a situation that certainly

requires the Council's attention. Organizations that have not presented audited accounts for several years, where the treasurer has been dead from about the turn of the century, have every right to raise issues, but they should also make it clear from where they come, and where they are heading.



Hon. Mahinda Samarasinghe, Minister of Disaster Management and Human Rights and Professor Rajiva Wijesinha, Secretary to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights, meeting the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Ms. Navanethem Pillay at the Palais Wilson in Geneva.

Lest we forget



The events of July 1983 were a watershed in Sri Lankan history. At its simplest, there was an attack on Tamils in Colombo and elsewhere in the country, an attack that seemed to have at least some official sanction. This was evident not only from what seemed official resources to which the attackers had access, but also the reaction of the President, J R Jayewardene. In his first address to the nation, several days after the attacks started, he declared that the attacks were the reaction of 'the Sinhalese people' to the violence of Tamil terrorists. His first official response then was to introduce legislation that had the effect of driving from Parliament the elected representatives of the Tamils.

This had two predictable consequences. The first was the wider perception that the attacks had official sanction, which led to an even greater outbreak of violence on the following day, July 29th. The second was the superseding of the Tamil United Liberation Front by terrorist movements, most

notably the LTTE. And the events of July seemed to justify this, for it suggested that the Sri Lankan state was a racist oppressive state against which violence was justified.

This perception has continued, fuelled by the enormous resentment felt by many Tamils who fled the country at this time and later. Though after July 29th the government called a halt to such violence, and though this has never been repeated in the quarter century that has passed, it is understandable that many Tamils, especially those who left in 1983 or soon afterwards, see Sri Lanka through the prism of 1983. This has led to support for the concept of a separate state, as canvassed most effectively by the LTTE, and hence continuing funding of what is now one of the most ruthless terrorist organizations in the world. A collateral result of this perhaps has been total ruthlessness in dealing with other Tamil groups, for the Tiger determination to ensure a monopoly of support is fuelled by the enormous financial and political rewards of such a monopoly as far as it concerns the Tamil diaspora.

For such support to continue, they have to convey the impression that another July 1983 is always imminent. The firm manner in which, with one or two very small scale but dishonourable exceptions, successive Sri Lankan governments have dealt with anti-Tamil racism, has made this unlikely, but of course it would take only one major lapse for the case to seem cast iron. And, though successive governments recognize this, there are political forces that wish to undermine elected governments, and may therefore encourage racist violence for their own shadowy reasons.

One reason therefore to publish the book *'Lest we forget'* is to make it clear that such violence can only benefit the far more sophisticated racist violence of the Tigers. It is therefore vital, not only that governments, which tend to understand this already, but also society at large, recognizes the enormity of what happened in 1983 and ensures that it is never repeated.

Another reason is to actually clarify what happened. For it is in the interests of all proponents of extremism to suggest that the events of 1983 were not the results of the particular policies of particular elements in government at the time, but were rather the natural outburst of Sinhalese resentment against Tamils. Sinhala extremists would thus suggest that what happened

was an assertion of strength against separatist violence that should be replicated. Tamil extremists, more practical in their approach, seek to declare that such violence is endemic in Sri Lanka, and that under any political dispensation this is likely to recur. This can be presented, and relentlessly has been, as a justification for separatism.

Central to both these partisan interpretations is a denial of the actual role of the government at the time. Tamil extremists claim that the Jayewardene government was typical of Sinhalese governments, ignoring the central role of Jayewardene himself in subverting earlier attempts at political compromise.

Conversely Sinhalese extremists play down the role of Jayewardene in their efforts to assert that the violence was spontaneous. They thus see his failure to quell it as due to diffidence in the face of nationalist emotion he could not comprehend. The illogicality of this argument, given the effectiveness with which he quelled the less structured violence of July 29th, is not important in comparison with the purportedly patriotic point they wish to make.

Sadly, not only do these two agendas converge, but they find support in what might be termed the intrinsic support for the Jayewardene wing of the UNP of elite decision makers in Colombo. *'Lest we forget'* therefore attempts simply to clarify the record, by republishing a number of writings that addressed the issue direct, very shortly after the actual events. It begins with a section of descriptive essays that also analyse, including the detailed description of what happened in the Welikada Jail massacres, perhaps the most hideous episode in a hideous week. The relentless account of state complicity in what occurred, along with descriptions of the courage of particular officials, the prison guards who risked their own lives to save their charges, Major Sunil Pieris who promptly restored the order that others in the security forces had subverted, is perhaps the best proof that the situation was as I have described it above. The next section contains poetry that deals with the events, and with attitudes that contributed to them. This is followed by fiction that addresses both the situation itself and also the political background. 'The lost one' I should note won the Deutschewelle short story competition for all South Asia.

The final section deals with relevant points of view, beginning with Cyril Mathew's equation of all Tamils with terrorists, which formed his defence to criticism of his part in the attacks on Tamils in Jaffna in 1981, the precursor – during which the Jaffna Public Library was burnt down - to the events of 1983. In part because of the emotions roused by Mathew's style of defence, which involved a Motion in Parliament of No Confidence in the Leader of the Opposition, Appapillai Amirthalingam, there were attacks on Tamils in the south of the country in that year too, but because Colombo was exempt, decision makers in society were not aware of the enormity of what was brewing. Following a report of the response of Ranil Wickremesinghe to the riots, exemplifying the Mathew approach to economic analysis, I include an appeal by Bishop Lakshman Wickremesinghe, the first Sinhalese leader to visit Jaffna after the events. The section concludes with my impressions of that period, culminating in his death.

It is with regret then for the wasted years that followed that this book is dedicated to the memory of those who died in that awful period; and of Lakshman Wickremasinghe, Bishop and Chairman of the Civil Rights Movement in Sri Lanka.





The Fruits of Anguish

A meditation on the anniversary of the deaths of Lakshman Kadirgamar and Kethesh Loganathan

If July 1983 is remembered as the darkest episode in recent Sri Lankan history, August 12th should be seen as the saddest day in terms of the deaths of individuals. On August 12th 2005 Lakshman Kadirgamar, Foreign Minister and potential Prime Minister, was killed by the LTTE. He had, since his entry into Sri Lankan politics, managed to reverse the dark image of Sri Lanka that July 1983 had created. He also did much to correct the image of the LTTE as the sole representatives of oppressed Tamils that they had

developed after their resistance to the Indian Peace Keeping Force. That the IPKF had been dragooned by LTTE intransigence into a war no one else wanted was forgotten, in the brilliant propaganda the LTTE has engaged in from the time the Indian army marched against them. Faced with an individual who could put a case better, who understood Indian imperatives whilst being unequivocally Sri Lankan in mind and heart, the LTTE eliminated him.

One year after Mr Kadirgamar was killed, the LTTE also got rid of Kethesh Loganathan, former Tamil militant, by then Deputy Secretary General of the Peace Secretariat. He had been one of those who re-entered democratic politics with the Indo-Lankan Accord of 1987 and, unlike some others who subsequently went over to the Tigers, through conviction or despair as their comrades were eliminated by them, he remained opposed to the LTTE. Thus he was disillusioned with the Centre for Policy Alternatives, which he had served faithfully from its inception practically, when it seemed that that once distinguished institution had gone down the slippery slope of appeasement following the 2002 Ceasefire. He therefore went, astonishingly it seemed for those who had followed his early career, but understandably given his always coherent political outlook, his concern with the deprived, into the service of the current government. As Deputy at the Secretariat, he was responsible for some of the most profound critiques of Tiger pretensions written, when he demolished their claims to being the sole representatives of the Tamil people. His reward for that was death.

Significantly, August 12th had many years previously seen another example of Tiger intolerance, of their determination to eliminate alternatives, to strengthen the monolith. This was their murder of Muslims in Eravur, the signal that what had originally begun as a struggle to win dignity for Tamil speaking citizens had turned into an assertion of the absolute will of

particular Tamils. The incident is engraved on my mind, for when I visited the East soon afterwards, my Muslim students insisted on taking me to the site of the massacre. My sympathy was compounded by the fact that their state of mind was similar to that of the Tamil students I had taught at Jaffna University in 1981, who had insisted on taking me to the burnt out shell of the Jaffna Public Library.

So much anguish. Anguish that so easily turns into an instrument to create further anguish. It was difficult for me to understand, having been a member of a privileged elite from birth. Even when I was a member of a minority, at university, it was in a context that celebrated individuality and diversity, so that one had no worries at all about being different, indeed pushing that envelope to its limits. But after 1981 I began to try to understand more about the diffidence of the underdog, to assess the writings of Forster and Paul Scott in those terms, in their depiction of the Indian at bay in the context of British domination. And I began to understand the need to compensate for that sense of deprivation, the obligation on the powerful to ensure the dignity of the individuals with whom they dealt.

All this came home to me with a vengeance, thinking as I was about Kethesh, struck by the remembrance of Eravur that had also appeared in the press, when I saw the interview given by the Indian National Security Advisor M K Narayanan in which he referred to the 'sullenness in the Tamil man', the fact that it was necessary to 'give Tamils a feeling they have a right to their own destiny'. His point is unquestionable that, for those who have suffered, it is vital that they do not feel deprived of their self worth.

Sadly, for reasons that have to do also with Indian interventions in the past, the training of the Tigers and then more crucially the martyrdom the Tigers took upon themselves in resisting the IPKF, the self worth of Sri Lankan Tamils was tied up with the Tigers. More sadly, though India soon enough learned its lesson, successive Sri Lankan governments continued to subscribe to the vision of themselves the Tigers had set up. Even though in time they too realized their mistake, they did nothing to change the framework.

This government has succeeded in doing that, but it has to do more if it is to remove the tie between Tamil dignity and the Tigers. It must work towards ensuring that other Tamil politicians, the democratic pluralists who have shown such courage in recent months, are able to embody Tamil aspirations.

Not only in memory of Lakshman Kadirgamar and Kethesh Loganathan, not only for the sake of the Muslims who suffered earlier in the cycle of violence that started with state brutality in the eighties, but also for the sake of the Sri Lankan polity, we need to ensure greater empowerment now for those who have been deprived of it in the past. Such empowerment is not only a matter of political structures, it must involve greater emphasis on language rights, on fairer employment policies, on social structures that emphasize commonalities rather than differences. It must also look at the deprived amongst the majority, though recognizing that they have not suffered from the communal belittling, whatever their other problems, that the minorities have endured.

If we remain aware of all this, of the need to compensate and empower, we can benefit from this unique opportunity to serve all our people well. If we fail now, we will deserve the endless anguish that will be inflicted upon us all in turn.



The Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process (SCOPP)

Born out of a need to institutionalize the Peace Process, the Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process (SCOPP) was established on 06 February 2002. The Secretariat was headed by **Bernard Goonetilleke (2002-2004)**, **Jayantha Dhanapala (2004-2005)**, **Dr John Gooneratne (Acting Secretary General) (2005-2006)** and **Dr Palitha Kohona (2006-2007)**. **Prof Rajiva Wijesinha** is the current Secretary General of SCOPP.

SCOPP is primarily a coordinating and facilitating body of the Peace Process. It is the main instrument of the Government to consolidate and strengthen the Peace Process. SCOPP engages in extensive consultations with all stakeholders involved in the Peace Process including the public and private sectors, civil society, donor community and line agencies on a regular basis and is presently under the purview of H E the President.

Vision:

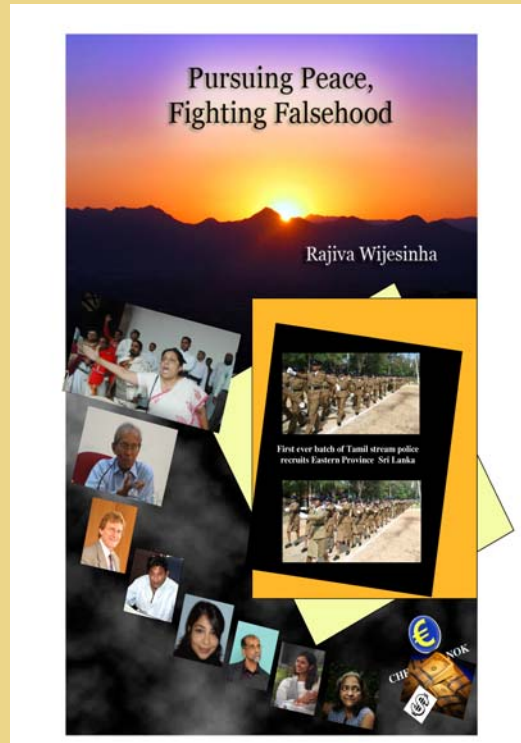
To act as the cutting edge of the Government of Sri Lanka to consolidate and strengthen the peace process on behalf of all Sri Lankan citizens, whilst promoting a negotiated settlement to the current conflict

Mission:

To develop confidence in the peace process and its potential benefits for all Sri Lankan citizens.

Strategy

1. To act as a resource centre for the government of Sri Lanka and its representatives in any negotiations.
2. To liaise with facilitators and potential facilitators of the peace process so as to
 - a) ensure synergy by bringing together all possible stakeholders and developing awareness of the wider benefits of cooperation and mutual understanding
 - b) promote activities that develop a sense of ownership, responsibility and commitment amongst all Sri Lankan citizens with regard to the peace process and related reforms while promoting constitutional changes
 - c) ensure commitment, in particular through its own practices, to truth and objectivity in reporting events and responses to them , and minimize distortion and innuendo that will weaken confidence in the peace process
 - d) remove barriers to economic activity and social intercourse, whilst recognizing and respecting security constraints due to continuing terrorist activity, facilitate training and education as well as investment
 - e) drive livelihood development activities, and in particular for IDPs, with relevant stakeholders so that adequate income generation alternatives are provided to the people in the East and North
 - f) initiate programmes that would contribute to greater understanding of mutual needs and. promote strategies to satisfy these
 - g) ensure transparency in its relations with stakeholders and encourage all of them to work to similar standards
 - h) enhance understanding of other peace processes and assess their relevance to the Sri Lankan situation



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