

SUMMARY OF WOMEN'S CONCERNS

SUBMITTED TO THE TOKYO DONOR CONFERENCE 9th and 10th June 2003

The undersigned women's coalitions and networks represent a cross section of groups working on women's issues in the country who are committed to the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Sri Lanka. We are pleased to note the progress made thus far in the search for a negotiated political solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict and urge the parties to resume peace talks. As part of our support for all efforts at peace making and peace building and in the search for ensuring that the process is inclusive and involves all sectors of civil society, we have engaged in a series of consultations with women's groups.

In July 2002, we presented a memorandum to the government of Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Norwegian facilitators. In December 2002, the International Women's Mission to the North & East of Sri Lanka also made various recommendations which were widely circulated at that time. In light of the forthcoming donor conference to be held on 9 & 10 June 2003 in Tokyo, we are reiterating those concerns and recommendations and are making this appeal to the Government of Sri Lanka, the LTTE, the facilitators of the peace process and the community of bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors to Sri Lanka.

1. Include Women in all aspects of the Peace Process

We welcome the establishment of the Sub Committee on Gender Issues (SGI) to explore the effective inclusion of gender concerns in the peace process and its status as an advisory body to the plenary of the peace process. We wish to stress the importance of continuing to recognise and incorporate women's concerns and needs in the process towards peace with particular reference to the different ways in which conflict and its consequences impact on women. We also call for the recognition of women's specific experiences of dealing with conflict and conflict situations and request that these experiences be brought to bear in the process of conflict transformation.

We reiterate the recommendation in United Nations Security Council resolution No. 1325 that a gendered approach to peace building, conflict transformation and reconstruction is essential in contexts of transition. We therefore urge the parties, their facilitators and the donors to fully implement this resolution.

2. Ensure that issues of concern to women are given due consideration during the process

We are alarmed at the lack of sufficient consideration given to most issues of major concern to women in the proposals being made at the donor conference including in the Government's "Regaining Sri Lanka" document and the Report of the Needs Assessment exercise undertaken by the Multi Lateral Donor agencies. Therefore we urge the parties and the donors to ensure that all structures that are set up to implement and monitor the use of the monies granted to the country as a result of this conference include a component on gendered participation and insist on consultation with women's groups in the finalisation of plans for implementing programmes.

3. Human rights must be fully protected at every stage of the peace process.

Consultations reveal that violations of women's rights continue to occur throughout the country during the ceasefire between the two parties. We call upon the parties, the facilitator and the donors to ensure that all efforts toward peace take place within the norms and standards of human rights and humanitarian law which are not compromised in the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements and/or in any interim structures that are introduced, especially as a result of this Donor Conference.

We strongly urge the following:

- § We urge the Government, the LTTE, and Humanitarian Agencies to take special measures to ensure the participation of women in decision-making in all phases of the reconstruction, rehabilitation and transformation process including in the setting up and work of the community level institutions.
- § liaise with and consult the various women's organisations representing the many constituencies of women throughout the island to develop and implement programmes which are appropriate to the needs of the different constituencies
- § disaggregate all statistics compiled in relation to peace and reconstruction according to gender.
- § all institutions responsible for public security and welfare must be made aware of gender issues and be converted into effective

mechanisms to address women's concerns, taking into consideration the special needs of women.

- § specialized programmes must be developed for areas that are of particular concern to women.
- § the rights of local communities, and ethnic minorities groups and the rights of women within these communities must be protected in the process of reconstruction and rehabilitation.
- § The participation of the Muslim community in the peace process must be ensured to guarantee that all sections of society are duly represented. Protection of diversity and the special needs of different communities including those living in the 'border areas', the plantation community, and other cultural minorities in all programmes.

§ call upon respect for the autonomy and independence of the media and civil society institutions including women's organizations.

§ inclusion of women in all constitutional deliberations and the views and the preferences of Sri Lankan women which should be actively solicited and taken into account in the formulation of a constitutional settlement.

§ all efforts must be taken to directly address the problem of militarization and special measures should be taken to counter militarization and its negative effects.

Sponsored by –

The Sri Lanka Women's NGO Forum
Mothers and Daughters of Lanka
Women's Coalition for Peace
Women's Forum for Peace ■

FREE AUNG SAN SUU KYI

We the undersigned women of Sri Lanka express our deep shock at the continued detention of Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the National League for Democracy in Myanmar and Nobel Prize winner. We are also concerned about the reports of the conditions of her detention and the deteriorating state of her health. We urge that she be released immediately. We also request the permission of the embassy of Myanmar and the government of Myanmar to allow a delegation of Sri Lankan women to visit Aung San Suu Kyi.

Name

Sunethra Bandaranaike
Radhika Coomaraswamy
Jezima Ismail
Sithie Tiruchelvam
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Suriya Wickremasinghe
Manel Abeysekera
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Kumari Jayawardena
Selvy Tiruchandran
Faizun Zackariya
Manouri Muttetuwegama
Chitra Maunaguru
Sunila Abeysekera

Name

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Malathi Alwis
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Anberiya Haniffa
Dulcy de Silva
Yasmin Tambiah
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Bernadeen Silva
Ramani Muttetuwegama
Kumudini Samuel
Ambika Satkunanathan
Rohini Weerasinghe

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