

## **STOP THE WAR: We have a right to live without fear**

People to People Dialogue for Peace and Sustainable Development is an initiative that is being built among farmers, urban, rural and plantation workers, fisher people and women's organizations in the South, North, East and the Hill country. Its aims are to stop the war and build peace, to work for the rights of the people in the North, South and the rest of the country and to work towards a sustainable development process that is people-centered and acceptable to all of them, while rejecting the efforts made to bring both the South and the North under the domination of global capital.

Following a series of discussions and an in depth analysis conducted among social activists representing farmers, fishers, urban, rural and plantation workers and women of all these sectors, on the present crisis facing Sri Lankan society in relation to the ethnic issue and practical actions to address the present state of affairs, the steering committee of the People to People Dialogue on Peace and Sustainable Development reached understanding and common agreement on the following.

- The war that has now reached a certain low intensity should be prevented from any further escalation and brought to an end through a negotiated settlement. A vast majority of people in Sri Lanka, belonging to all ethnic communities have come to a common understanding that the war should be stopped. We represent this very large majority of the unarmed people.
- Our task of highest priority today is to strengthen the initiatives for peace and to take it forward. It is the responsibility of all of us to work towards *preventing* the emergence of the war once more and breakdown in the peace efforts, and towards that objective we should take all necessary action.
- We make a strong appeal that all killings and acts of violence carried out by the Government, the LTTE and Others, should be stopped immediately.
- All hostilities should be stopped, while the agreements reached on signing of the MOU and at the Geneva round of negotiations should be respected, given effect and peace negotiations be initiated immediately on the basis of these agreements.
- The mainstream media should act responsibly. The use of media in a manner that increases mutual mistrust and spreads hatred among people while contributing to a war approach should be stopped.
- We propose the necessity of setting up an Impartial Citizens' Assembly to investigate into correct and factual information and for disseminating such information

- The right of people living in the North, South, East, the Hill country and all other regions of Sri Lanka to decide on their livelihoods, right to the land, the sea and other natural resources and their right to govern such resources in a responsible manner should be granted. A Sri Lankan nation could be built only on an acceptance of such rights.
- In finding solutions to the ethnic problem, serious attention should be paid to the rights and problems faced by the Muslims. Special emphasis should be given to the just demands made by the Muslim people. They should be provided space in the negotiations towards finding solutions.
- Similar attention and space should be provided to the plantation people, their human rights and their right to *autonomous* development, considering the fact that they have worked and lived under conditions of semi slavery for nearly 200 years and have contributed towards the development of the country, working under such conditions.
- The ceasefire agreement between the LTTE and the Government in 2002 was possible only as a result of official recognition of the LTTE. This recognition should have been strengthened and expanded as a means of further paving the way for LTTE to enter into a process of peaceful political settlement. We feel that the steps taken by the Government to get the LTTE proscribed in other countries, while continuing the efforts to reach a negotiated settlement, as not being rational and wise.
- As a step towards ending the 23 years long war, the proposal by the LTTE, for setting up an Interim Self Governing Authority as a mechanism of deciding on the control over land, the sea and other natural resources and the right to decide on their own development plans should be accepted. This authority should have the right to rebuild and rehabilitate the destruction caused by the war.
- Similarly, space should be created, with no further delay, for the LTTE and the people of the North and East to intervene in the administrative structures for the rebuilding of the Northern and Eastern regions that were affected by the tsunami. Such machinery that ensures participation of the people in the administration is a need in the South too.

As a result of the continued unwillingness on the part of Governments and among some groups in the South, to agree on a solution to the ethnic problem acceptable to the people in the North and East, there is a strong feeling of mistrust that has grown among the people in the North and East towards the Southern society.

The challenge before us today, is to dispel this mistrust. We wish to suggest the following steps towards this:

1. *Conditions should be created* for the people who have been displaced as a result of the high security zones and the land mines to enable them to return to their inherited land, the sea, and to have access to their livelihoods as farmers and fisher people. They should be able to go back to their homes and live without fear and insecurity.
2. People who have lived in camps as displaced people for as long as 20 years still live under miserable conditions. Continued bombing displaces more and more people. These people should be given the right to rebuild their lives. Further attacks should be halted to prevent such displacement.
3. Through maximum devolution of power, the right of the people in the North and East to decide on their development and governance should be ensured.
4. Peace negotiations towards a political solution should be restarted immediately in order to ensure security of the people who are threatened by the continued attacks and to prevent communities being compelled to move into refugee camps in increasing numbers.
5. We strongly reject the attempts made by various foreign powers to push through their destructive economic strategies and plans in the name of assisting in the peace building process.

We, the unarmed people living in the South, North, East and in the Hill Country would like to strongly emphasize our belief that sustainable peace can only be achieved on the basis of a sustainable development approach that would benefit the ordinary people and would address their genuine needs.

### ***Stop the War. We have a right to live without fear!***

People to People dialogue on Peace and Sustainable Development  
Steering Committee:

#### **National**

1. Affected People's Organization in Hambantota District, Ambalantota.
2. Agricultural Laborers Union, Jaffna
3. Al-Ameen Community Development Center, Sainthamaruthu – 16.
4. Alternative people's Health action, Kandy.
5. Annathaie Abayasekera, President, Penn Wimochana Gnanodayam, Hatton
6. Association Against the Colombo Circular Highway, Kadawatha.
7. Association of Path Finders, Batticaloa.
8. Agriculture and Rural Workers, Development Society (ARWDS) No: 42, Main Street, Udupussella.

9. Arising Sun Community Development, Organization (ASCDO), Pedro Estate, Nuwara-Eliya.
10. All Ceylon United Workers Congress/ United Welfare Organization, Uniwelo/ ACUWU, 36, Dolosbage Road, Back Lane, Navalapitiya.
11. Bakthi Probodanaya, No: 265, Deans Rd, Colombo 10.
12. Center for Family Services, Kurunegala
13. Center for the Protection of Community Resources, Monaragala.
14. Central Board of Disabled Persons, Bandarawela.
15. Ceylon Plantation Worker's Red Flag Union, Hatton.
16. Child Rehabilitation Center, Ampara.
17. Community Education Center, Malambe.
18. Christian Workers Fellowship (CWF, No: 82/2, Dunbar Road, Hatton.
19. Centre for Social Concern (CSC), 30, Station Road, Hatton.
20. Democratic left Front, Colombo.
21. Devasarana Development Center, Kurunegala
22. District Fisheries Organization, Pottuvill.
23. Faizun Zackariya - Centre for Development Initiatives
24. FOLISEB Lanka, No: 09, New shopping Complex, Lindula, Nuwara Eliya.
25. Future in Our Hand Development Foundation, Badulla.
26. Herman Kumara, National Fisheries Solidarity, (NAFSO)
27. Human Rights Office, No: 09, New shopping Complex, Lindula, Nuwara Eliya.
28. Human Rights Organization, Galle.
29. Human Education Aid Relief, Trust of Society (HEARTS), No: 22, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Maskeliya.
30. Institute of Social, Development (ISD), No: 652/3, Peradeniya Road, Kandy.
31. Janatha sangwadha Center, Negombo.
32. K.Chandramathie Kaliyaperumal, Social welfare mandram, Norwood.
33. Kotagala Samuga, Sevai Mandram (KSSM), No: 27, Station Road, Kotagala.
34. Linus Jayathilake, United Federation of Labour (UFL)
35. Lucas Fernando, Secretary, National Union of Fishers, Negombo
36. Leo Marga Ashram (LMA), 121/1, St. Thomas Road, Bandarawela.
37. Manawa Himikam Piyasa, Ekala
38. Ms. Padma Pushpakanthi, Savisthri ( Women for Alternative Development )
39. Ms. Rohini Weerasinghe, Kantha Shakthi
40. Ms. Sriyani Pathrage, Gemi Kantha Peramuna ( Rural Women's Front )
41. Ms. Indrani Kusumalataha, Praja Diriya Foundation, Nagavilluwa, Palaviya, Puttalam.
42. Mr. Lalith Abesingehe, Sathyodaya, No: 30, Pushpadana Mawatha, Kandy.
43. Mr. K.S.S.A. Francis, Savisthri, No: 09, New shopping Complex, Lindula, Nuwara Eliya.
44. MWRAF, Kalmunai
45. Navayuga Social Development, Forum (NSDF), No: 140/3, Main Street, Norwood.
46. Nature team, No: 70/10, Low lane Thulsipura Abhayapura, Trincomalee
47. National Union of Workers, 187A, Dimbula Road, Hatton.
48. Plantation Sector Social Forum, No: 30, Station Road, Hatton.
49. Prabath Kumara, Future in Our Hands Development Fund, Badulla
50. Professor Sonali Perera, Department of English, Rutgers University, USA
51. Plantation Workers, Service Centre (PWSC), No: 88/2, Dunbar Road, Hatton
52. Plantation, Rural Education and, Development Org. (PREDO), No: 30, Pushpadana Mawatha, Kandy.
53. Prosperity of Workers Employed in Rural Sector (POWER), No: 24, Bandaranayake Mawatha, Badulla.
54. PREDO, No: 5, Pansala Road, Bogawantalawa.
55. Rev. Fr. Sarath Iddamalgoda
56. Revd. Jeffrey Abayasekera
57. Sarath Fernando, Movement for National Land and Agricultural Reform ( MONLAR)
58. Southern Fisheries Organization, Galle Road, Rathgama
59. Sr. Noel Christine Fernando, Sramabimani Kendraya, Liyanagemulla
60. Steve Alston, Sri Lanka.

61. SIDPS, No: 68, 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Maskeliya.
62. Society for Welfare Education & Awareness Training (SWEAT), No: 187/41, Dumburugiriya Road, Hatton
63. Trade Union Committee for Rebuilding the Nation
64. United Plantation Action
65. Uva farmer's Development Foundation (UFDF), Badulla.
66. Up country Workers Information, Development Foundation (UWIDF), No: 41, Amathipuram, Kotagala.
67. UPSAC, 295/2, Darawela Road, Dickoya.
68. Vikalpanee National Organization, Malambe.
69. Women's Development, Center (WDC), No: 61, Mulgampola Road, Kandy.
70. Workers Development, Center (WDC), No: 70, 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Maskeliya.
71. Youth Assembly Sri Lanka, Addalachchainai.
72. Organization to Safeguard Democratic and Human Rights, Rathnapura.

## International

1. A.R. Aaman, Bangladesh
2. Aijaz Ahmed, PILER
3. Aman Samudaya, India
4. Artien Utrecht, HIVOS, Netherlands
5. Artisanal Fishers Association Republic of South Africa
6. Artisanal Fishers Association, Republic of South Africa.
7. Babu Mathew, Professor of Law, NLSIU, India
8. Ben Moore, EEPA, Belgium
9. Bidya Devi Bhansari, ANWA, Nepal
10. Christian World Service, New Zealand
11. Cornelie Quist, Bureau Asia – DRAG, Hivos, The Netherlands
12. Dr. Dale T. McKinley, Anti-Privatisation Forum – South Africa
13. Dr. Arjun Karki, SAAPE, Gauri Pardhan, Human Rights Alliance, Nepal.
14. Dr. V. Rukmini Rao, CWS, India.
15. Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT), Thailand
16. Ekata Sharma, RRN, Nepal
17. Ensure Viable Environment (EVE), South Africa
18. Ghulam Fatima, APBMU
19. Henry Saragih, La Via Campesina
20. International Trauma Treatment Program
21. Julia Schonharl, Tourm Consultant, Germany
22. Milena Müller, Katholische Frauenbewegung Österreichs, Austria
23. Mohiuddin Ahmed, SAF, Bangladesh
24. Mukta Srivastava, National Convener, National Alliance of People's Movements
25. Navachethana, India
26. Other Worlds are Possible, USA
27. Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum, Pakistan
28. Prem Dhagal, ANPA, Nepal
29. Prema Bomzan, SAAPE, Nepal
30. Prof. N. Shanmugaratnam, Department of international Environment & Development Studies, Noragric, Norway
31. Program for Social Action, India
32. Rokeya Kabir, BNPS, Bangladesh
33. Sarba Kadka, RRN, Nepal
34. Simon Stocker, Eurostep
35. Tahir Hasnain, Economic Justice and Development Organization (EJAD), Pakistan
36. Tara D'Sousa, Programmes Officer (Asia), Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand

37. Thomas Kocherry, World Forum of Fisher Peoples
38. Thomas Seibert, MEDICO International, Germany
39. Tara D'Sousa, Programmes Officer (Asia), Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand.
40. Francois Houtart, Avenue du Grand Cortil 17, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve.

There are scholars, academics in the North and South who are in this network and their views have been obtained in formulation of this statement.