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Information Update

The Information Update is also available on the CHA website

Perspectives on Reconciliation



Panel of speakers

The Reconciliation for Peace Programme of the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies convened a panel discussion on the topic entitled 'Reconciliation – the way forward: an assessment of on-going initiatives, a listing of productive possibilities' on 15 December 2011 at the Institute of Policy Studies in Colombo. The speakers comprised the Presidential Advisor on Reconciliation, Professor Rajiva Wijesinha, M.A. Sumanthiran, Member of Parliament and Tamil National Alliance, Mr Eran Wickramaratne, Member of Parliament, Mr V. Muralitharan, Deputy Minister of Resettlement and Chaired by Ambassador Javid Yusuf, Founder-Secretary General, Peace Secretariat for Muslims and Senior Advisor, Ministry of External Affairs.

Presidential Advisor Professor Rajiva Wijesinha commenced his presentation by stating that there is a need to overcome the bitterness and suspicion that prompted the terrorism that plagued Sri Lanka for three decades. As much has been done to boost infrastructure development in the North there is a lack of knowledge and awareness of what has been done and this can affect the dividends of such initiatives from being reaped. The putting on record of what has been done would also serve the additional purpose of clarifying what remains to be done. As a prerequisite for development there is a need to provide teachers in the North with the essentials. Another area he identified as needing focus is coherent planning with regards to what is being provided. He proposed a model whereby soldiers worked together with those

who need work as one that would assist considerably with reconciliation. Through working and playing together people establish lasting relationships, which has led to efforts to encourage project work as a component of the many educational exchanges that are taking place. The same principle applies to adults.

Reflecting on failures, Professor Wijesinha stated since 2010, we needed to have moved from our request for humanitarian assistance to our need for development assistance. While commending the treatment of surrendees he said that much more needs to be done. He highlighted that more should be done for employment, vocational training, and training in entrepreneurship.

He identified key areas where urgent and concerted efforts are necessary, namely, the need to pay more attention to the problems faced by women and children in the conflict areas; the need for conceptual changes in which the government policy on national languages is implemented; the need for a swift movement to arrive at a political solution – by dwelling on the many areas where consensus is within easy reach, so that there is realization that there is little that divides us, and much more that binds us together.

Mr Sumanthiran stated that he viewed the GoSL's mode of operation as being contrary to the process of reconciliation. He stressed the fact that there was a lack of clarity on the matter of post-war reconciliation with regards to aspects such as what the definition of reconciliation that the GoSL will be adopting, with whom or between whom the GoSL's seeks to effect reconciliation, and why reconciliation was seen as a necessity in the first place. He cautioned against the GoSL seeking to reconcile the government security forces with the LTTE leadership or with the Tamil community in general while according little or no place to

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Reader who wish to obtain more information or wish to collaborate with CHA are invited to communicate by email with execdir@cha.lk.

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the victims in the reconciliation process. Speaking on the issue of justice, he remarked that while the GoSL has chosen the route of restorative justice, he is of the view that both restorative and retributive justice is necessary for any genuine reconciliation to take place as the two are not mutually exclusive operations. Both the aforementioned approaches need to be victim-centred. He stated that the GoSL ought to caution against dealing with causes that are relevant only to a certain period of the conflict. Rather, what is needed is a tracing back to the period of 1956 when the violence against Tamils began. He called on the GoSL to respond to two reports that have been tabled in Parliament that incorporated the concerns of the Tamil peoples; to acknowledge the gravity of the national languages issue as a root cause of the conflict; and to take serious action to apprehend the assailants who attacked a TNA meeting while in progress. This he said was a prerequisite if meaningful reconciliation is to take place.



Ambassadors, Foreign & Local delegates present

Mr Eran Wickramaratne began his presentation by stating that he saw reconciliation as having two aspects, namely relational and political aspects. While the majority community tends to favour the former, the minority communities favour the latter. However, both are equally critical prerequisites for reconciliation. Speaking on the relational aspects, he highlighted that creating a sense of inter-dependence between all communities is crucial if minority communities are to feel a part of the fabric of the nation. The current development drive being witnessed in the country, he said, should not be a substitute for the restoration of dignity on the victims and survivors of the conflict. For there to be true reconciliation he went on to identify the following components as necessary – truth, justice (which is not revenge) restitution, acceptance and dignity. Recognition and acknowledgement of past mistakes were imperative to moving forward. He noted two positive developments in the current political context – the shift in perception from viewing the conflict as a terrorist problem to acknowledgement of the need for a political settlement; and rather than operating through a top-down approach of political patronage and proxies there is now a recognition of the need to engage elected representatives by the Tamil community.

He urged the strengthening of political will for implementation of the language policy similar to the South African model; the need to dismantle the current perception that any entity that asks for accountability is somehow and in some way related to

the LTTE movement; the identification of the problem as much wider than that can be covered through GoSL negotiations with the TNA; stressed the importance of demilitarization where the people are not viewed as subjects but rather as citizens under a civilian administration highlighting the need for the strengthening of the establishment of the latter form of government.

Mr V Muralitharan commenced his presentation by stating that the currently ensuing blame-game is a significant setback and obstacle to moving the country towards reconciliation.

He recommended that while there is no doubt that the GoSL has faltered on some accounts this does not mean that the many achievements should be ignored. Any shortcomings by the GoSL ought to be taken up constructively with the relevant authorities. He went on to note the important role that the international community has to play in supporting the process of reconciliation. Pointing out that, as the conflict was a long-drawn out affair, the fallouts cannot be addressed overnight and that reconciliation is a process which by definition takes time, effort and patience, the Deputy Minister of Resettlement opined that any route to moving the country forward ought not to focus on the past issues, concerns and violations as such an approach will only resurrect old memories and negativities.

Mr Javid Yusuf proposed the formulation and drafting of a National Policy on Reconciliation that is arrived at with consultation of all communities and concerned persons while addressing the root causes of the conflict. He went further to state that as the Tamil community is a bruised and wounded community there remains a need for a state-led initiative on individual and collective healing. This is closely linked to his analysis of the conflict as being one between the Tamil community and the state rather than one that was deliberately designed to oppress the minority communities by the majority Sinhalese community.

He commended the GoSL's efforts in the Northern and Eastern rehabilitation and resettlement processes and called on the GoSL to take the important next step by reaching out to the Tamil community to address their concerns and grievances. The Muslim community has oft been caught in the cross-fires and hence need to be taken seriously in any endeavour to move the country forward to lasting peace and stability. Mr Yusuf urged the minority communities to reposition themselves – by conducting themselves as equals. This can be achieved by ceasing to speak only on issues affecting their respective communities

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but rather to speak on national issues and leading national campaigns.

Link at Reconciliation Youth Forum

- <http://reconciliationyouthforum.org>

URL to article: <http://reconciliationyouthforum.org/perspectives-on-reconciliation/>



927 People benefited in Medical Outreach clinics

927 people including children and elders from five resettled locations in Maruthankeni DS division and Allaippitty received

medical consultation and free medication in December .

Microfinance Support to families

With the support of ZONTA Club I of Colombo, CHA provided



micro finance loans to female house hold heads in Jaffna to improved thier livelihoods.



Sessions on " Detection of mental illness in school " & " work place stress "

was conducted on 23rd December 2011 at CHA Head office premises.

Dr Charuni Gamage and Dr. Lakmi resourced the events.

Creative Development in early childhood

was another session conducted at CHA Head Office

premises on 21st December 2011. Mr. T.T Mayuran resourced the event.



CHA-NAITA-BCGR ILO Vocational Training for Rehabilitated Beneficiaries and war affected youth in Killinochchi/Pooneryn.

278 trainees received certificates and toolkits with the participation of GA Killinochchi, AGA Pooneryn, the Advisor to the President on reconciliation, Brigade Commanders and CHA/NAITA representatives.



OJT Placement

OJT will be completed by December, though NAITA will continue for another two months and will issue another certificate in addition to the 4 months program certificate issued by CHA- NAITA.

SIYB Programme

Two 5 days SYB programmes were completed for 45 trainees Each beneficiary prepared their business plans in terms of their selected businesses.

Marketing Linkage programme

CHA-NAITA organized a market linkage forum on 11th December 2011 at NAITA, Killinochchi, to develop market linkage for those who have trained on vocational training of TV repair, mobile phone repair, computer hardware, welding, out board motor engine repair, motorcycle repair, agricultural equipment repair and tailoring. The



business sector stakeholders were represented from employers, bankers, local authority officials, NAITA and CHA.

Psychosocial Forum

The National Psychosocial Forum was conducted to discuss plans for 2012 and provide a platform for the Ministry of Social Services to present the Psychosocial Action Plan for the north –east work in 2012 . The following were the proceedings of the meeting:

- ◆ Presentation by Ministry of Social Services on psychosocial activities to be conducted in the north-east in 2012 and to discuss the present ongoing activities. The presentation was conducted by Mr. Azad (North-east coordinator , MoSS) .
- ◆ Presentation by GTZ representative Ms. Marsha Cassier Daniel. The presentation focused on integrating psychosocial care in the education sector.
- ◆ Updates from PSF member organizations .

Capacity building initiatives with the Police

Department:

The PS Unit liaised with senior officers of the Western Province Police to discuss possible collaborative initiative to train the Women and Children’s Desk Officers in the Colombo District. Interested organizations are requested to contact the PS Unit CHA to provide any support to initiate the planned activities.

Regional Initiatives:

Ampara :

The monthly meeting of Ampara discussed following issues :

- ◆ Following up of referrals made through the GBV Desk;
- ◆ Facilitation for affected women(GBV victims) to be sent to temporary care homes in Batticaloa;
- ◆ Awareness raising programs for Grama sewaka Niladhari’s on GBV and informing them of the available services through the GBV Desk.

The CHA provided technical assistance to map psychosocial interventions in the Ampara district through disseminating the tools developed by the PSF- CHA for mapping initiatives

Mannar

The Mannar PS forum discussed the following issues:

- ◆ Development of women support groups in the villages with the support of PS members;
- ◆ Developing a mechanism to get support from the member organizations for the monthly activities and meetings of the Forum .

2. The following are details of information on the awareness raising PS programs / trainings conducted with a special focus on GBV, Mental health and psychosocial related referrals-

Location	Target group	Date	No. of Participants
Puthukkudiyiruppu	RDS/WRDS	01.12.2011	40
Puthukkudiyiruppu	Children	07.12.2011	38
Vankalai	Children	12.12.2011	43

Apart from these programs, a one full day programme was conducted by the Manner Forum. The programme had counsellors and be-frienders as target audience and specifically focused on discussing cases and facilitating support as to how to manage referrals from schools and the village communities.

Jaffna

- ◆ The Jaffna PS Mapping initiative has been completed with CHA support. Information from Government and NGO sector psychosocial activities has been compiled and the Coordinator is in the process of updating the National Data base maintained by the PSF CHA.

Lifeline programmes and other PS trainings:

1. The following programs (sessions) were conducted :

- ◆ Session on “creative development in early childhood”. Conducted on 21st of December at CHA premises with the participation of 17 people.
- ◆ CHA resource person facilitated the event in Tamil medium (Mr. Mayuran)
- ◆ Session on “Detection of mental illness in school” and “work place stress” conducted on 23rd of December at CHA premises with the participation of 15 people. Dr. Jayan Mendis , Dr. Charuni Gamage and Dr. Lakmi from the National Institute of Mental Health resourced the events.

2. The 1st issue of the Psychosocial Newsletter focused on children and mental health. The Newsletter contained articles on children & mental health , child abuse , preventative actions and referrals concerning issues related to chil-

dren and brief update on the Lifeline programme and its future events.

- 3. The Unit regularly coordinates with the Sunday Observer to disseminate information pertaining to the psychosocial sessions on a regular basis.
- 4. Hotline facility: The Lifeline caller line received 3 referrals for the month of December. These two cases needed counseling and support interventions on reproductive health related issues and advise on family planning. The two referrals were directed to the Family Planning Association for further assessments and counseling support. FPA being a member of the PSF-CHA have agreed to take on regular referrals made through the Lifeline. Hotline number - 117211724 or 4626100 ext :119

Upcoming activities of the PS Unit in general:

- 1. A series of training programmes and workshops are organized in January 2012 on autism and caring for children with behavior problems. The trainings are to be facilitated by a Professor from the Durham University UK. It is specifically targeted for school teachers and care givers of such children.
- 2. Up Coming Sessions of the Lifeline for the next month
 - What is child abuse?
 - What is pre school education?
 - What is early childhood development?
- 3. Hypnotherapy certificate program 2nd batch: Lectures for the 2nd batch of hypnotherapy are ongoing on a bi-weekly basis at the CHA Colombo auditorium and a full day.

For further information to participate in upcoming events / make any referrals to CHA lifeline helpline: Contact: PS Officer / PS Consultant on psofficer@cha.lk / psconsultant@cha.lk

Visit of MA Students from York, University, PRDU Programme Skype Conference with Prof. Stanley Samarasinghe

An introductory lecture was held through Skype with Prof. Stanley Samarasinghe from USA.

A follow-up session also took place through Skype with Prof. Samarasinghe to share the experience of the students after their field visit to Batticaloa.

The students presented their findings, lessons learned and recommendations in groups. CHA is hoping to facilitate more Skype conferences on various subjects for students in 2012.

The group was introduced to CHA where they had a session with Hon, Deputy Minister Muralitharan on Reconciliation,

Commissioner General Rehabilitation, Mr. Javed Yusuf, Head of WUSC and the Presidential Advisor on Reconciliation. The group of 29 students further divided into 4 smaller groups and



worked on 4 different themes –

- 1. Education and unemployment for youth
- 2. Role of local government in post war reconstruction and development
- 3. Reconciliation and recovery in the community
- 4. Return and reintegration of IDP's . Draft findings were presented prior to their departure.

The group on route to Batticaloa was hosted and briefed by the Commander East Region at Welikanda.



Environment Program

Rain Water Harvesting systems in Batticaloa

Karadiyanaru Maha Vidyalayam & Kithul Sri Krishna Vidyalayam



The Batticaloa District experiences severe water shortages from April through to October with average monthly rainfall < 50mm from May through August. This is counterbalanced by abundant rainfall during October to January with average rainfall in both November and December exceeding 350 mm/month. This project focuses on two schools in, Karadiyanaru and Kithul villages. Karadiyanaru is home to 35 families while Kithul is home to approximately 350 families with Karadiyanaru more at-risk due to its very remote location, extreme poverty and lack of access roads. People in Kithul were displaced in March 2007 due to the conflicts

and were settled in camps November 2007. And they are being



resettled by the intervention of some NGOs.

After the initial awareness held in 2010, next awareness programs were conducted at Karadiyanaru Maha Vidyalayam and Kithul Sri Krishna Vidyalayam with the participation of Principals, teachers, parents and students of respective schools. Awareness programs were very successful and beneficiaries understood their contribution in this project is essential for the projects' success as well as their own well being. Beneficiaries were motivated as the project is addressing one of their burning problems. Constructions is being carrying out with the supervision and guidance of CHA, and Principals. Construction work in Karadiyanaru Maha Vidyalayam has been fully completed, while 95% has been completed in Kithul Sri Krishna Vidyalayam. Construction work was slowed by the heavy rain received by the Eastern province.

District Initiatives

Matara

Coordination, facilitation and Networking



Scholarship awarding ceremony in Ambalantota Terapuththa National School organized by CHA Hambantota District office in collaboration with Foundation of Goodness for the supplementation of school items for 105 school children in Ambalantota Zonal Education area. The programme will extend to Matara District in 2012 with CHA Matara District office. Selection of vulnerable school children from Matara district is being done in this month.

Household and cottage industry - energy saving cooking stove model establishment programme

5 Effective energy saving cooking stove models were built in Ambalantota on 14th and 15th of December. This programme is a pilot programme conducted in parallel to the Entrepreneurship development subject learning students in Ambalantota Terapuththa Vidyalaya. Matara district community protection network is providing technical support.

Community protection Network Meeting

CPN meeting was conducted on 4th December 2011 with the participation of 12 CBOs in Matara District. New organizations are joining the CPN to source technical solutions for existing enterprises and cottage level industries.

Sisujaya Scholarship Programme

30 students from different rural areas in Matara district were selected for the supplementary contribution of Rs.2000 scholarship to buy school items in new school term. Students who have financial difficulties will benefit. They will receive their donation in the month of January.

Jaffna

(1) **Agriculture :**

CHA, Jaffna is taking action to cultivate onions in a quarter (1/4th.) acre plot this season .**Manioc Cultivation-** 1500 plants of Manioc at our land at Urelu will be harvested in March 2012.Revenue is for the office.

(2) **Free Tuition class**

Free Tuition class for 39 students of vulnerable families continues. They are also helped with stationary and educational requisites.

Hambantota

Scholarships Program for 100 poor school students



With the objective of assisting poor children in their education, CHA coordinated donation of scholarships for selected poor school students in Ambalantota Education division in collaboration with Foundation of Goodness. Under this program we donated basic schooling equipments such as school bags, school uniforms, shoes, books, & other required basic equipments cost nearly Rs. 04 lacks Among these, schools bags, books, pencils, pens & other essential items. Director of Education Hambantota, Operation manager & General Manger of Foundation of Goodness, Youth Service officer of National Youth Service Council, CHA Matara District officer,NGOs officers, Principals of some schools & parents attended the function.

CHA coordination support for building New Houses for poor Youth.

As CHA Hambantota District office, provided coordination and facilitation support to build new houses for poor youth in Ambalantota Divisional secretariat division. Under the Program "Thurunu Wasarak Gamata Niwasak" ,National Youth Service Council donated initial financial Aid to build this house for a nominated poor youth. Am- balantota Youth service officer requested our coordination support. We were able to provide financial contributions from some in the business community, , NGOs and Individual donors.



Other coordination & facilitation services

01. Coordination & facilitation services to DFCD organization for their child rights program.
02. Supports to Sujaya Foundation for their leaderships & community empowerment program.
03. Support to Ambalantota Therapuththa National School .

Information Dissemination - Hambantota District NGOs / INGOs contact information details to 05 clients who have requested from CHA DRC,Information on Hambantota District Ancient places to 02 visitors through DRC, Hambantota District Hotels & Training centres to Pannegamuwa Women Enterprises Foundation and District Media contact information to 02 clients through over the phone.

Drinking Water facility for rural Marginalized temple will be completed by the end of the month.