

# New Era For Sri Lanka

## Draft Policy Platform



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## Executive Summary

Our policy platform aims at forging a progressive future-oriented movement working towards building an egalitarian society. This society will be based on the firm principles of equity, social justice and economic freedom and participatory democracy at all levels. It will be reinforced with the primacy of shared values for the whole of society as against profit maximisation for the few.

Such a society can only be developed on the basis of the current socio-economic and political conditions that exist in our society. The modern world has the wherewithal and advanced technologies such as automation and digitisation that will allow us the opportunity to provide a decent standard of living for all regardless of age, race, class or creed. That is why we are at this particular juncture in history presenting modern solutions to fix the rapidly deteriorating situation in Sri Lanka to take the country beyond the 21st century.

We believe that social justice and economic equality cannot be achieved without challenging the existing inequalities of power and wealth in society. We can overcome such inequalities only by empowering the people and thus ensuring that all of us have a guaranteed minimum standard of living, well-being and an equal opportunity to develop the full potential of all of us.

This can only be realised by empowering the people to make their own decisions. This will provide all of us with the opportunity to proactively participate and engage in the decision-making process that governs the economic, social and cultural life of the nation. In doing so, we can ensure that the freedom, solidarity, justice, economic security and equality prevail.

As such, this movement will be built on principles based on social justice, equality and inclusiveness that will collectively contribute to the socio-economic and political progress of the nation. This can be engendered through productivity, creativity and ethical entrepreneurship that will result in peaceful coexistence for everyone that constitute our society.

Since independence, subsequent administrations have presided over ever-increasing corrupt practices, failing to deliver a thriving economy and a fair and just society and losing the plot in uplifting the standard of living of the masses.

It is worth remembering, that during this period, the youth of the country have been decimated in three rebellions launched against the country's untenable mode of governance. The dismal results are not hard to discern: an increasingly disempowered society fragmented along narrow and selfish nationalist lines.

We offer an alternative way of practising and involving in political discourse. We believe that a process that involves the whole of society with a bottom up engagement is vital to address the prevailing issues that hinder social cohesion and equity. In doing so, we want to create a rule-based society that will value individual life and treat everyone with dignity and respect. We believe that not a single life needs to be sacrificed for the advancement of society.

Our policy platform offers modern alternative approaches in vital areas such as: restoring law and order, addressing corruption, delivering economic growth, democratisation of the economy, constitutional reforms, provincial governance, public sector reforms, reforms in health, education, sports, transport, agriculture and taxation, sustainable tourism, investment promotion, working with Sri Lankan Diaspora communities, environmentally sustainable development, waste management and resource recovery, industrial relations, multiculturalism, social policy, ethical trading, adopting the fourth industrial revolution, application of gender mainstreaming, arts and culture, media and communication, social market economy, democratic public ownership, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, disaster management and social resilience, international relations, regional collaboration and integration, international trade and partnerships, food security, water security, energy security and morale, spirituality, happiness and well-being.

We believe that with collective action underpinned by social justice, ethnic harmony and economic equity, the society and the individual can be empowered and mobilised irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, caste, creed, faith or sexual orientation.

We present to you the people of Sri Lanka, these clear policy initiatives for your consideration, discussion, participation and input. We are dedicated to the task of mobilising people around this progressive and inclusive policy platform utilising all means and institutions available at our disposal.

We strongly believe that the task of rallying round masses to fighting for the change we had to have, should be based on an agreed substantial policy position for alternative government, not on a short-term task of winning elections at any cost. That is why we are focusing strongly on this policy document. We have great pleasure in inviting you to join with us in any way you can on this important task to effecting this long overdue change of providing a decent society for this generation and the future generations.

# 1. Rule Based Governance

## 1.1 Constitutional reforms

### Executive President

The establishment of democracy will not be complete until we do away with the executive presidency and move into Parliamentary system – where the executive authority is vested in the Cabinet led by the Prime Minister and answerable to the Parliament, the supreme body in a representative democracy.

The Prime Minister can hold office only so long as he can command the confidence of Parliament.

Recent history has proved that the concentration of power on one person has not only denigrated the Parliament but also the whole Cabinet. There is also no evidence to support the misguided belief that an executive authority vested in a single person helps to maintain the geographical integrity of Sri Lanka. The Executive Presidential system has prevailed since 1978 and the civil war ended in 2009, after 31 years of that system. When the government in power defeated the 1971 April uprising in a short time, it did not possess executive presidential powers.

The Presidential system favours dictatorial regimes with an inclination to suppress the press and control the judiciary, as shown by our experience with several such regimes.

### Size of the cabinet

It should be enshrined in the Constitution that there should not be more than 25 members of the Cabinet and a maximum of 25 Parliamentary Secretaries.

### Second chamber

As canvassed in the interim report of the Steering Committee of the Constituent Assembly, the establishment of a second chamber or a Senate is encouraged. The Senate should act as a house of scrutiny. However, the Senators should be representatives of each Province. Five Senators suggested in the interim report, from each province could be reduced to three. The ten Senators to be appointed by the National Government should also be reduced to three. Accordingly, the Senate chamber will have a total of 30 Senators.

If we have the privilege to govern, we will endeavour to disqualify Senators who have a history of partisan activities in the Sri Lankan political spectrum at least within the past ten years. Our intention is to choose people who have excelled themselves in their own professional fields or made a positive contribution to the country as a social activist.

### Multi-Member Proportional Electoral System (MMP)

The incumbent government has introduced a Multi-Member Proportional Electoral System. A government of ours will provide a reference to one of the Parliamentary Investigatory committees (Electoral Matters Committee) to investigate into the appropriateness of the MMP system. Appropriate action in this regard will be taken based on the recommendations of the committee report.

### Political donations

All political donations over and above a certain limit (for example Rs 5,000) should be declared with donor details by each individual parliamentarian or candidate/campaign director to the Election Commissioner's office within one week of receiving the donation.

### Responsibilities of Jurisdictions

Once the powers and responsibilities of the Provincial Council are established, that should be enshrined in the Constitution as independent jurisdictions.

A government of ours will revisit this issue to ensure the responsibilities allocated for each level of government is appropriate. Eventually, responsibilities of each level of government will be codified in the Constitution.

A body which will be temporarily named as Council of Governing Entities of Sri Lanka (COGESL) needs to be enshrined in the Constitution for the National Government and Provincial Councils to work together.

The main forum of the COGESL will be the Chief Ministers and the Prime Minister's forum chaired by the Prime Minister. However, there will be a number of other ministerial forums and public servants' forums. The main task of the COGESL is to funnel money to provincial jurisdictions for projects since the principal tax collector is the national government.

A government of ours will make provision, for the provincial councils to carry out investment and trade with foreign jurisdictions after obtaining prior permission from COGESL. Although all COGESL members will be briefed about such matters, only the national government can approve, reject or takeover the accomplishment of this task on their behalf. However, on request other Provincial Councils can partner with such projects.

It is vital to set up Bipartisan Parliamentary Investigatory Committees to investigate on current issues and understand what the citizens of the country expect of the Parliament and Government. The ministers and the Parliament can provide references for each committee to work on. These committees can be enshrined in the Constitution or more appropriately enacted as acts of Parliament. The details of the committee structures and roles will be open for discussion. For example, there could be committees investigating on Road Safety issues, Drug and Alcohol issues, Electoral Matters, Family and Community issues et cetera.

While Provincial Councils can enact their own legislation, such legislation where responsibilities overlap, need to comply with national law. Otherwise national law will override provincial law if they are in the same space.

The Chief Ministers should have the responsibilities to appoint the Provincial Governors for an agreed period of time.

### **Fixed Terms and Compulsory Voting**

We consider a fixed parliamentary term comprising ideally 4 years to be long enough for a government to deliver on its commitments.

This will provide certainty to government departments, private sector, worker co-operatives and potential foreign investors. This will end party leaders and governments manipulating election dates to their advantage.

Voting at elections is a civic responsibility of all citizens. There is no excuse for not taking the trouble to turn up at the polling booth to express their voting preference. If a particular voter is unhappy of all candidates or political parties seeking election, he or she can vote informally. That will indicate their preference or rather disapproval of all candidates/political parties on offer.

If there is no such commitment from the people, it is hard to establish a participatory democracy.

Legislation should be passed to make hindering the voting process in any way shape or form to be a criminal offence and punishable with imprisonment.

## 1.2 Reforming the Parliamentary System & Public Sector

Democracy, accountability and popular participation will be the foundations on which we built our polices on. In this light it is crucial to have bipartisan parliamentary committees to investigate issues that matter to all Sri Lankans. For example, a Road Safety Investigatory Committee from time to time to investigate on road safety matters, a Drug and Alcohol investigatory committee to investigate on matters related to drug and alcohol usage in the country etc. These committees would need to get referrals either from the Government or Parliament to conduct inquiries into their subject matters. These enquiries will reflect the views of the stakeholders and average citizens who are affected by the issues being investigated. Everybody will be invited to provide written submissions and the committee will choose to invite some of them for verbal submissions at public hearings. Public hearings will be conducted in a number of publicly accessible places across Sri Lanka. People will be invited to observe the proceedings at these hearings.

These committees will be required to report on their findings and their recommendations will be presented to Parliament. If one or more members of an investigatory committee dissent on part or all of the findings and recommendations, they can incorporate a minority report in the body of the main report. All the reports, except those dealing with national security issues, will be made available to the public.

The government of the day will be required to respond to such a report within six months indicating which recommendations the government will take on board and which ones will be rejected and articulating their reasons for acceptance or rejection. This will be our model for drafting appropriate legislation and government decisions to reflect public aspirations.

A special investigatory committee will be set up in the national Parliament to identify and compile a list of ongoing projects that need to be funded. This committee can work with outside organisations such as philanthropic groups and Sri Lankan Diaspora organisations to attract funding for the identified projects or make arrangements such as providing ownership of an appropriate project to a relevant group. A bureaucracy needs to be established to work with the parliamentary committee. The parliamentary committee should have members representing each province of the country.

It is important to set standards on parliamentary language and enhance the speaker's role and empower him or her to take punitive action against the members of Parliament, who do not adhere to the appropriate ethical standard and parliamentary code of practice.

### **Budget office**

An Independent Budget Office (IBO) will be established in the Parliament. One of the roles of IBO will be to assess funding commitments of political parties in the lead up to an election and publicise a report for the public to know which commitments are deliverable and which are not. During this term, members of Parliament, especially opposition members can seek assistance of the IBO to cost government policy announcements and their own policies. In doing so, the IBO will help cut down in a big way the fake promises political parties make. The IBO will always report to the Parliament and not to the government.

### **Provincial Council Governors**

Provincial Council Governors will have a fixed term and no person affiliated with a political party in the past ten years will be appointed as a Governor. It is preferable to appoint somebody apolitical, who has contributed to the society in some form or another, and against whom allegations of abuse of his/her authority have not been raised.

### **Remuneration Tribunal**

It would be important to set up a Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal (PRT) to review salaries, allowances and other perks currently enjoyed by members of Parliament, including Ministers and the Prime Minister. The members of the national Parliament will be compelled to have a full-time commitment to their role. When the Parliament is not sitting, they should be involved with committee work and constituency work. The constituents should have access to



their local member more often than they presently have and that can only be achieved if there is a full-time commitment by all the Members of Parliament.

### **Decentralized Budget**

Members of Parliament in any jurisdiction will not be entitled to a decentralised budget. Members of Parliament being elected by popular vote are beholden to the country as a whole. Therefore, they are not supposed to be masters of all aspects of life. For example, they will not be able to prioritise road projects provincially or nationally as it will not serve the best interests of the community or the country as a whole. They will need to only focus on issues under their remit.

Therefore, we will hand over those responsibilities to government agencies such as Roads Authority, Transport Authority etc. These agencies which are answerable to the corresponding minister, will collect statistics and other information needed to prioritise projects across their jurisdictions to serve the best interests of the country. Members of the Parliament will lobby the Minister and in turn through the minister's office will get responses from the agencies as to how particular projects are progressing.

### **Public Service Recruitment Commission**

A Public Service Recruitment Commission will be established to undertake all public-sector recruitment in conjunction with all departments and public institutions. Members of Parliament will be prohibited from influencing the recruitment process. Any evidence of influence will be brought to the attention of the IBAC and those who found guilty will be prosecuted.

### **Official Vehicles for Senior Public Servants**

The issue of vehicle permits should be scrapped, instead government vehicles should be allocated to all members of Parliament and also to all appropriate public servants. In chauffeur driven situations, it will be the responsibility of the chauffeur to maintain logbooks even when private travel is permitted.

The Constitution will enshrine that the government shall have not more than 25 members of the cabinet and a maximum of 25 parliamentary secretaries.

### **Public Service Code**

The senior public service should be apolitical, and involvement in any political activity in any shape or form would be a disqualification. All senior public servants should be loyal to the government of the day. Disloyalty will be made a serious offence by legislation. However, public servants are in their rights to complain to IBAC, if parliamentarians exert any undue influence on them.

### **Separation of Powers**

The separation of powers is an important principle underpinning all democracies. According to this principle, the three main institutions of government: the legislature, executive and judiciary, are maintained as separate entities in order to provide effective checks and balances, thus preventing power from becoming centralised in any one entity.

Unfortunately, in Sri Lanka, in the recent past there has been executive creep into the judiciary, setting a dangerous precedence. It is important to restore the complete independence of the judiciary and legislature from the executive arm of the government. Legislation needs to be passed to make executive interference in the judiciary in any way shape or form an offence punishable by law.

The Sri Lankan Parliament or any Parliament should not be subject to control or direction by the Executive. The Executive should not determine the level of funding and how money is allocated to Parliament, parliamentary committees or its independent statutory institutions like the Office of the Auditor general, Budget Office, Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) and any other statutory bodies directly reporting to the Parliament.

To ensure good governance, a separate parliamentary service model such as a Parliamentary Corporate Body (PCB) will be established. The Parliament should be the controller and determiner of its own funding through the above body and thus would be initiating its own money bills through its presiding officers. PCB Membership will reflect the aggregate membership of the house.

The Executive of the Parliamentary Corporate Body (PCB), chaired by the Speaker of the house could be set up as follows:

- Prime Minister (or nominee and Leader of the Opposition (or nominee));
- The clerk of the Parliament and the Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services;
- Requesting the Cabinet to provide forward estimates of government revenue (as to be reported in Budget Papers) before the PCB makes its recommendations;
- PCB membership can make recommendations to the PCB executive at any time;
- Reporting its recommendations to the house on budget day;
- Providing budget bids for parliamentary appropriation under a separate appropriation bill which the house can amend; and
- This appropriation should include funding for the Legislative Assembly, Department of Parliamentary Services, Independent Officers of Parliament and the Office of the Opposition.

### **Judicial Appointments**

Judicial appointments, their tenure and remuneration will be handled independently of the executive governments. Appointments ought to be based on merit and be exercised in cooperation or consultation with the judiciary. Similarly, any processes for promotion must be solely based on the individual's merits and appropriateness to hold judicial office.

Tenure of the appointed judges will be guaranteed by law either for life or a specified statutory age of retirement, or for a substantial fixed term, depending on what is more appropriate at the time.

The process for disciplining or removing judges from office should be limited to cases of serious misconduct or incapacity to discharge the duties of the office. A decision to remove a judge on these grounds should be made by an independent body, which has some experience in handling judicial matters.

Judicial salaries and pensions should be adequate and commensurate with the dignity of the office and should not be decreased during a judge's tenure. These should also be established by law, and not subject to arbitrary interference from the executive.

The daily operational processes and procedures of courts require freedom from executive.

Court funding is also a key issue affecting the operational independence of the courts. It is our understanding that levels of court funding are set by the executive, as appropriation bills are initiated by the government of the day.

Introducing a judicial council should be an alternative model. Essentially, a judicial council is established by legislation, comprised of representatives from a number of courts and tribunals. The executive will determine an amount of funding which is paid to the judicial council, which then has autonomous powers to administer and fund the courts which are part of the scheme.

## 1.3 Provincial Councils and Local Government

It is important to review the role of Provincial Councils (PC), on the one hand to cut any waste occurring and on the other to provide more responsibilities to justify their existence.

The official working language of each Provincial Council should be determined solely by that Council. It is incumbent upon the national government to deal with the Provincial Councils in their official language. To facilitate this, the national government will have to expand the resources made available for interpretation services where it is necessary.

The local police dealing with local crime should be the responsibility of the Provincial Council, while the national police should focus on tasks such as border protection, drug-related issues, international criminal activities and terrorism etc. The police operational matters whether it is local or national would be the responsibility of the police command without the interference of any governing entity, at any level. Every Provincial Council should set up their own Provincial Police Monitors to examine misconduct of their police forces.

The Provincial Councils should have the necessary powers to negotiate with foreign entities to attract investment within the investment policy frameworks and rules set out by the national government. This would be part of the COGESL process.

The Provincial Councils should be at their liberty to compete with each other to hold international events within COGESL while the national government should make selections on merit. The national government is within their rights to refer to international bodies to assist them in this process.

### Local Government

A council participatory budgeting model requires that citizens meet in popular assemblies throughout the council jurisdiction to deliberate on how the Council budget should be spent. Most of these assemblies are organised around geographical regions within the council jurisdiction; a few are organised around themes that have a city-wide scope – like public transportation or culture.

At the beginning of the budget cycle each year, these assemblies meet in plenary sessions. Council executives, administrators, representatives of community entities such as neighbourhood associations, youth and sports clubs, and any interested inhabitants of the council jurisdiction attend these assemblies, but only residents of the region can vote in the regional assembly. Any city resident participating in a thematic assembly can vote in those. Members of the local government and community delegates jointly coordinate these assemblies.

These participants discuss and identify development priorities. These projects are in turn submitted to local elected bodies that formulate and set budgets for local plans. Final plans are presented back to the assemblies for discussion.

These permanent structures will empower grassroots level local communities.

## 1.4 Restoring law and order

Restoration of the rule of law is imperative for the implementation of progressive policies. A few initiatives are articulated below.

Legislation should be passed in Parliament to make it a criminal offence for any member of the Parliament, Cabinet, or Provincial Councils to interfere in police operational matters.

An Independent Police Monitor (IPM) should be established and adequately resourced to investigate any corrupt practices within the police force. The Parliament with consensus should appoint members of the IPM. The IPM should report to the Parliament instead of the Minister and should do so on a quarterly basis. Anybody should be able to report to the IPM about police misconduct. Any misconduct of the IPM too can be reported to an Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC).

The main involvement of the Minister in charge of Police with the police force should be about providing resources to and discussing issues the police force is confronted with. The minister might from time to time articulate the government vision on policy matters without any interference in operational matters.

It should be made a criminal offence for the police Commissioner/Officer to refrain from reporting to IPM of any political interference on police operational matters.

An independent Public Prosecutor's Office (PPO) should be set up for undertaking prosecution on behalf of the police and IBAC. It will be instructive to find out the current prosecution procedures that are in place in Sri Lanka.

These watchdogs with sufficient teeth will be permanent arrangements necessary for the continuous maintenance of a rule-based society.

## 1.5 Addressing Widespread Corruption

It is vital to address widespread corrupt practices that are prevailing in Sri Lanka. It can only be done through establishing an Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC).

IBAC should have coercive powers to compel an individual to participate in its enquiries.

No citizen of Sri Lanka regardless of the position that citizen holds, will be able to ignore a subpoena served by IBAC.

IBAC should report to the Parliament once in every two months. A bipartisan parliamentary committee should be established to oversee the activities of IBAC. A Secretariat should be appointed to assist the parliamentary committee.

IBAC will be set up under legislation with powers to investigate and recommend for prosecution private sector activities that hinder open and transparent public-sector operations and activities that contravene public policy positions. Anybody can report to IBAC regarding misconduct of government agencies or private agencies where government officials are involved.

IBAC should have powers to undertake investigation of their own volition. IBAC can work on references made by Parliament, Cabinet and the Community.

Legislation needs to be enacted making it a criminal offence to interfere with IBAC enquiries, punishable by imprisonment.

IBAC will have more powers than any anti-corruption body currently operating, and it will continue to operate combating corrupt activities on an ongoing basis.

## **2. Shared Economy**

## 2.1 Macro-Economic Framework- Social Market

As outlined earlier, all our policy positions are oriented towards the notion of “People before Profits”. What that means is our economic planning is driven not by the objective of “conventional profit maximisation” but for “shared value maximization” or promotion of social well-being of all.

To do so, we will introduce a Social Market Economic System powered by digital technology adaptations. Social Market Economy is a socio-economic model combining free market private investor driven sector alongside social policy measures to the welfare of the less fortunate to establish a fairer and just society.

The social market economy refrains from attempts to plan and guide production, the workforce, or sales, but it does support planned efforts to influence the economy through the organic means of a comprehensive economic policy coupled with flexible adaptation to market studies. This type of economic policy creates an economy that serves the needs of the entire population, thereby fulfilling its ultimate goal.

We will introduce a Social Market Economic Model suitable to Sri Lanka by considering the social-economic environment of the country. In order to do so, we look at the experience of the German model, its recent developments, and other comparable economic models such as in Europe, Scandinavia, Japan and elsewhere. To overcome resource constraints and other economic challenges, we will use Industry 4.0 technological advancements.

It is therefore our policy to implement measures such as Universal Basic Income (UBI) to all citizens, Widened Share Ownership, Co-determination, Sustainability Reporting with Shared Value Maximizations and other economic best practices.

## 2.2 Democratic public ownership for the 21st Century

### Status quo

Sri Lanka has a long list of state-owned enterprises. Some of the larger ones are very important public utilities which are natural monopolies. The large losses incurred by state-owned enterprises over several decades have been a major drag on the development prospects of the country.

These losses have affected the general population by a number of ways. To name a few:

- The losses incurred impact directly on the government budget. This means that the government has to find tax revenues to finance these losses. If the revenue base is not sufficient, which has been the case for long number of years in Sri Lanka, the government has to borrow the money domestically and from abroad. One way or another, the people have to bear the cost of financing these losses. This is manifestly unfair.
- These losses that constrained development involves state banks financing these institutions and carrying their accumulated losses on their balance sheets for long periods. This leads to an increase in the interest rate spreads in the state banks making them uncompetitive with commercial banks.
- When the public owned utility companies are running at a loss there is always a tendency to increase the cost of services. This is unjustifiable.
- There are frequent industrial relations disputes as employees do not have the sense of ownership.

### Privatisation

It is no secret that government is looking at handing over the state-owned enterprises to the private sector. To avoid a potential public backlash the government may be considering Public Private Partnerships; i.e. privatisation by stealth. In some cases, in the longer-term Public Private Partnerships are a bigger drag on the public purse than direct privatisation. In Public Private Partnership arrangements invariably, governments have to invest public money and set up an environment attractive enough for the private operator to take over and milk the profits.

The idea that, privately owned enterprises will be delivering the best outcomes for anyone except private shareholders is a minority view. There is a growing consensus in places like United Kingdom where they had the bitter experiences of privatisation that action is needed to curb excess profits and deliver a better deal for customers and employees.

Governments across the world use Public Private Partnerships as a political ploy. This is a good way to show the people before the next election, the government is investing on public infrastructure and they are superior to that of their competitors. In reality, it comes with a heavy cost burden not just for us but also for future generations.

Ownership matters. Who owns a business dictates in whose interest it is run, who has a say when decisions are made, and who benefits from its success. We agree that the status quo of the state-owned enterprises in Sri Lanka is unsustainable. In fact, it is a daunting task to maintain the status quo in present Sri Lanka where currently there is widespread corruption not just at the helm but across all levels of the public sector.

### Democratic & Accountable Public Ownership

We believe the full potential of public ownership can only be achieved through the use of democratic, accountable and inclusive models.

This approach puts decision-making closer to the people who are affected by those decisions, giving bill payers and employees a democratic voice. When workers have a say in how their workplace is run and a stake in its success, productivity goes up. When consumers participate, they can ensure the services they rely on are invested in properly and run in everybody's interest. Decision-making is transparent, and decision-makers are accountable for the decisions they make in all our interests.



We will work towards creating an economy where power and wealth are shared. Just as political institutions are measured by the extent to which they give the ordinary citizen the fullest opportunity of exercising political power, public ownership must be judged by the test whether it gives economic suffrage to ordinary citizens too. Public utilities and transport will be designed using co-operating values and principles that would democratise key aspects of our economy.

We believe that the utilities and transport should be run in the public interest. Distant and difficult to understand regulatory processes do not empower the consumer to challenge mismanagement and give employees a voice in their workplaces or communities the ability to decide how the profits are redistributed.

We believe that political democracy has to be buttressed by economic democracy. Therefore, in all utility markets characterised by monopolistic structures, we should pursue opportunities to convert them to a democratic public ownership, accountable to their stakeholders.

A lack of government investment can cause serious harm to the services and infrastructure we rely on. Democratic public ownership can provide protection against this. By virtue of the collective strength of the customers, the interests of workers and communities having a powerful and meaningful voice cannot be side-lined.

The co-operative model challenges us to think beyond the old paradigms of market versus the state; beyond the divisions between owners and customers; and to think creatively about new ownership and management models. This is the kind of creative thinking our public services will need for the future.

This transition would be achieved by changing the state-owned enterprises into organisations limited by guarantee. Our model ensures democratic public ownership and decision-making through a consumer trust and an employee trust. For each organisation, these two trusts would be run along mutual lines – where every consumer has equal membership of consumer trust, and every employee of the organisation has equal membership of an employee trust.

Every member would have an equal say and vote. Their participation would be encouraged and enabled so that their voice can be heard both at consumer and company level.

The industry regulator will always oversee the operations of the enterprise. The regulator will also work with stakeholders and these companies to deliver trust and confidence in services among customers, investors and society as a whole.

Once the regulator has been set up properly and new consumer and employee trusts formed, it is possible to take the next steps necessary to create democratic, not-for-profit companies. The three main areas to focus would be changing the way the industry's finance, changing the corporate form of companies so that they are accountable and not-for-profit and introducing robust mechanisms for customer and employee participation.

This futuristic approach that can face up to the challenges posed by technological advancement and automation is in line with the arguments of the progressive movement in United Kingdom, most parts of Europe and New Zealand and other political and community organisations across the world.

However, public utilities whether monopolistic or otherwise and other state-owned enterprises are unique by their nature. Some can be national organisations and others are best suited to run by the provincial or even local government councils.

## **Study**

Therefore, it is important to do a thorough study of each enterprise and determine the appropriate structural arrangements that are needed. It is therefore necessary, to commission a group of people from all walks of life suitable to carry out a thorough study and provide reports on every state-owned enterprise. The priority will be given to public utilities. The terms of reference for the study have to be laid out very clearly.

### **Company Limited by Guarantee**

A Company Limited by Guarantee does not usually have a share capital or shareholders. Instead, it has members who act as guarantors. The guarantors give an undertaking to contribute a nominal amount in the event of winding up the company.

Until the employee and community trusts are financially sound, the government can provide a guarantee on behalf of them if it is necessary to raise funds for those public companies where employee and customer trusts are stakeholders.

## 2.3 Democratizing the economy (Social Economy)

We are a private, public and community investment friendly movement. We encourage creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation in all sectors of society, including in the private sector.

We will ardently promote the Social Economy sector. The concept of social economy neatly fits in with economic democracy concept as well.

We reject the notion that for Sri Lanka to thrive, its growth will inevitably be generated only by a handful of entrepreneurs, or that wealth needs be inevitably concentrated in just one corner of the country. We will build a democratic economy which creates growth and jobs in every community, makes the most of the skills of all, and whose rewards are delivered fairly in every region of Sri Lanka.

The requirements of a successful social economic entity are as follows:

- Primacy of people and social purposes over capital;
- Sharing of economic activity results;
- Promotion of solidarity;
- Independence from public institutions; and
- Promotion of democratic principles: one worker member - one vote.

Worker Self-Driven Enterprises (WSDE) is the more modern and more democratic version of the old concept of cooperatives.

The traditional cooperative societies of Sri Lanka have been for distribution of consumer goods, supply of essential consumer services and agricultural inputs, promotion and marketing in agriculture, fisheries, industry and rural banking services. These cooperatives do not have a direct ownership of stocks by their workers or a requirement for democratic and participative governance. The top organisation managing these cooperatives is run by a board of directors of nine multi-purpose cooperative societies and representatives.

WSDE is different and it is an autonomous enterprise in which:

- Worker/members own stock;
- Ownership is widely distributed among worker members who own much of the voting stocks;
- Worker members participate in the enterprise's management and control;
- They share in the distribution of the surplus, usually on the basis of work, rather than stock ownership; and
- Democratic Governing structure with one member - one vote.

The workers in a cooperative have their say in the first instance through its General Assembly (made up of all worker members), where the performance of the cooperative is discussed, and its policies determined. The General Assembly, which is the highest authority within the cooperative, is required to convene at least once a year, and also often meets for information and discussion sessions.

The workers are also elected to the Governing Council, together with its president. The Governing Council conducts the affairs of cooperative between assembly meetings and oversees the performance of the cooperative and its senior management. Only members of the cooperative – all of them workers – are eligible to stand for the Governing Council. Voting will be on one member - one-vote basis. Successful candidates hold office for a period of time determined by the General Assembly and continue to be paid their normal salaries but receive no compensation for their council responsibilities.

The Council appoints a manager for the cooperative for a specified period of time, who may be subject to a mandatory performance review by the Governing Council. There is a separate Management Council where the top executives and other officers of the cooperative liaise with one another on a monthly basis. An Audit Committee, elected by the worker members, monitors the cooperative's financial operations and its compliance with its formally established policies and procedures.

We will work on setting up a community bank to finance the social economy units in the community.

The government will also set up a Work Self Driven Enterprise Authority to promote and oversee the operations of the WSDE sector commonly known as worker cooperatives sector.

The government's overarching policy position would be that no company could be sold off, closed off or embark on an initial public offer (offering its stock on a public stock market for the first time) before giving the first right of refusal to their workers. If the workers take the offer, then the WSDE Authority will work with them to reach their objective. A local or foreign company has to inform WSDE Authority if they have an intention to sell off, close off or increase capital in the stock market before taking any initiatives. The WSDE Authority will work with the company through the process.

There are other sectors such as not-for-profit social enterprises, mutual organizations (member driven), labour societies (like cooperatives but small professional type organizations), especial employment centers (provide employment for disabled and disadvantaged) that constitute the social economy.

## 2.4 Foreign / Local New Investment Policy

We will be a private, public and community investment friendly movement. We encourage creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation not only in the private sector but also in all sectors of the society. However, we believe that resources should be utilized not just only for private profits of the few but for the needs of everybody in the society. Therefore, all our policy positions are directed towards the goal “People before Profits”. What this means is our economic planning will be geared not only for conventional profit maximisation, but for shared value maximization and promotion of the social well-being of all strata of society.

We will boost democratization of capital ownership by encouraging public listing of companies, equity ownership by the management and employees, multi-stakeholder participation in corporate management and community ownership of SMEs. If elected to government, we will ensure companies will adhere to paying a fair wage and provide appropriate working conditions for their workers as set out by the industrial relations system.

We will welcome foreign & local investment with enthusiasm on the proviso that those investments do not threaten the sovereignty of the country.

If elected, we will provide incentives such as temporary tax breaks to foreign companies and brand-new local companies where appropriate. The corporate tax rate will not be brought down to attract investment.

Similarly, we could consider lump-sum depreciation for new plant and equipment that companies buy to initiate and expand business opportunities.

However, private investment companies should agree to comply with the government’s overarching policy of business not being able to close off or sold out or to make an initial public offer, without first offering the business to the employees to run as a worker cooperative, if they choose to do so.

If elected, we will adopt a policy that by a certain date all government fleet cars will be purchased from a car manufacturing company or assembling plant established in Sri Lanka. In Australia, for a car manufacturing company to survive at breakeven point, it had to produce at least 80,000 vehicles annually. In Sri Lanka the breakeven point will be less due to lower variable costs, however about 40,000 cars are registered there annually.

If a study that will be undertaken indicates a car manufacturing industry can surpass the breakeven point, manufacturing companies may compete to move into Sri Lanka for vehicle production. Based on the recommendations of a study emphasising on electric vehicle production, vehicle manufacturers will be encouraged to locally start plants manufacturing or assembling electric vehicles; similarly, vehicle owners and drivers will be given incentives to buy electric vehicles. This strategy could also be employed for other products.

We would also promote conducting secretarial work in Sri Lanka for small business/professional operators in the first world countries. For example, professionals like lawyers and doctors in USA or Australia could send their dictation files electronically to Sri Lanka where those can be typed and sent back overnight.

## 2.5 Ethical Trading Policy

We will promote a policy of ethical trading for all business enterprises.

If elected, we will set up an Ethical Trade Labelling (ETL) Authority to certify that particular products and or organisations embody ethical trading standards.

For example, the organisations that have undertaken production and traded under conditions characterised by the following amongst others:

- The absence of child labour and forced labour;
- The unalienable right to unionise;
- Compliance with industrial relations laws;
- Provision of genuine advice to customers/clients;
- Respect for the environment assessed in terms of the contribution to minimise carbon footprint;
- Not involved in insider trading and other unscrupulous activities;
- Commitment to gender equity and poverty reduction;
- Humane treatment of animals;
- Those who use higher percentage of locally manufactured inputs as opposed to imported inputs;
- Provision of work opportunities for socially disadvantaged and people with disabilities; and
- High percentage of ETL certified trading partners.

We will encourage industry associations and peak bodies to actively comply with the ethical trading policy.

Based on international best practice on ethical trade, for example, following the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) stipulated in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we will seize opportunities to take action on and promote ethical trade and workers' rights in partnership with businesses, trade unions and civil society organisations.

We will make arrangements to deliver awards of recognition to businesses that demonstrate an outstanding contribution to the social, economic, environmental planning and development of local communities, particularly those businesses seeking to address the challenges these communities encounter.

If elected, we will give special consideration to Ethical Trade Certified organisations in procurement of government supplies and provision of contracts.

National government will work with local government, business, community groups, non-profit organisations and other relevant groups to support the establishment and ongoing development of self-administered community-based fair-trading clusters.

## 2.6 Taxation and Universal Basic Income

It is important to get the taxation right because it is not just about government revenue but also about promoting investment. The government revenue base is extremely vital to deliver services to the community.

It is important to consider having a tax file number for each and every person in the country. This can be easily done since everybody has a national ID card. Everybody above and on the threshold income needs to send a tax return every year. Those who are below the threshold and exempted from paying tax can choose to send their tax returns as well. For example, the threshold could be set to Rs. 1,250,000 indexed per annum. People at and above the threshold need to pay taxes on a scale plus the 2 percent levy on healthcare.

We believe when it is affordable the government should make arrangements to provide a universal basic income (UBI) to all those who are on low or receive no income.

Our long-term vision given the way technology is heading is about a world without work! It may be too idealistic/theoretical to grasp or difficult to envision presently, but even Sri Lanka is fast moving in the direction of automation and digitalisation, making UBI a necessity.

First, automation in society should be guided and determined by Parliament on the behest of society and not solely by the market. Second, the implementation of UBI should not dismantle the existing welfare measures but reinforce and supplement the welfare of all citizens. We would also consider putting in place measures such as 'volunteering for income' to discouraging people spending their lives in idleness.

Therefore, it is important for everybody to have a tax file. The amount of tax to be paid will be determined from time to time based on the government revenue base. UBI will be linked to the individual's tax file number.

It is necessary to look at a land tax to the value of just the land, if land is not the primary residence of the tax payer. This will not only provide revenue for the government but also encourage owners to utilize land to generate an income rather than just holding on to it for capital gains. The land tax threshold would be placed around Rs 1 million and will be indexed.

The government will also work with the relevant taxation experts in government to set up a capital gains tax structure.

People who are employed should be able to start their own lateral business using the same tax file rather than setting up a new tax account for the business. This will provide an incentive for working people to start their small business without the fear of becoming unprofitable and incurring a total loss in the first couple of years as they can claim tax benefits to minimise the loss.

Tax avoidance will be taken seriously, and necessary resources will be provided for policing irregularities and tax declarations. The government will expand the regular desk checks regime and make sure those who claim losses continuously will be monitored thoroughly and the rogue operators will be brought to justice. Random tests need to be carried on for all taxpayers, including those who claim to be below the threshold.

IBAC will have the powers to scrutinise the activities of the taxation office. Taxation staff that breach the law will be prosecuted with no mercy.

## **3. Decent Society**



### 3.1 Social Policy

The existing social policies tend to penalise those who do not fit the current economic model. Alternative social and economic contributions such as parenting, volunteering, caring for others are not valued. Social inequality is widening with gaps between haves and have-nots increasing under the current economic regime. Current economic policies and political practices do not adequately address issues such as social cohesion, poverty reduction and social inclusion.

Social policy deals with the way our society is organised, who gets what benefits and who is left to fend for themselves. Those whom society has failed, and often discriminated against have been defined as the problem. Thus, opportunities for education, healthcare and social mobility have been constantly under attack. In contrast, good social policy is about social arrangements for everyday life that affect everyone in all areas of personal and social life contributing to the well-being of citizens.

Our social policy will focus on key social issues such as welfare, health care, education, labour market and child protection. It will serve to ensure that every Sri Lankan will be able to have a decent standard of living. We consider our country should be a nation state that prioritises social well-being.

For example, if elected, we will focus on aspects such as follows:

- Modernising laws, like decriminalising LGBTIQ prohibition through legislative changes;
- The law of the country will be supreme and will be overriding religious laws;
- The nature, quantum and victims of family violence & child abuse will be subjected to study in order to identify the issues and the corresponding solutions and appropriate law reforms and new legislation where necessary;
- The dignity of women and their economic contribution including their unpaid labour will be recognised; and
- A parliamentary committee will undertake a study to investigate widespread child abuse.

Based on its recommendations, we will take strong action against child abusers. We believe children are a responsibility of the society. This is an important example of our approach towards Family and Community Development.

## 3.2 Multiculturalism

We strongly believe that Sri Lanka is a multi-faith, multi-ethnic and multicultural society. We consider diversity in the Sri Lankan society is not a liability, but an asset that we can capitalize on positively. For Sri Lanka to thrive economically, socially and culturally there should be intercourse and empathy between all different groups. It will be disastrous for Sri Lankans to be ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones or inhabitants of different planets.

We believe hollow words calling for unity will not bring us together as a nation. We will set up a legislative framework for a rule-based society treating all Sri Lankans with dignity and respect, while recognising the issues specific to all different groups of Sri Lankans.

If elected, we will set up a number of independent commissions/watchdogs with teeth to keep the government honest and fair. We will establish an Equal Opportunity Commission, a Racial, Religious and Gender Discrimination Commission and any other legislated bodies that are necessary to ensure social inclusion, harmony and cohesion.

We will ensure that all citizens enjoy freedom of religion and freedom from religion. We will recognise Buddhism as the religion of the majority of population. However, the government operations will be completely independent of any religious practice. We believe religious practice is an individual private matter and any religious activity should not be a hindrance to public life at large.

If elected, we will pass strong legislation relating to Religious and Racial Tolerance with a harsh penalty regime that will make religious and racial vilification unlawful. These laws will indiscriminately apply to all inhabitants of Sri Lanka irrespective of their backgrounds.

### 3.3 Looking After People with Disabilities

In Sri Lankan law disability is defined as: "Any person who as a result of any deficiency in his physical or mental capabilities whether congenital or not is unable by himself to ensure for himself, wholly or partly the necessities of life".

Under the current legislative framework in Sri Lanka, disability is analysed from a personal point of view. Therefore, disability is defined as a personal deficiency and hence society is not held responsible.

However, under Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), persons with disabilities include "those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."

Thus, in the international convention it is defined in terms of constraints created through the society. Under the definition given by the UN Convention, society is held accountable since it is considered to have been created as a result of shortcomings of the society. Sri Lanka can affirm the importance of respecting, protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status, by following the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 4, 10 and 17) in this regard, as stipulated in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Transforming the World.

We believe the laws should be amended to reflect the UN convention.

About 1.6 million Sri Lankans, eight percent of the population, were regarded as disabled in 2012. About 96 percent of the total disabled population with functional difficulties did not engage in educational activities. Only about 54,311 disabled students attend school. The majority of disabled people are unemployed as they face discrimination and limitations like access to safe working environments. Given these severe constraints, self-employment is the only viable option available to disabled people at the moment.

Women with disabilities consisting of 57 percent of the disability population in the country, face greater risk of abuse due to their sexuality as well as their disability. There is no opportunity for women with disability to participate in policy making to ensure their rights are protected. They are exposed to multiple discriminatory abuses in their daily lives and vulnerable to unreported household activities.

According to statistics received from the 2011 census, 34 percent of children with disabilities in the school attending age does not receive any education whatsoever. Furthermore, it has been reported that 20.3 percent of the children of primary education age do not receive education.

Related to disability in Sri Lanka, the following legislation are taken in consideration:

#### **1. Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 1996**

This Act is one of the key pieces of legislation related to disability. It provides secure protection for people with disabilities against discrimination with regarding employment, education and access to the built environment. This also gives a legal framework for activities of the National Council for Persons who have disabilities.

#### **2. Rana Viru Seva Authority Act, 1999**

This was enacted by the Parliament of Sri Lanka by which Ranaviru Seva Authority was set up to provide for the after care and rehabilitation of members of armed forces and police who are disabled.

#### **3. Rehabilitation of The Visually Handicapped Trust Fund Act, 1992**

This Act involves providing educational and vocational training opportunities for poverty reduction and provides financial assistance and guidance for self-employment of the visually impaired people.

Following are voluntary advocacy groups operating in Sri Lanka to help people with disabilities:

- **Brighter Life Foundation** is a Swiss group founded in 2004, aiming to assist disability charities in Sri Lanka;
- **Sri Lanka Council for Mental Health** was established for disabled people who have mental illness. It serves as a skills training centre and a Sheltered Workplace;
- **Sri Lanka Foundation for Rehabilitation of the Disabled** manages "Rehab Lanka", a workshop which provides employment to people with disabilities and earns income for the organisation; and
- **Disability Organisation Joint Front (DOJF)** is the only umbrella body for disability organisations in Sri Lanka formed in 2001. Membership consists of organisations of Visually, Hearing, Physically impaired and parents of intellectually impaired children. Presently there are 26-member organizations from different parts of the country including the North and East.

Sri Lanka signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) on 30 March 2007 and ratified its protocols on 08 February 2016, after a lapse of almost 10 years. Thus, our international legal obligation toward UNCRPD came to force with effect from 09 March 2016.

By ratifying this Convention, Sri Lanka undertakes to abide by the terms of the Convention which is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

Therefore, as a fair and equitable society it is not only the right thing to look after the less fortunate people in our society, but also after ratifying the convention, it is an international obligation to setup a regime that complies with the terms of the convention.

However, Sri Lanka's support arrangements for people with disabilities are embarrassingly far behind the standards set out in the UN Convention.

Our approach in line with the UN protocols would be to increase social and economic participation of people with disabilities, by improving the way in which disability supports are provided and accessed in Sri Lanka.

Our model of disability support will place greater emphasis on meeting the "reasonable and necessary" support needs of people with disability through a more person-centered approach and, increasingly, through individualised and self-directed funding.

People with disabilities can also be classified according to the severity of their disability as:

- Fully Independent
- Partially independent but needs care and support
- Severely disable and fully dependent

### **Fully independent**

The challenges for this category of people would be finding employment, special access to buildings and access to service provisions. They are people with minor physical disabilities, minor intellectual disabilities, physical disfigurement, learning disabilities and other minor disabilities.

### **Partially independent but needs care and support**

This category is also facing similar challenges to fully independent category. However, depending on the severity of the disability, more career support role will be needed.

### **Severely disabled**

People of such disabilities need to be looked after around the clock.

The disability support arrangements are life-long except in the case of fully independent people with disabilities. Therefore, we will conduct a broader investigation in finding:

- An approximate number in each category and its annual growth;
- What sort of personal centred support should be provided to each category of people;
- How the disability service provisions can be funded.
- How planning codes can be implemented enabling people with disabilities to gain easy access for services and other daily life activities;
- Improving education and employment opportunities;
- How to facilitate easy access to exercising their democratic right to vote;
- How to provide opportunities to participate in social and cultural life like their fellow able-bodied citizens; and
- The roadblocks to participating in international disabilities sporting activities.

To enable this investigation, we will appoint a commission consisting of the following staff:

- Chair – an academic who has done in-depth studies in provision of disability services;
- Commissioners - from a legal background;
- A panel - can consist of a senior public servant with disability services responsibilities;
- A senior public servant from the Treasury;
- People with disabilities; parents/carers of people with disabilities and representatives from advocacy groups; and
- A research officer and two administrative officers, one senior, the other Junior. Ideally, the senior administrative officer should have a research background.

The minister responsible for the disability portfolio will put together the Commission in consultation with the disability sector. The Commission will be directed to provide a report with evidence-based recommendations within a period of twelve months. The government will be bound to respond to the report by reference to the recommendations and indicating which ones will be implemented and which ones will not be implemented with valid reasons, within six months.

### **Scope of the investigation**

Requests for briefing from the following advocacy groups:

- Disability Organisation Joint Front;
- Brighter Life Foundation;
- Sri Lanka Council for Mental Health; and
- Sri Lanka Foundation for Rehabilitation of the Disabled.

Call all interested parties for making submissions;

Invite the appropriate submitters for a public enquiry; and

Communicate with and learn from overseas entities who are providing good disability services.

### **Terms of Reference**

- Explore possibilities of setting up an educational framework to educate all sections of the judicial system as well as the general public on how to take appropriate measures to continuously monitor and make sure the law that exist for equality for all is efficiently implemented.
- Investigate the possibility of the government providing information through alternative communication media such as sign language, Braille, large prints et cetera. The value in providing an officer who can communicate through sign language at focal service provision points to assist people with disabilities. Explore the sign language training regime.
- Evaluate the costs and benefits of setting up Guide Dog facilities for people with vision impairment;
- Evaluate the cost of person-centred provision of services such as wheelchairs, walking frames and other necessary equipment to access residential properties;

- Examine the current legislative framework and recommend changes to eliminating discrimination and provision of equal rights in all aspects of social life, educational and employment opportunities and enhancing the sporting arrangements for people with disabilities;
- Explore ways to eliminating discrimination of people with disabilities when recruiting for employment in the public and private sector. Review the adequacy of the current three percent disability employment quota and making it mandatory for both the private and public sector;
- Explore the feasibility of setting up a Disability Employment Trust through an Act of Parliament. For the employers who do not wish to comply with the disability employment percentage quota will have to contribute an equal amount in gratuity payment to the trust;
- Explore the possibility of setting up worker cooperatives for all or over 50% disabled people with special privileges from the government such as preference for government contracts, very low or no corporate taxes, et cetera;
- Explore a proper action plan to create an environment where people with disabilities can comfortably use and access the public transportation system;
- Undertake research that can absorb international experiences, update teacher training, implement disability education in private and public schools;
- Explore the feasibility of government using braille ballot papers as a medium for voting, making polling stations physically accessible, granting the severely disabled the right to vote from their place of residence, and ensure the voting rights of persons with intellectual disabilities who can make decisions on their own;
- Value in government taking action to improve the quality of special training centres and to introduce new vocational training streams based on the preference of persons with disabilities and the market trends/demands;
- Investigate the possibilities of establishing special schools for disabled children;
- Explore what measures need to be taken to enhance the sporting opportunities for people with disabilities;
- Explore the feasibility of setting up an independent Disability Rights Commission with the required financial and human resources needed for its tasks, which reports to the Parliament. The Commission will be responsible for monitoring the rights of people with disabilities island wide;
- Explore overseas non-government programs and possible support from the Sri Lankan diaspora community for disability programs;
- Explore long-term funding opportunities for people with severe disabilities. Part-time and full-time caregiver provisions should also be explored;
- Examine the possibilities of establishing cluster homes for non-independent disabled people and their caregivers/parents to live and look after their loved ones in a cooperative setting. In addition, also explore respite opportunities for caregivers; and
- Lastly, explore the costs and benefits of having not-for-profit private providers to deliver disability accommodation.

### 3.4 Application of Gender Mainstreaming

We see gender as a socio-cultural construct built around the differentiation among the two biological sexes. Therefore, gender status is not something innate but socially developed.

Gender inequalities persist in numerous areas in Sri Lanka. Gender based socio-economic disparities are mainly due to diverse living conditions, specific needs, direct and indirect discrimination and sex-based roles and stereotyping. Since the end of the military conflict in 2009, issues of sexual abuse and violence have been on the rise among the war affected women and children. Their socio-economic needs prevent from returning their lives to normalcy.

We will develop a strategy that will compare situations to identify the sources of inequality between the sexes and develop concrete policies to remedy these inequities based on that evidence. The Constitution by stipulating for the equal exercise of rights and liberties of people having biologically diverse male and female characteristics will form the basis for eliminating gender inequalities and promote equality in all spheres. We will also take all necessary action to ensure that informed political decisions are made by including an assessment of the impact of each political decision based on a gender perspective.

We will make gender equality the central issue to conditions of access (legal equality) to rewards, resources and opportunities, and to obtain concrete results in terms of gender equality (actual equality). As a result, our approach will differ from liberal feminist campaigns, which are limited to demanding more or equal opportunities for advancement in employment, education and health through the existing governance framework.

Almost 52 percent of the total population in Sri Lanka are women. The women of the family run about 1.2 million households. As domestic assistants overseas and local workers in the textile, garment and tea industries, they are the highest foreign exchange earners of the country. However, Sri Lanka is ranked low in terms of gender equality. Participation of young women in the labour market is less than half that of young men. Overall unemployment rate for females is twice that of the male unemployment rate.

Discrimination in terms of property rights are prominent especially in relation to marriage and divorce laws of the country in both civil and religious spheres. High levels of gender-based violence persist. The educational gains acquired by women have not made them economically independent, socially mobile or politically empowered. Overarching these are the religious, cultural and patriarchal attitudes and social practices inculcated from childhood.

Violence against women and children is a prevalent, serious and preventable human rights abuse. More than 60 percent of women is said to have experienced domestic violence at some point in their lifetime. This is neither a private matter nor an inevitable or intractable social issue. The social, health and economic costs of violence against women and children are enormous. We recognise that preventing such violence is a matter of national urgency and can only be achieved if we all work together.

A number of factors appear to contribute to this violence including dominant social and cultural norms discouraging women from seeking legal recourse for violence, beliefs and behaviours reflecting disrespect for women, low support for gender equality, adherence to rigid or stereotypical gender roles, relations and identities, increasing drug and alcohol abuse and rising unemployment. Male chauvinism both individual and systemic, patriarchal privilege, and cultural stigma against victims of domestic violence aggravate this situation.

We are committed to a Sri Lanka free of violence against women and their children. We acknowledge the vast damage such violence inflicts on individuals, communities, institutions and the society. We believe gender inequality is the core of this problem and also that the solution lies at the heart of it. An island wide cultural and systematic change that safeguards women's economic, social and political rights and the more equal distribution of power and resources between men and women would lead to marked reduction in this violence.

Greater participation of women in the political process may be a pre-condition for their economic and social emancipation. However, female representation in the political decision-making process is small. It is only five percent at the parliamentary level, four percent at the provincial council level and two percent at the local government level.

Legislation have been amended to increase women's participation at the provincial council level to at least 30 percent and the women representation at the local government level to 25 percent. However, a mere increase of the number of women at provincial and local government level may not be sufficient to change the way of governance and the style of political decision making.

Women's political participation will depend on whether male-dominated political institutions will propose suitable candidates. The ingrained political culture that imparts a second-class status to the women in families as they attribute family success to how well males in the family do also hinders their participation. Women are subjected to discriminatory remuneration and are more vulnerable to sexual attacks. Their participation is further discouraged by lack of resources, entrenched social norms, disrespectful, undignified, insulting, derogatory and violent nature of propaganda carried by the male dominated political machinery.

Addressing this issue needs commitment and persistence from all leaders at the national, provincial and local levels in both public and private sectors. We believe rather than taking a piecemeal and remedial approach, it needs a preventive, transversal and systematic approach in the form of gender mainstreaming. Such an approach will reinforce the social equality of women and men by integrating the gender perspective in public policy.

At a practical level this approach will strengthen and embed the equality of women and men in society; by ensuring that during all the steps in the political process (i.e., in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation), the socio-economic differences that exist among men and women are taken into account. We believe that the daily application of gender mainstreaming in each of these areas will bring about a cultural change; making a real and concrete impact on the decision-making process.

Appropriate national legislation will be enacted for this purpose and incentives will be provided for the provincial governance to help them better understand and follow through the gender mainstreaming legal framework and the concepts behind it. A new law will be enacted with the intent of thwarting discrimination against those with biologically diverse male and female characteristics regarding their employment, social security, provision of goods and services and access to economic, social and cultural activities etc.

We will initiate a study to develop a legal framework for a consistent and integrated national approach to prevent violence against women and their children. Based on the findings appropriate legislation will be enacted to prevent such violence within and outside the family by criminalising physical violence and mental abuse. In addition, we will provide funds necessary for measures such as shelters, refuges and other appropriate care places for women and children, screened staff, monitoring protection orders, counselling, paid maternal and paternal leave, 24/7 psychological support, medical care and education etc.

We will engage with communities starting from school level to challenge historically entrenched beliefs and behaviours and the socio-economic and political structures, practices and systems that support such violence.

This will fall in line with the application of the resolutions from the world conference on women held in Beijing in September 1995 and integration of the gender mainstreaming perspective into holistic national policy analysis, formulation, implementation and monitoring.



## 3.5 Media and Communication

### Sri Lanka Media Authority

We believe it is important to set up an independent Sri Lanka Media Authority (SLMA). It will be the responsibility of this body to ensure radio and television broadcasting, print and other electronic media provide a balanced service to all Sri Lankans without fear or favour, operating within the regulatory framework.

### Public Broadcaster

We also believe there should be public broadcasting service financed and controlled by the public for the public. It should be neither commercial nor state-owned, free from political interference and pressure from commercial forces. At its best, the public broadcaster can play a major role in helping the Sri Lankan public better understand the country's social, political and cultural complexity.

Public broadcasting includes a radio, television and other electronic media outlets. Their primary mission is public service.

### Public Enquiry

We will appoint a commission to carry out enquiries into setting up:

- a Statutory Media Authority; and
- an Independent Public Broadcasting Corporation.

This commission will be chaired by somebody with extensive media expertise and members will be drawn from diverse fields of expertise in society. A secretarial team will be appointed for its administrative and research work. All appointments will be solely based on merit.

The commission will be expected to hand over within a prescribed time limit, the report with evidence-based recommendations to the minister responsible for media. The Minister is responsible for tabling it in the Parliament. The government should be responding to the report within four months from the date of receiving the report.

The government's response should outline the following:

- the recommendations the government will not accept and the reasons for it;
- the recommendations the government will principally agree to, but no timeframe to implement and the reason for it; and
- the recommendations the government will take on board and implement within a specified timeframe and reasons for it.

Once tabled in the parliament the report will become a public document.

The Terms of Reference detailed below describe the purpose and scope of the enquiry.

#### 1) Setting up Media Authority

##### Purpose

To investigate and recommend the best way of setting up a regulatory body that is independent of government to monitoring the operations of all media outlets with special reference to the following criteria:

- Identify and counter new challenges presented by technological development;
- Review and recommend media industry standards and codes of practice including censorship laws;
- Develop an effective licensing regime to contribute towards the expenses of public broadcaster;
- Review television classification regime with reference to the telecasting times to suit a younger audience;

- Investigate and recommend appropriate commercial advertisements if any, for the public broadcaster;
- Review whether the government should give priority to the public broadcaster for government advertisements as a way of contributing to its coffers;
- Develop guidelines especially for television outlets to reduce unnecessary displays of violence in television programs and to focus on delivering unbiased information to all citizens;
- Review and recommend requirements of monitoring and sanctioning of electronic media engaged in prohibited online content;
- Review defamation guidelines for all media platforms and recommend changes, if necessary;
- Discuss through a parliamentary bipartisan oversight committee the pros and cons of SLMA reporting to the Parliament as opposed to the Minister; and
- Review and recommend a legislative framework necessary for setting up Sri Lanka Media Authority.

#### **Scope**

- Call for written submissions from all interested parties;
- Invite most appropriate submitters for a public enquiry; and
- Requests for briefings from all media outlets and relevant departments.

## **2) Public Broadcasting**

#### **Purpose**

To identify the best way to set up an independent broadcaster that is not solely about producing entertainment, but will deliver market share and inform the public while serving the public good based on the following criteria:

- Enhancing Public Broadcaster as an educational and cultural vehicle especially for disadvantaged communities;
- Strengthening Public Broadcaster as a gateway to information and knowledge for all Sri Lankans;
- Encouraging innovative and creative improvements in programming to captivate larger audiences;
- Transparent process to make independent Public Broadcaster board appointments;
- Review the situation of all publicly funded media outlets and recommend an appropriate amalgamated/umbrella structure for a truly independent public broadcaster;
- Review and recommend funding methodologies;
- Recommend ways to distant it from vested interests;
- Recommend coordinating programs to reflect the multicultural nature of the country;
- Identify topics of social benefit that are not provided by commercial broadcasters;
- Review the use of state-of-the-art technologies;
- Explore the possibilities of broadcasting overseas; and
- Any overall recommendation for setting up a legislative framework to facilitate the independent Public Broadcaster.

#### **Scope**

- Call for written submissions from all interested parties;
- Invite most appropriate submitters for a public enquiry;
- Request for briefings from all media outlets and relevant departments;
- Communicate with SLD communities who are engaged in community radios/televisions;
- Request briefings from the Arts Community in the country; and
- Research on British, Australian, Canadian and other relevant broadcasting corporations.

## **4. Futuristic Industry and Infrastructure**

## 4.1 Reforming The Public Transport System & Road Networks

The operation of local buses, taxis and hire car services should come under the jurisdiction of PCs. The inter-city buses and trains should remain in the hands of the national government. A National Transport Authority will be established to operate inter-city bus services, railway system, any non-recreational cruise operations and other mode of ground transportation that are not the responsibility of the PC.

No road project should be embarked upon, until a cost benefit analysis indicates it is a worthwhile project and is not environmentally hazardous. These studies have to be independently carried out by appropriately qualified staff working at the Road Authority.

National government should undertake major rail infrastructure projects including fast rail projects so that people can travel from distant places to cities for work. For example, a fast train from Puttalam to Colombo through Chilaw and Negombo would be enormously beneficial to those who live in that corridor. There will be other corridors where introduction of fast trains will change lifestyles of many. The government might need to raise loans or foreign aid to embark on such major projects. This will also help cities and inner suburbs where populations are surging.

Public-sector buses can run alongside the private operators, with each province setting up its own public transport authority to oversee the running of these services. We will consider a proposition in which the government will pay a private contractor an agreed amount of money to run a set number of bus trips in a particular route, while a public servant will be employed in the bus to collect ticket money from the passengers.

It will be mandatory to operate feeder bus services to and from railway stations. Taxis, Uber, three wheelers, fair share arrangements and hire car operations should be regulated by the Transport Authority of each PC. This is an area where Platform (sharing) Co-operatives could work. Local governments can take the lead in helping out platform cooperatives in the community to share out services. They can be trained through the national WSDE Authority. Studies will be made available on Platform Cooperatives to gain experiences from such entities that have been implemented in other parts of the world. The Platform Cooperatives concept is based on sharing the data and services.

The National Transport Authority should undertake a study to alleviate the transport congestion in Colombo and inner suburbs of Colombo. The study will consider a number of public transport options such as Sky Rail, Trams and enhanced rail and bus services and imposing restrictions on the flow of cars into Metropolitan Colombo.

It is ideal to have a plan to move government offices outside Metropolitan Colombo, where it is practical to do so. This should be in the mix for consideration when looking to reduce traffic congestion.

## 4.2 Smart Cities

The importance of our cities, both urban and rural to our well-being is undeniable. Our cities are full of congestion, polluted and constricted resulting in long delays, costly health issues, environmental damages and economic wastage. Hence, new ways are needed to make our cities more liveable, greener and productive with all tiers of government adopting a united strategic approach to address such issues. When the government, the private sector and the community work together, to deliver a shared vision, our cities will succeed and perform at their best.

Sri Lanka has a strong rural based population and a series of urban city centres developed since the colonial days. The population growth rate is one of the lowest in the region and is expected to become negative. Urbanization is also perceived to be low. Sri Lanka's growth as a knowledge-based economy and the resultant prosperity will go hand in hand with the growth of our cities and the surrounding regions. Knowledge based industries rely on the successful concentration of enterprises in particular locations.

To succeed in future, our cities need to be productive, accessible and liveable and clearly focused on serving the needs of their citizens. People settle around locations that offer economic and social benefits such as transport, trading, resources, employment, education and training. To take advantage of future opportunities, we need to rethink the way our cities can be planned, built and managed. Given the potential economic growth, our decision making needs to be knowledge-based and participatively driven. If cities are to meet the needs of residents, their engagement and participation in planning and decision-making processes are essential. We will therefore encourage all residents to share their ideas to help shape the cities of the future.

Commerce and manufacturing have fostered growth in the cities and suburbs, while agriculture and tourism have supported towns and cities in the regions. Entrepreneurs will establish their business operations in locations accessible to the largest number of potential employees and customers. People will have an incentive to settle in locations where they can access better employment opportunities, goods and services. These locations, often located in city centres, will become the places where the knowledge economy is strongest. Such locations need to have better and efficient transport corridors and interchanges.

### **Cities of the Future**

The cities should first and foremost serve their own residents humanely. Hence, our natural and built environments need to be sustainable, liveable and have accessible, high quality public spaces providing a sense of community that brings people together to exchange their ideas. Hence, the necessity to have better and smarter transport arrangements within and across cities and appropriate priority investment decisions on public transport projects that will improve access to job centres and government agencies and promote urban renewal.

### **Challenges and opportunities**

Transition to a shared and digital economy can help transform Sri Lanka into a Knowledge Nation, which in turn will present many opportunities and challenges. Innovation plays a key role in this transition. Sri Lanka enjoys the advantage of being located in a high economic growth region of Asia; comprising a highly educated workforce, skilled and capable researchers and research institutions and a reasonably mature financial sector. To take advantage of upcoming opportunities, our cities need to provide the right environment for investment, collaboration and growth.

Therefore, we will establish Infrastructure Authority of Sri Lanka (IASL) as an umbrella organisation for strategically managing all infrastructure projects in the country. Its first priority will be to conduct an infrastructure needs audit and deliver a 30-year Integrated Infrastructure Plan for Sri Lanka (IIPSL) for the country as a whole. In response to this plan, a Smart Cities Plan will be developed. This plan will make a fundamental commitment to a cooperative approach to long term planning, targeted investment and reform.

## **Environment**

By completing large scale strategic assessments, the IASL will streamline long term environmental planning outcomes. Such assessments will provide greater environmental outcomes to the people, certainty to investors and can reduce business costs. Improving city air quality can be enforced by ensuring improved vehicle fuel efficiency and sustainable buildings linked with renewable energy sources such as solar. We shall work towards developing a rating system to assist improving the sustainability, quality and efficiency of buildings and precincts through developing standards and making appropriate investments.

## **Green spaces**

Living in regional cities provide the advantage of accessible green open spaces and amenities. City dwellers who live in apartments or semi-detached houses with no backyards also need access to parks and open spaces. This is vital to increasing the quality of life in urban areas. Therefore, in high density neighbourhoods, people need to be able to access amenities such as community gardens, green walls and roofs, public artwork and sports grounds.

## **Transport**

An efficient, convenient and environmentally friendly means of transporting large numbers of people within and between cities will occur in a well-designed public transport network. Such networks will include heavy and light rail, buses, ferries as well as integrated active transport means such as cycling and walking. In addition, we will use pricing signals to influence the time and route motorists choose to travel. Pricing can also be used to relieve peak travel time pressures and manage demand on public transport networks.

Vital to the economy is the efficient movement of freight, including linking regional areas to markets. Congestion cannot be avoided, but investment in fast, efficient public transport systems to provide viable alternatives to passenger vehicles can alleviate congestion. To help reduce congestion, we will plan and develop strategies to enable commuters accessing employment, schools, shopping, services and recreational facilities within an hour of their residence.

## **Human capital**

The greatest opportunity for Sri Lanka's future lies among our people, their ideas, skills and experiences. To secure our expatriate community and also to attract overseas talent, our cities need to make career opportunities, education and training accessible. We need to initiate and attract great enterprises and support their growth and success. As the work force becomes increasingly mobile, the liveability of a city that offer lifestyle, culture and amenity will become a significant factor in choosing a city to live over another.

With traditional industries becoming less labour-intensive, regional populations will encounter STEM related employment challenges. New employment opportunities will develop in tourism and service-related areas such as health and aged care. Employment clusters may arise in urban city centres, regional cities or suburban zones with concentration of a few specialised industries with access to a skilled work force. This will result in more demand for housing and land in the vicinity. To counter this, we shall make accessible and affordable housing available closer to such employment clusters. All tiers of government and the private sector will need to play a role in increasing housing supply in appropriate locations.

We shall do this by:

- a) increasing housing supply near work and appropriate transport connections so that more people can live closer to their work with easy access to transport and services;
- b) increasing the opportunity to choose active transport such as walking and cycling;
- c) increasing employment growth nearer the locations where people are already concentrated; and
- d) improving connectivity between housing and employment centres.

## **Smart Technology**

To overcome the challenges relating to employment, housing, environment, access to education and training and congestion, we need to base the economic transition and growth of our cities on vast advances in technology currently taking place. The intelligent and strategic use of smart technologies will fundamentally change the way we live and work. These technological developments will provide unique creative solutions to the challenges we face in both the government and the non-government sectors. Real time data and smart technology will lead to better utilisation of infrastructure, clean energy, energy efficiency, improvements in services and better benchmarking of the performance of cities.

Use of information and communications technology (ICT) including improved broadband networks will enable new types of real time personalised services. Take up of technology such as smart phones combined with access to and use of data across the public and private sector will represent an enormous resource for innovation, better services and efficient use of infrastructure in our cities. This will also contribute to making government more people focused and stimulate innovation in service delivery.

### 4.3 Industrial Relations

Our industrial relations policy will provide for workplace arrangements and associated employment relations matters. This policy will apply to all employment relationships at a work place under various employment situations both unionised and non-unionised.

When labour markets are seen as imperfect, and when the employment relationship includes conflicts of interest, markets or managers cannot be relied upon to always serve workers' interests. An industrial relations framework supports institutional interventions to improve the workings of the employment relationship and to protect workers' rights.

Industrial relations policy should aim at balancing the employment relationship to generate economic efficiency as well as employee equity and participation. Such a system will not pursue an employment relationship that provides too much weight to employers' interests.

When the interests of employers and employees are divergent, the employers wish to maximize profit at the expense of the employee and employees wish to enjoy social benefits in the form of increased wages and more conducive working environments. This makes conflict inevitable. Trade unions intervene to protect the interests of their members as trade unions are legitimate representatives of employees. Collective bargaining when properly managed should lead to workplace harmony and positive change.

We will study the existing industrial relations system in Sri Lanka to check whether it needs to be replaced by a new fairer system.

If elected, we will set up an Investigatory Parliamentary Committee to look into the existing system of industrial relations. At the outset, a referral will be provided to investigate into the independence and the appropriateness of powers of the industrial relations tribunal. We believe that all workers should have a protection mechanism and above minimum wages and conditions determined by an Independent Industrial Relations Commission with non-judicial power of arbitration in settling industrial disputes.



## 4.4 Tourism and Related Industries

To improve this vital industry, we need to become not only a decent society, but also a welcoming society. It is incumbent upon government to lay out a broad base tourism plan to cater for different types of tourism such as Nature, Sports, Recreation and Regular Tourism, etc. It is wise to look at niche markets such as accommodating tourist with disabilities and or complex health issues.

It is worthwhile having a detailed study about the feasibility of setting up a large tourism and gaming complex with other entertainment facilities on land that is not irrigated and has easy access to South Asian tourists. Large-scale tourism and gaming industries are not available in India and Pakistan. The investment in the entertainment industry will spread into other industries such as hotel, restaurant, water activities, transport etc. Kalpitiya in the Puttalam District could be an ideal area to set up a tourism and gaming complex. The added advantage here is the beach in the area. Kalpitiya is a dry sandy area with lot of barren land.

These should not be just tourism and gaming complexes but also entertainment centers with variety of activities for families. Water activities, state of the art cinemas, theme parks and other activities could be incorporated into these entertainment complexes. These centers could be made attractive to the wealthy to middle class South Asian community and general tourists from across the world.

It will be fully worth investigating the innovative idea of operating a Sri Lankan luxury cruises in the South Asian waters touching ports in India, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

Sri Lanka is central enough to develop the Colombo airport as one of the regional central airports similar to that of Singapore. A detailed study will be needed to examine what is required to achieve this. This study will certainly include looking at airline landing rights and upgrading other facilities at the airport. If the gaming complex idea can be set in motion, there could be a domestic airport where the complex is located. If the complex can be developed with sea frontage, cruise ship facilities should also be built. This will increase the traffic flow to Colombo Airport.

Sufficient measures necessary including the security will be put in place to ensure the safety of tourists.

## **5. Health and Well-being of the Nation**

## 5.1 Reforming the Health System

We envisage a health system based on individual needs and not according to the size of that individual's purse. This will be our overarching policy position.

### **Medicare Levy 2 percent**

This can be achieved by a universal medical system where everybody pays a small percentage such as two percent of their income to a National Health Fund. This fund could provide subsidies for doctor visits with a small co-payment made by the patient. This co-payment should be small enough not to discourage patients to visit a doctor when they are ill, and it should be reasonable enough for them not to visit the doctor when they really don't have to. The same arrangements could be duplicated with specialist visits as well. This can be extended to other systems of medicine in Sri Lanka, such as Ayurveda and Yunani which will be incorporated into a national scheme.

### **Organ Donation**

It will be legislated that everybody is an organ donor unless they choose to opt out. Anybody should have the right to opt out of this without citing any reason. An offence occurs if anybody including family members hinders the organ donation process of a deceased person who has not opted out. A national registry will be maintained on organ donations, like cadaveric organs. The live organ donation process will be tightly regulated. Legislation will be passed with punitive measures, including imprisonment for those who are found to be breaching the law.

We will invest heavily in research in creating organs through the 3D printing technology.

Expansion of palliative care (if available presently) and provisions for assisted dying will need to be examined. The assisted dying legislation, if agreed to, should be subjected to a conscientious vote in the Parliament.

A detailed study of Sri Lanka's abortion laws will be conducted, and appropriate and necessary legislative changes will be made. The legislation that is put forward to parliament should also be subject to a conscientious vote.

A reference will be provided to the parliamentary Investigatory Committee on Health to carry out a detailed study on the role of private hospitals, medical insurance, community health centres and public day surgery places, dental health, mental health, ophthalmology etc., to articulate necessary policy positions to overhaul the health system for the benefit of all, not just the privileged few.

The parliamentary committee will investigate the COGESL arrangements and also make appropriate recommendations on funding arrangements.

## 5.2 Well-being, Happiness, Morale and Spirituality

The modern world is richer than it has been at any time in its history. Yet income inequality is at unacceptable levels. Everyone in the world is affected by the unceasingly draining world's natural resources for profit maximisation accelerating industrialised corruption and the resultant destruction of our planet including its environment. This creates strains and stresses on us as individuals, as families and as a society.

Our health depends on material, social, cultural and spiritual sources. As physical beings, our material needs are for nutritious food, clean air and water, adequate shelter, physical activity and sleep etc. As social beings we need families, friends and communities to be associated with to flourish. As cultural beings, we require cultures to make our lives worthwhile. As spiritual beings, we are subconsciously connected to the rest of the world, thus providing meaning to our lives. Well-being emanates from being connected and engaged in such a web of relationships and interests.

In 2011, the United Nations called on its member states to undertake steps that give more importance to happiness and well-being. Bhutan sponsored this resolution. It was adopted without a vote. Bhutan has been using Gross National Happiness (GNH) rather than gross domestic product (GDP) as an indicator of human success. The resolution also noted that the GDP “was not designed to and does not adequately reflect the happiness and well-being of people in a country,” and “unsustainable patterns of production and consumption can impede sustainable development.”

### Well-being

We recognise the well-known fact that well-being contributes to health and health contributes to well-being and that well-being is a composite of various objective and subjective elements. We will therefore establish a National Well-being Development Authority (NWDA). Its tasks will include, conducting an appropriate technical study by specialists in the field to select an approach to determine an appropriate composite that can be used to measure national well-being and happiness, what indicators can be used for its measurement and practically how the required data can be collected. This will be a technically complex and politically sensitive process.

### Happiness

Happiness should signify the fullness of life one enjoys, personal development as a human being and meaningfulness of one's existence. So, material development is complemented with developments in community, culture, relationships, spirituality, psychological well-being and harmony with the environment. Happiness of a person comprises of both subjective and objective elements. One component would be psychological well-being, which is constituted by good health, education, living standards, environmental diversity, resilience, good governance, cultural diversity, community and leisure time.

### Morale

If a population is over stressed due to cost of living pressures, instability, human rights violations, trauma, death, destruction and war and intense longing for peace its morale would decrease. The number of suicides in a society also indicates the stress levels it is being subjected to. The causes for this could be mental health issues, addictions, relationship issues and the social stigma attached to certain incidents etc. Low morale may also accelerate the number of people leaving the country searching for better opportunities for them and their families. Thus, managing morale is challenged by the level of societal and individual stress a population has to endure as a whole. To keep improving the morale, peoples' participation, interaction, consultation and communication will be extremely significant and these need to be incorporated into the policies and procedures of the government.

### Spirituality

Spirituality is a broad concept regarded as an internal process concerned with finding a sense of meaning and purpose of life. It is about connection/relationship with the self, with others, with environment and with some higher

power beyond the self, people believe in. Spirituality may affect the way people understand and give consideration to health, illness, diagnoses, recovery and loss. Therefore, for health and health care policy considerations, it is vital to find out how a population is spiritual/religious.

Furthermore, health and healthcare systems are increasingly moving towards holistic, patient centered approaches which embrace a bio-psychosocial model of care that emphasises on collaboration and effective communication. In order to help people, sensitivity to cultural diversity and practices is important. Thus, we need to be particularly sensitive to the diverse ways they experience and express their spirituality.

For Sri Lanka, one of the challenges would be the manner in which we can develop policy options to promote wellbeing by integrating the wellbeing focus into government policies in a systematic manner. The other challenge would be the quantification of the incremental wellbeing achieved. By means of an appropriate study, we will work towards identifying the spheres which will have the most potential for public policy to influence wellbeing. In those spheres, we can link the better understanding of wellbeing with appropriate policies to promote it. In doing so, we will take a more sophisticated view of future-readiness and the policies that are needed to promote resilience by reinforcing strengths and remedying vulnerabilities.

We believe that wellbeing correlates fairly closely with particular forms of government and the outcomes of particular government policies. Happiness is not an end in itself. Yet, it is a resultant of realising other relevant social and economic goals. We believe that public policies can and do influence the overall distribution of wellbeing of the population making most people upwardly mobile.

In practical terms, increasing the wellbeing of population can be initiated by incorporating appropriate policies in school education, thus preparing young people for the full demands of life, taking into consideration the patient experience and wellbeing in health policy formulation, implementing policies that would encourage better interaction among neighbours in a community etc.

## 5.3 Arts and Culture

The arts, culture, heritage and creativity are fundamental to Sri Lanka's identity as a society and to the success of its national economy. Art and the culture directly contribute to the prosperity, liveability and happiness of our communities and promote the cultural vitality of our society to the rest of the world.

Our vision is for building a creative and inclusive nation. We will work towards developing, preserving, protecting and promoting arts, cultures and heritages of all communities who have made Sri Lanka their home. We will aim to develop and support creative initiatives that contribute to acknowledging, respecting, interpreting and building upon our rich and diverse cultural heritages.

We will take steps to preserve our country's unique and rich ancient arts and cultural heritage, while introducing the salient features of the rest of the world's art and cultural heritage. Our cultural diversity needs to be recognised, respected and celebrated. This will contribute to strengthening the multi-cultural social fabric and healing the wounds of the past not only locally, but even beyond our national boundaries. Many different but equally valid forms of artistic expressions would encourage people to develop understanding, tolerance and respect for varied opinions and approaches.

### **Creative Industry Audit**

We will commission a study inclusive of an island-wide creative industry audit with the aim of working out a strategy for growth and development of industry. Its findings will contribute to developing a learned model for establishing provincial cultural hubs island wide, serving as training and marketing platforms of emerging cultural enterprises and to increasing the market access potential in the sphere of arts.

### **Artist cooperatives**

Functioning similar to the model of Worker Self-Driven Enterprises (WSDE), autonomous arts organisations organised as non-capital stock corporations, non-profit organizations, or unincorporated associations and jointly owned and democratically controlled by its members will be promoted. This type of cooperatives will offer professional and emerging artists a strong support network and a unique space in which to create, educate and exhibit.

Such cooperatives will provide professional facilities and services including studios, workshops, equipment, exhibition galleries, educational and training resources, web marketing, publishing and distributing. By design, all economic and non-economic benefits and liabilities will be shared equally among its members. Cooperative members will elect their board of directors from within the membership.

### **Register of Cultural Organisations**

We will develop a Register of Cultural Organisations (RCO) that aims to strengthen private sector support for the arts and encourage people to contribute to the nation's vibrant cultural life. The RCO will be administered and maintained by the Council for Arts and Culture (CAC). To be listed in the RCO, the Minister responsible needs to approve an application on the recommendations of the CAC council. To be listed in the RCO, an organisation's primary purpose should be to promote one or more cultural activities in Sri Lanka such as: literature, visual, community, fine, performing or digital arts including television, video, films, craft, design, radio and cultural heritage etc.

### **Infrastructure**

Appropriate measures will be taken to build skills and capacity of the arts, culture and heritage sectors to ensure their on-going development and responsiveness. The teaching of arts, culture and heritage and the building of arts, culture and heritage infrastructure such as libraries, museums, heritage monuments and arts centers in rural and regional areas will be given priority.

## **Arts and Culture Conference and Exhibition**

An annual Arts and Culture Conference and Exhibition aimed at promoting collaboration among private and public-sector arts players can become a key cultural event on the Asian continent. It will be tantamount to a trade-show comprising conferences, exhibitions, arts business seminars and arts products and services for sale.

## **Annual National Festival of Sri Lanka Arts**

We will sponsor an Annual National Festival of Sri Lanka Arts (NFSLA) as a celebration representing all the cultures of the Island. It will become the largest art event on the Island. This NFSLA Festival will play not only a vital role in safeguarding traditional cultural practices by sharing and exchanging culture, but also promote tolerance, respect and dignity of each culture through a deep people-to-people connection and mutual understanding.

## **Cultural material**

Cultural material including art works, historical artefacts such as technology and antiques and objects such as fossils and skeletal remains are an important part of our national identity. Any handling of such cultural material should be done according to the law and any one violating such legislation will be brought to justice.

## **Creative Industries**

We will help develop creative industry initiatives that will contribute to acknowledging, respecting and interpreting our rich and diverse cultural heritage, regardless of the form of art through which it is expressed. Such initiatives will work towards developing and buttressing a tolerant society. Intellectual Property Legislation will be reviewed and amended as needed to prevent copyright violations of creative work.

Operational funding will be provided for training programs to promote research, innovation, participation and excellence in the field of creative industries. We will provide a range of scholarships both local and international to aspiring artists to advance the knowledge base and art techniques they use for producing their creative work. In addition, new art project spaces will be designed for local and international collaborative work among artists and artist run organisations.

We will arrange through programs of cultural exchanges and sister city relationships for local creative artists to gain mutual international arts experience. Teams of creative artists from other countries will be allowed to undergo similar opportunities in Sri Lanka through international exchanges. This will help build networking opportunities and foster international linkages that will help promote our artists and their work to foreign art circles.

In Sri Lanka and among the SLD communities, countless creative art works can be found. In addition, there are many works, some of which are recorded and some of which are centuries old. The risk of the older artworks and recordings being lost due to deterioration can only be avoided through digitisation. We will initiate and support a process of digitisation of these art works so that they can be properly identified and inventoried. Digitalisation of these precious works and performances will remove traditional barriers to cultural engagement both at individual and mass level.

The ensuing digital platforms will facilitate digital engagement of more audiences between themselves, artists and artist organisations. Such engagement will be more democratic and encourage more in-depth and reflective, but constructive artistic critique. Increasing internet access speeds coupled with the numerous devices capable of supporting digital media will provide arts audiences access to arts content of their choice.

While this will be disrupting the traditional ways of delivering and consuming arts, new forms of delivery and consumption anytime, anywhere in the form of "Streaming", "On-Demand Content" and "Access on the Go" will display an exponential takeover. The impact of digitisation on creative industries has been contradictory with revenue streams being maintained, expanded or created anew, while piracy of artworks increasing and margins for the artists decreasing. Recent trends indicate after a challenging period, revenues from digitalised creative industry services have returned to growth.

Monetisation of these services is still evolving. We will set up public media providing content free of cost while artist organisations and artists can charge for premium content sharing provisions.

### **Performing Arts – Theatre and Dance**

The theatre in Sri Lanka is vibrant. To buttress this vibrancy, we will set up a New Play Writing Programme with the involvement of government, universities and private institutions aimed at developing a generation of new writers who could create theatre work that resonates with the challenges of the modern world. Street Theatre has become more prominent and effective since the 1980s. New talents can be developed by nurturing a Street Theatre Laboratory and Young Street Theatre Festivals etc. The programme could comprise a series of playwriting workshops, development of new plays and production of selected local and international play work etc.

Dance has become a prime means of artistic expression, with dance companies expanding and exploring new territories. Other than the traditional dance, novel forms of dance are attracting new audiences with a number of home-grown productions, particularly those aimed at the popular and the SLD market. Like in music, theatre and the movies we will develop the proper infrastructure, encouragement and funding to realise the full creative and financial potential of dance.

### **Fine Arts – Screen, Music, Literature and Visual Arts**

We will support the Sri Lankan screen industry by showcasing the talents and creativity of our actors, writers, producers, directors and post-production workers. Sri Lanka can be promoted as an ideal location for film, television and other screen productions. This can also be supported by developing opportunities for establishing world class technical facilities for post-production, digital and visual effects for local and foreign films.

If elected, we will offer a package of incentives to attract film, television and other screen production and to promote the local film industry. In addition, an Emerging Filmmakers Incentive will aim at nurturing emerging local filmmakers, also contributing towards employment creation. A specialised art circuit will be established with theatres in provincial capitals. Film festivals will be organised island wide including International Film Festivals to held in all provincial capitals.

Sri Lanka has a rich local musical tradition with contemporary music also making its mark. Music also plays a vital economic role, generating significant copyright revenue. The creation of music hubs with a vision to develop these into state-of-the-art high-quality local music content production centers will assist independent music creators and producers. A Music Task Force will also be appointed to deal with challenges such as business investment, royalty collection and distribution, piracy, local content quota, and to look into the possibilities of looking after musicians via social security schemes.

Sri Lanka's rich and diverse literary heritage needs help to compete globally. We will support the work of writers from all communities and in doing so, jointly celebrate their outstanding literary achievements and their valuable contributions to the nation's cultural and intellectual life.



## 5.4 Sports

We will look into sporting activities not simply to partake in the spirit of sports but also to build up relationships with the international community and put Sri Lanka on the map to benefit the country economically. It is not an exaggeration to state that when in government we will use sporting activities as a precursor for investment and trade relationships.

Therefore, we will review supporting structures in every sport that is currently available in Sri Lanka. Sporting bodies will be independent of the government of the day and decisions should be made without fear or favour. Any corrupt activities or irregularities can be referred to IBAC and will be dealt with the full force of the law. All sporting bodies responsible for the selection process should be completely transparent and geared towards bringing the best talent to the fore.

The introduction of new sports should also be considered if it helps to build up relationships with other countries. Sri Lanka needs to develop sports for fraternal, political, economic and strategic reasons. For example, sport is an ideal way to build up a strong relationship with Australia and in particular with Victoria by introducing Australian Rules Football (ARF) in Sri Lanka. Talented Lankan ARF players might have the opportunity to play for Australian clubs. There will be talented Australian players going out to Sri Lanka for ARF related work thus building up mutually beneficial relationships. It will definitely take Sri Lanka-Australia relationship to greater heights.

The introduction of baseball could even take a similar twist as Americans are fond of baseball similar to Victorians believing in ARF as their religion.

The structures put in place to induce SLD communities to contribute for the well-being of their homeland could play an important role helping out in this process.

If not all sports, at least majority of them should be brought into a reputable standard so that international and local media rights could be obtained.

As sport is a global business, sending a strong anti-corruption message within and through sport may be of help in the fight against corruption in sports worldwide. All sports bodies and events should be organised while respecting human rights, labour rights, the environment and anti-corruption requirements. We will take strong anti-corruption measures such as, for example, all sport organisations to include transparency, accountability, integrity and democracy in their day-to-day work and internal compliance systems.

## **6. Knowledge Nation**

## 6.1 Reforming the Education System

We consider education is an investment for the future. Social and political agreement on the value of education will provide stability on the structure and key features of the Sri Lankan education system. The socio-economic background of a student should not be a hindrance in them attaining his/her educational goals. Higher educational performance will be enhanced when supported by system-level policies that encourage quality and equity in education. Further focus can be made on reducing inequities in specific target groups. Such policies also need to address the mismatches between supply and demand of study places and labour market needs both domestic and overseas.

### Governance arrangements

Governance of the education system needs to be shared between national and provincial authorities. The national government should define and set educational priorities, while PCs maintain and support schools and day-care centres and have significant responsibility for organising education, funding and curriculum and for hiring personnel. Decisions in schools are made by either the school, or the PC. This will depend on how decision-making is organised in the PC. The educational expenditure as a percentage of GDP (for all education levels combined) needs to be well above the current budget levels.

### Jurisdictional Responsibilities

The Tertiary education sector consisting of universities and technical schools should be the responsibility of the National Government. It is imperative that every Province should have at least two technical schools located far apart so as to provide easy access to all residents living across a province. The arrangements need to be made for secondary school children to have pathways to technical schools if they choose to explore those paths earlier on, while in secondary school. However, after year 10 they should have the opportunity to join a technical school if that is what they want to do. The technical schools should provide not just skills required for the country but also skills that are competitive in an international market.

### Teacher Issues

Teaching should be made a valued profession in society. Teachers need to be trusted professionals with a master's degree in education which will include research and practice-based studies. In primary and secondary education, their salaries need to be comparable to those at the level of senior public servants. Their teaching time has to be comprehensive and subjected to educational audits by an independent authority with expertise in education.

If elected to government, we will provide a referral to the Education Investigatory Committee to investigate primary and secondary education curricula. The government will act upon the Committee's recommendations.

### Plan

A National Education and Research Development Plan adopted by the Parliament needs to outline education policy priorities every four years. Nationally standardised curriculums and examinations are necessary to be conducted at years 6, 10, 12 and graduate level. Schools should have autonomy over the use of curricula and assessments based on the standards set by the national government.

### National Standard

Much greater attention needs to be paid to the primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions, with the help and trust in the proficiency of the academics, principals, teachers and other educational staff. Leadership capacities of all educational institutions that deliver quality education need strengthening. All players in the education system need to have the capacity to use evaluation and assessment strategies to improve student outcomes. It also needs to ensure capacity to deliver high-quality education across all PCs and improve efficiency of funding in tertiary education as a key goal. The university entrance examination will be a national examination conducted by the national education office. This will qualify a student to enter any tertiary educational institution anywhere in the

country depending on the marks they have secured. However, preference will be given to students who live close to those institutions.

The success of an education system will depend on the quality of its teachers. A reform process is needed to strengthen teacher education and to make it highly selective. Teacher education needs to move from teacher training colleges into universities. Primary & Secondary school teachers need to have at least an education diploma; preferably a master's degree. Selection process for primary teacher education will also involve a desk assessment of applicants' academic learning skills, and an examining assessment of their skills, motivation and commitment for teaching.

### **Kindergarten**

Receiving primary education will be made mandatory for every child. A study will be undertaken to assess what is currently available and practised at Kindergarten, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary levels of education. The management of Kinder, Primary and Secondary education should be the primary responsibility of the PCs. However, through COGESL process, national funding should be funnelled to PCs to help resource the school education system. It is vital to provide a kindergarten place for every child who is four years old. Adequate funding will be provided to build infrastructure and meet operational costs to have enough kindergarten places for all four-year kids.

### **Contribution Scheme**

Ten years of comprehensive basic education (from the age of five to fifteen) will be made compulsory, with a focus on equity and on preventing low achievement. Our education policy will offer flexibility at the upper secondary level between general and vocational education and training options that lead to a tertiary education.

It is in the best long-term interest of the country to provide more university places in required skill areas than what is available now. It depends on finding and committing funds. Therefore, it is important to introduce a Higher Education Contribution Scheme. It should consist of a payment of least 25 percent of the tertiary course fee by every student. The students need not pay this upfront but at a later stage in annual instalments when they are employed and earning a certain level of income that needs to be determined. If emigrating out of the country, they should make arrangements with the taxation department to pay back the amount owed.

### **Private Sector**

Currently, religious education plays an important role in the education system. We will examine how to incorporate it within the national educational policy and the suitability of current funding. As private institutions for tertiary education have become a part and parcel of the Sri Lankan educational system, it will be important to standardise both entry level requirements and final assessment level processes of all public and private tertiary educational institutions. This will ensure a nationally accepted syllabus will be taught in all universities, irrespective of whether they are publicly or privately run. A similar assessment process will also apply to overseas qualified graduates. Until a student passes the assessment process, requiring in some cases a written examination and a practical test, he/she cannot be legally employed in the profession studied for.

## 6.2 The Fourth Industrial Revolution and STEM

We are in the midst of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0 or i4.0), where technology and industry undergo rapid change. Yet, our education and training systems are not geared to develop skill sets, particularly in information based and technological environments, that will satisfy the market demands that would be called for. To make a workforce Industry 4.0-ready they need strong Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skills. Therefore, we need to develop STEM capabilities the future needs by aligning educational curricula with industry relevant skills.

For modern society STEM are critically important disciplines for holistic and participative social and economic development in preparing for the future. STEM skills are important to enable us to engage with disruptive technologies. Science and Mathematics provide answers to the fundamental questions of nature and enable us to understand the world around us. STEM disciplines of knowledge enable us to measure, analyse, design and advance our physical environment and enhance our quality of life.

Our education system will need to create workers with the skills and competencies required to thrive in a continuously changing environment. The most important skill is the ability to acquire new skills through life-long learning. We need to focus on the changes to skill sets needed to accompany technological change. Everybody needs the skills to interact with digital technology, whether it is maintaining records in caring professions, taking orders in retail, or operating equipment in the processing plant.

At the moment there is neither an overarching, coherent, cooperative strategy, nor a clearly-articulated STEM education policy. Many lack sufficient literacy, numeracy and STEM skills to meet this challenge. This technological disruption has outpaced our education system with literacy and numeracy in the reverse gear. The overall levels of performance and engagement in STEM subjects appear to be diminishing. This is not a good omen for sustaining our economic ambitions for the future. Thus, we believe a paradigm shift in STEM performance and outcomes is needed in the entire educational system.

In meeting the technologically driven change and complex social and environmental challenges, our vision is to equitably provide students with a STEM educational experience of the highest international quality. STEM education will play a crucial role in preparing for the future by paying attention to groups who are underrepresented in the STEM disciplines. At the same time, we need to take measures to fill gaps between the employability skills and the STEM-related skills.

If Sri Lanka is to become a hub of technological creativity and a leader in innovation, providing STEM Education of the highest quality is essential. STEM Expertise is necessary to drive our economic ambitions, support innovation and provide the foundations for our future prosperity. If Sri Lanka is to become a knowledge-based economy, we need to see that the quality and quantity of STEM are of a high standard. We will increasingly need scientifically-literate citizens for making well-informed decisions regarding major global issues such as climate change, sustainability, energy, and food security.

STEM education is multi-faceted. The four STEM disciplines include a wide range of STEM subjects that students can engage in during their educational life. We believe that the foundations for STEM education begin in early childhood when children naturally engage in early STEM exploration through hands-on multisensory and creative experiences. This helps young children to develop curiosity, inquisitiveness, critical-thinking and problem-solving capacities. We believe that STEM education not only involves the teaching of these disciplines and subjects in isolation but also involves a cross-disciplinary approach. We also recognise that a strong link between STEM and an Arts education will foster design, creativity and innovation.

We will establish a STEM Education Review Committee (STEMERC) to carry out a comprehensive review of STEM education which will make a set of recommendations that would address identifiable deficits in the primary, secondary and tertiary education, and lift the quality of the STEM education system to the highest standards. The

STEMERC committee through public consultations will draw upon the expertise of specialists in their respective fields, including the broader community. From a forward-thinking perspective, it is important building awareness, both in industry and among training and education providers, of the potential for Industry 4.0 technologies and service-based approaches to transform the industrial base.

Our priorities will be on teacher quality as it will be the main determinant of the quality of the education system. We will also implement the best methods to enhance learning, and endeavour to create heightened awareness of STEM careers, particularly among the rural children. A system of Professional Standards for Teachers and a National Curriculum will be developed to ensure high-quality teaching. This will be reflected and incorporated in all government policies and initiatives.

We will develop Innovation Sri Lanka 2025 as a strategy for Research and Development, Science and Technology. The STEM national action agenda will involve increasing teacher capacity in STEM, increasing student knowledge, participation and understanding of STEM, encouraging school system support for STEM education initiatives and facilitating effective partnerships.

In this light STEMERC will examine ways to:

- establish STEM education research as a national research priority with multi-annual, sustained funding commitment;
- prepare teachers for STEM education including developing specialist qualified STEM teachers;
- support the existing STEM staff through mechanisms such as Continuing Professional Development and new teaching and learning modalities;
- provide for the broad base of STEM skills needed for future;
- foster student autonomy and responsibility through supporting inquiry-based learning;
- recognise the value and demand for STEM-skilled people;
- promote leadership in actively addressing all inequalities in education, employment and participation;
- use digital technologies to enhance learning;
- promote STEM careers and methods to enhance student STEM engagement;
- develop successful working partnerships with a shared vision based on trust and enthusiasm and benefits for all involved;
- ensure a high-quality graduate output aligned with national economic needs; and
- introduce digital technology to facilitate international collaboration in STEM subjects amongst schools, and between schools and research facilities.

Based on the STERMEC recommendations, we will produce an integrated National STEM Education Policy Statement with input from, all the relevant stakeholders across the continuum of education. The implementation of this policy will require commitment, investment and early action, together with partners across all the primary stakeholders in both the formal and the informal learning sectors.

The findings of the committee will be considered within our overarching framework of providing primacy to the shared values for the whole of society as against profit maximisation for the few.

### 6.3 Adopting Industry 4.0 (Digital Economy)

Fourth Industrial Revolution (also called Industry 4.0) is the current digital revolution happening all around the world. This is very different to Information Communication Technologies (ICT) of the Third Industrial Revolution (Industry 3.0), which has been happening from 1970s with the invention of Microchip, PLC, Personal Computer, Internet, Mobile phone and recently social media.

Industry 4.0 is also a digital revolution like Industry 3.0 but different in speed, scale and complexity. Industry 4.0 is happening in the domains of physical, digital as well as biological spheres. The transformations are exponential in speed and also are blurring the boundaries of the above three domains. The Industry 4.0 technologies can be summarized as physical Megatrends (Autonomous Vehicles, 3-D Printing, Advance Robotics, New Materials etc.) Digital Megatrends (Internet of Things and Block Chains) and Biological Megatrends (Synthetic Biology, Personalized Healthcare Geno-editing, GM food and Bio-printing).

We will launch a study to assess the new technologies such as robotics, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, the Internet of Things, 3D and 4D printing etc. that could be applied in the current industrial environment and their impact on the economy, particularly in the manufacturing and agriculture sectors. This study will help identify appropriate targeted investment that need to be made in turning some of the selected technologies into important drivers of growth. It will also identify the incentives that could be used to support industries involved in applied research, hi-tech starts up etc. to facilitate building necessary public and private partnerships in enabling Industry 4.0 technologies. This study will also identify the adjustments that need to be made in education to bring it to fall in line with the changes that would be brought about by the implementation of Industry 4.0. This will be extremely useful in synchronising the skill levels of workers who would find it difficult to keep up with the technological changes Industry 4.0 will bring about.

We believe that Industry, 4.0 if managed effectively, has the potential for country like Sri Lanka to “leap-frog” development challenges without following the conventional development strategies. Industry 4.0 will bring the benefits of improved productivity, improved manufacturing capabilities, international competitiveness while being a small player, distributed local production, better working conditions and sustainability and many more. At the same time, Industry 4.0 may expose us to new challenges and risks such as need to change the current economic settings, increased data security challenges, possible loss of conventional jobs, skill gaps, lack of institutional set-ups and poor digital infrastructure facilities and potential “social backlash” etc.

We therefore believe that Sri Lanka should adopt Industry 4.0 in a proactive way. We will therefore formulate a national strategy for adopting industry 4.0 in Sri Lanka by studying the best practices of pioneering countries such as the USA, the UK, Japan China, India, Korea and countries in the European Union etc. We will engage multi-stake holders including private sector, academia and research institutions, communities, civil society and other partners in the policy making in developing an eco-system for Industry 4.0. Along with our social market economic thinking, we will encourage Open Development Initiatives and innovate new social-business models while investing in skill development and change management. Innovative collaborative mechanisms among all parties and international partnership building will be key components of our Industry 4.0 national strategy.

The findings of the study will be considered within our overarching framework of providing primacy to the shared values for the whole of society as against profit maximisation for the few.

## **7. National Resources**



## 7.1 Food Security and Nutrition

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone has the right to a decent life, including enough food, clothing, housing, medical care and social services.

The experience of food insecurity has a high cost to individuals, families and the community as a whole in terms of reduced physical, mental and social health and wellbeing. Good nutrition depends on the availability of quality food and people having sufficient knowledge and understanding to make good choices and the desire to eat healthy food. As imported food varieties become more accessible and available, we believe food labelling information needs improving to include country of origin and the nutrient content of the food.

Currently Sri Lanka produces about 80 percent of its national food requirements and imports the rest. However, rice cultivation has become increasingly less profitable with farmers abandoning paddy fields. Agricultural productivity has stagnated with about 28 percent of the country's agricultural workforce contributing to only about eight percent of the Gross Domestic Product. Food inflation have surpassed levels of general inflation and is forecast to do so in future.

Sri Lanka strongly lags behind in terms of food security and nutrition. Despite the recent progress in child and maternal nutrition, Sri Lanka has continued to experience 'triple-burden malnutrition', a condition due to under nutrition, micro-nutrient deficiency and rising overweight and obesity. Among children between six months and five years of age, 17 percent have been found stunted and 21 percent underweight. Women at reproductive age are found to be under poor nutrition. Low agricultural productivity, vulnerability of agricultural eco-systems to climate change and natural disasters have increased risks of failure of food harvests with more food insecurity and less nutrition. Yet, the rate of food wastage in Sri Lanka continues to increase and it represents one of the highest globally.

The causes for food and nutrition insecurity in Sri Lanka are complex and appear to be caused by income inequality, rising costs of food, climate change, resource constraints such as water, fertiliser, energy and land, land fragmentation, soil degradation, stagnating agricultural productivity, urbanisation and aging population. For overcoming these challenges, we will use a multi-disciplinary and holistic food systems approach to improve small to medium holder productivity and make food production economically and environmentally sustainable.

Food security is intrinsically linked with sustainable agriculture. A food system, from agricultural production to processing, depends on reliable access to good quality water. Food crops depend on pollinating insects that face extinction due to habitat degradation, use of pesticides, climate change, diseases and pests resulted in mainly by profit maximisation at any cost. Committing resources for rural water infrastructure and efficient water management and investing in research to understand crop pollination by native insects are critical for ensuring food security.

Our vision is to ensure access to safe, culturally appropriate and nutritionally adequate food for all, now and into the future through developing a food system that is secure, healthy, sustainable, thriving and socially inclusive. After a comprehensive study, a State of the National Food System report will be tabled to the Parliament at the end of the first year and then regularly every three years. This report will collate all the key information about the food system such as, production capacity, land use, workforce and food security and related vital health indicators including dietary intake, food consumption patterns and food insecurity.

We will establish a native grains gene bank and a pasture gene bank so that we could conserve and manage national genetic resources. These genetic resources will be used to improve agricultural productivity and create new food products. This will contribute to making the industry viable, supporting food security and helping producers adapt to climate change. To do so we will develop a National Food Plan for Zero Hunger within two years in power, via extensive public consultation with all relevant stakeholders on the food security and nutrition goals that need to be realised.

The diverse topography and climatic conditions will enable our farmers, fishers and other food producers to make a great variety of food available in sufficient quantities. We believe Sri Lankan farmers; livestock owners and fisher folk can produce enough food to feed the population and create a sufficient surplus to export. The national government's broader strategy with input from provincial councils and relevant stakeholders like those involved in the agricultural

sector to reduce social disadvantage has to be addressing individual food insecurity needs. We will review the current systems and arrangements for managing food safety through a specialist committee under the relevant portfolio and improve our systems as per the committee's findings.

In consultation with provincial Councils, we will launch school and community educational programs around approach, attitude and engagement in food production and preparation. We will encourage supporting community and cooperative food enterprises and their activities that will cater for healthy and sustainable food options. Among such activities could be community and backyard gardens, community kitchens, city farms, school kitchen gardens, food hubs, cooperatives and farmers' markets. Under the education curriculum, students from kindergarten to GCE can learn about food, nutrition and agriculture, including how food is produced and marketed, and the sustainable use of resources and waste recycling. Children's behaviour and attitude toward healthy living can be influenced by teaching them about where food comes from, how it is produced, and how to prepare healthy, seasonal, nutritious meals and, most importantly, to sit together with their friends to enjoy food.

In this light, we will also support community participation and volunteering in food production by encouraging the establishment of food co-operatives. We will support community gardens, farmers' markets and other activities through programs developed around education, health and social cohesion. We will fund establishing a foodbank to deliver food and grocery supplies to agencies that help individuals in need. We will also implement a program for disadvantaged groups to establish better links with relevant services to avoid or resolve financial difficulties and to provide the frail and partially able people assistance with food preparation at home, delivery of meals, transport and mobility etc.

We will help farmers and other crop producers' access to new agricultural technologies. Sharing the international research and development expertise including that of the SLD communities with targeted stakeholders will help develop sustainable, safe and nutritious food varieties. We will also explore digital technologies such as the use of 3-D printing for food printing in order to prevent resource scarcity and improve food diversification.

We will ensure food safety interventions are well targeted, that research and development priorities are set for the future. Soil is essentially a non-renewable resource because it forms and regenerates very slowly but can degrade rapidly. Erosion, salinity, depletion and changed dynamics of soil biota reduce the land's capacity to produce food. To raise awareness of the important role soil plays in agricultural productivity, we will establish an Authority for Soil Preservation. This Authority will engage with stakeholders on the importance of maintaining healthy soils and application of innovative solutions for this.

We will seek to develop close institutional linkages with the neighbours in the Indian sub-continent and the trading partners for strengthening investment and technological cooperation to enhance food security and strengthen research and development into agri-foods. Regional integration will provide better opportunities for exports, if we can identify high value, premium food products for such export. We will do this by reducing trade barriers further, open new markets and improve access for our food exports through building new global partnerships.

Grants will be made available for the prospective exporters so that they can target priority markets or sectors. Priorities will be set in consultation with industry groups, agricultural producers and diplomatic network. We will give prominence to domestic producers who could find overseas partners to collaborate with; who are willing to adopt new technologies; who could create new opportunities for the broader agricultural industry and who could provide a basis for the development of commercial ventures to export food.

Collection of digitalised data on the status of food production that underpins decision-making needs to be conducted efficiently. Digital innovation will create new channels for food distribution making virtual supermarkets a reality. In future, farmers may sell directly to their customers via the internet. We will monitor and keep up-to-date data, policies and research relating to food security. A State of the Food System report that brings together key information about the food system and how it is performing will be published every five years to monitor the progress of our National Food Plan goals. We will monitor and evaluate our Food Security Policy every five years.

## 7.2 Water Security

Key issues relating to water security in Sri Lanka are identified as the variability of the availability of water, climatic variations, pollution of water and degradation of watersheds, use of groundwater and water governance.

The aim of water security is for all citizens to have equitable access to clean, safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation into the future at least cost. Water security is a basic human right as water is fundamental for sustaining livelihoods, human well-being, socio-economic development and eco-systems. During the last few decades there have been attempts to establish a privatised water market in Sri Lanka. We see the privatisation of water as a denial of basic human rights of our people.

The link between globalization and sustainable water management is evident from the relationship between the impact of international trade and the structure of the global economy and local water depletion and pollution. Whether the international trade in virtual water flows leads to global water use efficiency or whether it simply shifts the environmental burden to other locations need to be explored. Following the UN Conventions, we believe that it is the responsibility and the duty of a government to protect and secure this basic right of the people. It should remain under people's control.

This crucial resource underpins the economy, society, environment and cultural and social values. Water security will be enjoyed when water resources and services are successfully managed on an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable basis while:

- satisfying household water and sanitation needs of all communities on an equitable basis;
- efficiently supporting productive economies in agriculture, industry, and energy;
- developing sustainable vibrant, liveable cities and towns;
- restoring healthy rivers and ecosystems; and
- building resilient communities that can adapt to change.

Water governance refers to the range of political, social, economic, and administrative systems in place to regulate development and management of water resources and provision of water services at different levels of society. A key in sustainable water management is equitable, participatory and accountable water governance. Water is a strategically critical resource like food for the society as a whole. Factors such as population growth, urban expansion, deforestation, environmental degradation, climate variations, land use, salination, pollution, privatisation and exports demand influence it. Water supplies need to be made secure and resilient and satisfy customers in terms of quality and costs.

Sri Lanka has abundant water in terms of average per capita water availability despite being subjected to water scarcity issues at district levels due to socio-economic, geographic and climatic factors. Water shortages at district level will be of concern with future increase in demand and climate change. Agriculture and food production consume most of the available water during the water cycle and the remainder is attributed to households, commercial and industrial use.

Water scarcity continues to be a major constraint to development in the dry zone. Attempts to address the imbalance between the excess water in the wet zone and the lack of water in the dry zone have caused many socio-economic and climatic issues due to the lack of a long-term vision based on scientific advice and long-term community engagement and consultations. As magnitude and intensity of extreme weather events continue to increase, per capita water availability can be expected to decrease.

Water security requires protecting reservoirs and dam sites, pump stations, distribution networks, hydropower plants and related water infrastructure from contamination both natural and wanton and to natural hazards such as flooding, droughts, tsunami like events and during political and civil unrest, and curtailing water wastage and profligacy. Protests to safeguard drinking water against pollution show the failure to foresee water security challenges and the lack of appropriate regulatory and administrative mechanisms to allocate water amongst competing users sustainably

and economically efficiently. Water quality issues are found due to faecal pollution, turbid water, eutrophication, organic pollution, agrochemical use etc. Agricultural waste pollutes both groundwater and surface water with excessive use of agrochemicals and excessive use of fertiliser and water compounding this problem.

Under colonialism the transformation of the ecological system in Sri Lanka into a plantation economy employing unsustainable agricultural practices such as soil loosening and petro-chemical use has led to many ecological imbalances causing water and environmental issues such as soil erosion in the hill country, sedimentation of the waterways, sea erosion and rising salination levels in the coastal belt. Though our soil is fairly robust, there are fragile environments that need caring, such as the sloping lands in the plantations or the poorly structured soils in dry zone. These soils are susceptible to erosion and give rise to instability. Due to the large irrigation projects implemented since independence, conservation of the ecosystem and bio-diversity has become a serious issue with certain species both animal and plant under threat of extinction. Degradation of watersheds causes siltation, which is a threat to the sustainability of water resources. Thus, water security needs to become a key element in national planning with relevant measures to protect all water related infrastructure from any potential disruptions.

Our vision is to make society benefit from secure access to water resources into the foreseeable future by maximising the productive value of water, minimising long-term costs to users, industry and government and protecting water-dependent environment through a proper water governance framework. Water security needs to be considered in the long-term for peoples' benefit, rather than in the short-term simply for acquiring and maintaining political power. Investment decisions should be based on balanced social, economic and environmental analysis, informed by sound scientific advice and implemented through transparent and contestable processes. Through better water policy development and implementation, and with better governance systems, natural and human-induced water security issues could be better handled.

Household water security is essential for eradicating poverty as the poorest households have been left behind from the investment made to provide increased access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Addressing this inequitable access to pipe borne water and improved sanitation will be our priority.

Economic water security deals with supporting productive economies. Sri Lanka has enough water to support agriculture and economic development, but spatial and temporal variations have caused many challenges such as highly inefficient water use with relatively low agricultural productivity. The highest increase in demand for water emanates from the industry sector and urban households due to rapid industrialization and urbanization. Extreme climatic conditions such as drought and flood require forecasting and planning for future needs in terms of water supply and demand. As the liveability of urban and rural communities advances the demand for quality water supplies will rise. As such, water management with integrated planning across water cycles becomes critical.

If severe scarcities are to be avoided, effective steps for water conservation and management need to be taken. Urban water security deals with developing vibrant liveable cities and towns. Our cities are overcrowded and continues to draw more people in. They have the highest number of slum dwellings. Waste water, mostly untreated, is released into waterways and groundwater. For protecting public health, well-being and economic growth, the increasing pollution trends need to be reversed. Managing the demand for water needs to be looked at depending on the variability of water availability.

Natural disasters can temporarily affect water availability and security. Hence, alternate back up water supply arrangements to the affected areas should be in place. Future predicted water shortages in the drought prone and water deficit districts need to be explored after the conduct of necessary feasibility studies. Augmentation of drinking water supplies through desalination, recycled wastewater and treated stormwater for potable use can be considered based on expert advice regarding economic, environmental and social merits. Sea water desalination is expensive, however, with increased portability of desalination units and multi-barrier approach, we will explore the adoptability of desalination while maintaining primacy of protecting human health.

Most rural communities in the coastal belt depend on extractable water for drinking and other domestic requirements. This could become vulnerable due to future over-exploitation. Groundwater is also being increasingly extracted for agriculture leading to increased agricultural productivity and resilience. This seems to have led to high extraction

rates and a trend toward faster expansion of groundwater than surface water for irrigation. Such over-pumping of groundwater, for instance in the Jaffna Peninsula, could lead to very high salinity levels rendering the water unsuitable for both farming and domestic consumption. The key to the equitable use and sustainability is a paradigm shift from unregulated groundwater extraction to groundwater management and governance.

We will adopt measures to integrate investment in water and sanitation into national planning and to increase investment and maintenance of the needed water related facilities within enforced accountability mechanisms. We will allocate sufficient resources to improve water governance with the objective of attaining greater efficiency, transparency and equity. We will adopt measures to increase investment in the following areas:

- modernisation of irrigation services, reducing and reversing environmental damage and protecting natural habitat;
- water infrastructure and capacity development for wastewater treatment and controlled wastewater discharge;
- Integration of land and water management into urban planning for managing flooding of our cities; and
- improvement of water productivity and conservation.

Our rivers are in poor health due to pollution threatening health, economy, quality of life and ecosystems. Already, the island is experiencing extreme hot weather, extraordinary drought, floods and landslides and mosquito-borne diseases. Increased frequency and severity of drought and floods have made us particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate variability. This has adversely affected the timeliness and predictability of water supply. Coordination of the efforts of the public sector, private sector and the communities will enable reducing pollution and financing restoration of healthy rivers.

We are most vulnerable to water-related disasters, but we continue to be inadequately prepared to face such disasters. We will improve river health by holistically integrating water resources management and addressing the issues of water logging and salination. We will reduce the costs of rehabilitation through investing in risk reduction and preparedness by combining structural and non-structural solutions. We will also work towards establishing regional knowledge hubs as well as links with the expertise available with the non-resident Sri Lanka communities for receiving their advice for advancing research on important water security issues.

Considering the criticality of water for people's survival, we will establish a National Water Commission (NWC) led by an Independent Commissioner for Water Security. The NWC will be an independent statutory body within the government portfolios dealing with water, sustainability and population. We will launch a National Water Security Initiative (NWSI) under the direction of the NWC with due consideration of the inter-university research project recommendations and the current water initiatives and the legislative and administrative set-up.

Under the NWSI, provinces will be encouraged through research projects that will take a water-sensitive, decentralised approach to their water issues, with the aim of turning settlements into independent sites that will recycle their own wastewater, harvest rainwater, develop green spaces for water cleansing and food cultivation and restore natural waterways and tanks to encourage diversity and deal with flooding. Our approach will be based on more productive use of water, reducing the impact due to disaster vulnerabilities, prioritising sustainability as the issue in managing ecosystems and applying this knowledge in the decision-making process.

A Water Security Audit will be conducted in all provinces through grass-root level consultations to assess the water issues of each province. As assessed currently, even the wet zone would suffer in future due to water scarcity in an economic sense. The NWC with the assistance of an expert committee and the government, particularly, the work already done by the current water establishments will recommend a suitable course of action to secure rights of the people to continue to use water as one of their basic rights.

The NWC will initiate a scientific study of the effects of large irrigation schemes established and the benefits a system of small tank networks the dry zone inhabitants could accrue. In addition, it will look into additional ways of harmonising the surplus water during the wet season and the water scarcity during the dry season. It is also

paramount to study the use of groundwater and underground as water resources through wells and hand pumps. Depending on the recommendations of the Commission, we will take measures to build necessary infrastructure to increase water flows to the regions affected by drought related conditions.

We will emphasise on application of evidence-based practical initiatives, better planning founded on an improved understanding and more efficient management of water systems and application of simple new conservation technologies, such as drip irrigation, waste reuse and rainwater harvesting. We will provide for sustainable management of water resources including accounting for use and development for domestic purposes ensuring adequate and safe public water supply.

We will ensure transparency and security of water resource management. We will make it explicit that water quality specifications are taken into account in all applicable decision-making, particularly, in uniformly protecting water quality in public drinking water sources in both urban and regional areas. In water planning, public water supply will be accorded the highest priority by setting of statutory allocation limits and statutory water allocation plans for current and future use of public water supply. We will establish joint mechanisms between water scientists and policy makers to improve information exchange to ensure that advancements in hydrological sciences are employed to address water security issues and also to determine the data that need to be collected. Such data should be openly and easily made available to be utilized to improve water quality or security in the country.

A national research and development strategy for water, recognising its multiple roles and importance across the economy will be developed and its components prioritised. Government support for innovation in water management should be carefully targeted to accelerate the development and uptake of technologies leading to greater efficiency in supply and use of water.

We will establish a STEM based inter-university government funded research project code named 'Water for A Healthy Sri Lanka'. This is to develop and use digitalised and other technologies for island-wide sustainable water usage and management in addressing any emerging water issues, particularly in the areas with critical water shortages. The policies of Provincial Governments on sustainable water management need to be aligned with those of the National Government. Any divestment of their responsibilities to provide sustainable, just and affordable, potable water to their population will provide grounds for the National Government to legally challenge such divestment of a provincial government.

To achieve the national water security agenda, the NWC will table an annual report to the Parliament and will be made publicly available. This report will highlight the achievements and inadequacies during the year in realising the water agenda with the future directions planned for the three subsequent years.

Conservation of water will be the best additional source of freshwater. Traditional and natural wetlands and water bodies like tanks and village ponds etc. have been badly neglected in the yester decades. These structures will be restored, maintained and used properly and these water bodies should not be allowed to be encroached upon for any other land use.

A long-term community based participatory public awareness program can be undertaken at a suitable time to address the reservations on desalinated water, recycled wastewater and treated stormwater and assist public acceptance of potable recycling of water. We will introduce a school curriculum to educate children and communities about urban water and wastewater issues. Water conservation could be implemented mainly by creating community awareness and enforcing it through pricing mechanisms

In targeted communities, water consumer cooperatives and farmer's cooperatives can be set up to actively manage small-irrigation schemes. Providing them ownership would reduce project costs and promote programme efficiency. In the agricultural sector, cooperative water bodies can be established that would strengthen livelihoods of farmers. Community cooperatives can initiate schools for primary education which practice activity-based learning. This would help make communities aware of climate change and other topical subjects that affect their livelihoods. In power, we will provide incentives for these cooperative societies to be genuinely and legally recognised.

### 7.3 Energy Security

Energy security refers to the availability of an adequate supply of sustainable, resilient energy at an appropriate and affordable price, at the same time being responsive to the demands of a decarbonising economy. We will encourage and incentivise to establishing strong government, business, cooperative partnerships to address energy security challenges.

On the one hand, this involves dealing with timely investments on energy infrastructure in line with sustainable economic development, while focusing on the ability of the energy system to react promptly to sudden supply demand fluctuations. On the other hand, we also need to consider the correlation between national security and energy security. The water-energy-food nexus approach deals with complex resource and development challenges. This approach offers a promising conceptual approach, though its use to systematically evaluating water, energy, and food interlinkages has so far been limited.

Sri Lanka's economy has moved from a rural agrarian framework to an urbanized service-oriented structure. Its service sector accounts for 62 percent of GDP, manufacturing 29 percent and agriculture 9 percent. Sri Lanka is in the verge of reaching 100 percent electrification, thereby fulfilling the goal of providing access of grid electricity to all its citizens. At the same time, it maintains a low energy intensity of economy. Economic growth and provision of energy accessible to all demand a steady increase in the energy supply capacity. To satisfy this rapidly increasing demand while ensuring environmental sustainability is a key challenge for Sri Lanka.

Energy costs in Sri Lanka are extremely high by international standards. According to statistics, Sri Lanka annually imports 2 MMT (million metric tons) of crude oil, 4 MMT of refined petroleum products and 2.25 MMT of coal, costing about USD 5 billion. These imports provide for about 44 percent of the country's energy requirements. This amounts to 25 percent of the import expenditure and almost 50 percent of the total export income. Thus, demand on energy exerts an enormous influence on the budget and exchange rates. This poses a high risk to the energy security.

Of the total electricity demand about 40 percent is for domestic consumption, another 40 percent for industry and 20 percent for commerce. Current total installed power generation capacity is about 4,050 MW comprising 900 MW of coal power, 1,335 MW of oil based thermal power, 1,375 MW of hydro power and 442 MW of non-conventional renewable energy sources such as wind, mini hydro, biomass and solar power plants. The high contribution this makes to greenhouse gas emissions needs consideration.

The energy mix for the next 20 years is planned to add coal, natural gas, solar, wind, major hydro, oil, mini hydro and biomass generated power into the electricity generation system with an investment of about \$15 billion. This contradicts the pledges that were made to fulfil the basic energy requirements of the country through renewable energy sources. Last year, 28 percent was coal power generated, but in 2030 it will be 48 percent and by 2037 54 percent. The renewable energy proportion diminished from 36 percent to 31 percent in 2017. This emphasis on coal power goes against the aspirations of fighting climate change and the Paris Agreement requirements.

Aligning Sri Lanka with the Goal 7 of the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN would contribute to achieving universal access to energy. This will lessen the dependence on fossil fuels and also halve the specific energy use by 2030. Greater cooperation in the energy sector would enhance national energy security, reduce the cost of energy supply, and reduce the negative effects of price volatility. Promoting energy cooperation would be an effective climate change mitigation mechanism. Cross-border energy trade would also minimize the need to build new generation capacity in each country.

However, our vision will be for building a nation self-sufficient in energy without being dependent on imported oil and oil products or contributing to air pollution. We believe that this is a pre-condition for energy security, as we are located in a politically contested zone influenced by the nuclear powers in the region. To realise our vision, we intend to capture the full potential of all renewable and other indigenous resources. Out of the total energy requirement in 2013, about 56 percent was produced from biomass and hydro power sources. However, the country has drifted

towards using more diesel for power generation, contrary to the existing policy of incorporating a limit of 10 percent diesel or fuel oil due to the resultant social and environmental harm. Integration of renewable energy to the mix has been totally disregarded.

Nuclear power is expensive. It poses an unacceptable risk to the environment and humanity without addressing the challenges caused by climate change. Nuclear energy may cause less carbon emissions than fossil fuels. However, it produces radioactive waste and causes radioactive pollution all over the world. Dumping nuclear waste will be much complicated and will become increasingly untenable. Using nuclear power is fraught with high risks. Hence, we rule out producing nuclear power in the country.

We recognise renewable energy and new energy technology as priority sectors for our economy. We have vast renewable energy resources that we can harness. Our wind generation will have a strong growth potential, particularly in the coastal areas where there will be significant opportunities for offshore wind exploration. We will make it compulsory standard feature to see continued growth in rooftop solar photovoltaic systems, with significant potential in the commercial and industrial sectors. Solar photovoltaic systems will be rolled out island-wide. Grid augmentation will help unlock the abundant natural resources well into the future.

Another prominent strategy is utilization of renewable energy. Nearly every town in the island has access to sunlight and wind, and the geothermal power from the Earth. Harnessing these sources of renewable energy could offer affordable and plentiful power to everybody. With the new advanced energy storage systems, we believe that we also could become a 100 percent renewable country.

Sri Lanka is yet to properly utilise the abundant solar energy as a power source. The capital cost of solar photovoltaic technology is decreasing and in all residential and commercial building construction, use of solar panels for power generation can be made a standard feature. The central hills of Sri Lanka are rainfed. It provides large volumes of water that can potentially be used as hydropower resources. Due to the verdant landscape, high incidence of solar energy and rainfall of the country, it has a huge potential for producing biomass, simply by converting marginal land to fuel wood plantations and improving productivity of other crop land and home gardens.

Sri Lanka is surrounded by a vast swath of uninterrupted ocean that provides strong wind and ocean wave energy potential. Inhabitants of the island have used wind energy since 300-200 B.C. We will explore using other forms of renewable energy such as wave energy, ocean current energy, geothermal energy and Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion – OTEC (Baseload, Dispatchable Renewable Energy) energy. This will help achieve the objective of realising a renewable, affordable and reliable energy supply that will use large-scale renewable energy technology and ensure grid stability for moving away from a carbon-intensive to net zero emissions status by 2040.

If the potential to provide natural gas for power generation in Mannar becomes a reality, then it may provide an opportunity for us to limit the quantities of imported oil. However, appropriate plans for developing LNG infrastructure needs to be made. In principle, we rule out using coal and nuclear plants for power generation. However, this does not exclude the option of buying nuclear generated power from the countries in the South Asian region under collaboration agreements.

We will provide incentives to the business, cooperative and research communities to actively engage them in developing local entrepreneurship and research capacity. We will encourage the use of novel ICT applications such as energy accounting, smart metering and intelligent traffic management. Smart grids will be promoted for effective utilisation of distributed and variable generation from renewable energy sources. We will promote research and development on introducing, adopting and implementing new and emerging renewable fuel sources and efficient energy conversion and end use technologies. We will provide financial incentives and tax benefits to those who nurture nascent technologies.



We will establish a National Energy Authority (NEA) to conduct a National Energy Security Assessment. It will recommend on the manner in which the renewable energy sources can be incorporated with a target of achieving a sustainable renewable power generation within the time frame of a decade. The NEA will also develop a Renewable Energy Action Plan (REAP) building upon the work the governments have already done. Through the REAP plan we will empower and engage households, businesses and communities by supporting community energy projects; and ensuring affordable energy supply; ensure our energy system is smart, safe and reliable by advancing energy storage, smart grids and microgrids; creating value through data and other energy innovations; and create jobs, attract investment and grow our economy through boosting the new energy technologies sector.

We will also take steps to establish Cooperative Community Grids for helping residents to manage their energy use and offset the need to build costly new infrastructure. We will invest in a series of smart, microgrid demonstration projects across the island including battery storage and demand management solutions in different locations and network configurations so as to apply grid enhancements for increasing renewable energy uptake. The project will involve solar photovoltaic systems, battery storage systems and demand response enabled device units allowing businesses, households and community centres to reduce or shift their energy use during peak electricity demand events such as extreme hot weather conditions.

Communities play an important role in increasing renewable energy generation by establishing grassroots projects that adopt new energy technologies. We will urgently launch projects ranging from powering primary schools with solar power to transitioning entire towns to one hundred per cent renewable energy. We will also support our communities in this transition by bringing together local people, provincial councils, industry to secure the regional economic future. We will also initiate economic support to go hand in hand with investments in the infrastructure to community needs such as education and health care.

We believe Sri Lanka has the opportunity to grow and develop as a role model in the use of renewable energy and other new energy technologies. We can start building upon by utilising our vast renewable resources and established energy infrastructure. Building collaborative relationships between research and educational institutions, and international and local businesses is critical to capitalising on our capabilities within the renewable energy sector. We will work towards increasing the amount of renewable energy generation and delivering a more resilient system, capitalising on our abundant natural resources and our skilled workforce.

## 7.4 Environmentally Sustainable Development

Every citizen has a responsibility in contributing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate climate change for the sake of future generations. Our vision is to work with and for all Sri Lankans to realise environmentally sustainable development that will ensure a healthy environment that supports a liveable and prosperous country. Our policy will comply with sustainable development goals 2030 and will be dependent upon strong government action.

Leveraging good environmental performance across community, private and state sectors for protecting people and environment is needed for preventing and reducing harm caused by greenhouse gas emissions. Creating social awareness about the state of the environment and ensuring shared responsibility with civil society for reducing greenhouse gas emissions will assist this process. The Central Environment Authority of Sri Lanka will be a trusted source of advice and will work together with the populace in addressing the complex issues arising from their work.

Targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions will be set up according to the 2015 Paris Agreement that Sri Lanka is a signatory to, of which the primary goal is to limit the rise in global temperature to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. With the effects of global warming becoming acute, further resilience will be needed to achieve these targets. As air pollution is a health hazard, we will contemplate a carbon tax from heavy air polluting industries and transfer that revenue to the national health budget.

Infrastructure projects are major contributors to global warming. Thus, those projects will provide the key to fighting it. Reducing the carbon footprint of an infrastructure project will bring material, energy and labour efficiencies due to savings from design to decommissioning. A core part of the mission at leadership level of infrastructure management will be sustainability. To avoid any misunderstandings and cost blow outs, a common sustainability policy reflecting procurement requirements needs to be established.

One strategy for greenhouse gas emissions reduction would be to make its management a mandatory pre-condition for approving any infrastructure project and also to incorporate sustainability assessment schemes as a direct procurement requirement. Greenhouse gas management is not just a functional methodology, but it also requires the value chain to work together. This will commit contractors and suppliers to achieving reduction targets. Another strategy would be to enable investment in more energy-efficient and low-carbon transport solutions.

We will introduce climate-friendly building projects that will reduce environmental impact of buildings by targeting water-saving and energy-efficient initiatives. Coal and energy intensive infrastructure will be phased out with the use of more climate-friendly technologies.

## 7.5 Waste Management and Resource Recovery

Our vision is to work towards a Zero Waste Island by reducing consumption, and by reusing or recycling waste material. To meet this goal within a reasonable time frame, we should deal with waste management issues urgently. We will adopt appropriate innovative recovery and disposal technologies and methods used across the world in managing waste. For example, use of Dendro Liquid Energy (DLE - nearly 'zero-waste') and smart bin technologies, eco-friendly biodegradable products, solar powered trash cleaners etc. Based on such technologies and methods, profitable ventures can be built using waste as a resource.

Our National Waste and Resource Recovery Policy covers managing, handling and disposing of all waste including electronic waste (e-waste), hazardous waste and substances. It will rely on peoples' commitment to improving resource utilisation efficiency, reducing our collective environmental footprint of waste and improving management of hazardous waste and substances. This will cover all gaseous, liquid and solid waste including e-waste, excluding radioactive waste. It will provide the basis for collaboration between diverse jurisdictions to effectively and efficiently deal with national waste issues and ensure that waste management remains aligned with Sri Lanka's international obligations such as the carbon emissions reduction commitments made under the Paris agreement.

Focusing on the strategies of waste minimisation and conversion of waste to energy, we will develop an integrated solid waste management system utilising to the best the existing infrastructure. An offshore sanitary landfill for the disposal of non-combustible waste shall be considered after a holistic feasibility study. A national and provincial e-waste management program shall be established to deal with recycling and disposal of electronic components and materials.

From the outset, we may have to collaboratively work with foreign companies who are leaders in the waste management space and have the specialist know-how in setting up a process of collection, sorting, recycling, electricity generation and fertiliser production. Illegal dumping of any kind of waste will be declared a serious offence. The Public shall have the opportunity to report any such illegal dumping activity. A system of waste collection fees and punitive measures against illegal dumping will be adopted based on consultation of communities in each jurisdiction.

Planning, developing and managing Sri Lanka's waste management system will be entrusted with the Central Environment Authority of Sri Lanka. It shall be responsible and accountable for defining, standardising and enforcing all activities relevant to waste management and resource recovery, licensing and illegal dumping. It will also specify needed health and safety guidelines and conduct mandatory inspections. Any corrupt activities or irregularities associated with waste management can be referred to IBAC for investigation and will be dealt with the full force of the law.

National definitions and methods relating to waste management will be developed and national standards established for waste data and reporting through Sri Lanka Standards Institution. A database shall be established, and an Annual National Waste Report initiated to provide statistical information on waste management. A review of landfill composition audits of all provinces will be initiated.

Waste management awareness will be introduced from kindergarten upwards as part of the subject school education curriculum. A national awareness creation program on waste management will be launched using school-based educational activities that are applicable in peoples' day to day lives. Civil society shall be encouraged to undertake a national dialogue on the necessity to move towards a more sustainable and resource efficient consumption pattern.

## 7.6 Disaster Management and Social Resilience

Disasters are deadly and damage infrastructure and economies. Natural disasters have become a feature of global landscape and will continue causing personal, social, economic and environmental impacts that will take many years to dissipate. South Asia is one of the regions where exposure to disasters is high. The impact of disasters in the region prevents many thousands of people from breaking out of poverty. Repetitive disasters and shocks reduce the resilience of individuals, communities and societies. The psychosocial repercussion of disasters can be long lasting and may undermine well-being and threaten peace and human rights. This would further exacerbate with climate change, urbanisation and demographic shifts. Thus, reducing risk and building resilience to future disasters is a priority not only to save lives but also for sustainable economic growth.

Sri Lanka is not unfamiliar with natural disasters commonly caused by floods, cyclones, landslides, and droughts mainly due to the fact that the country is an Island in a complex geographic location. However, the Tsunami in 2004, took Sri Lanka by surprise warning that the country is vulnerable to low-frequency and high impact events. The Tsunami killed more than 35,000 Sri Lankans, damaged 100,000 houses and caused an economical damage estimated at US\$ 1.3bn (six percent of the country's GDP). However, 2004 Tsunami also taught bitter lessons to Sri Lanka forcing the all major stakeholders to act collectively for developing a comprehensive, long term and holistic disaster risk management framework.

We believe that natural disasters and hazards may be inevitable, though the suffering, destruction and the loss of life associated with those are not necessarily inevitable. We will undertake the activities that are needed to develop social resilience by analysing and managing risks, reducing vulnerability and building capacity to reduce risk and grow greater resilience. Investing in disaster management and social resilience is a precondition necessary for making development efforts sustainable. We believe integrating risk reduction into development is critical for achieving sustainable development. We will make arrangements for investing in risk reduction before disaster strikes. By better preparing the vulnerable, the poor and the marginalised, it will be able to recover faster.

Based on research and operational experiences gained over many years both locally and internationally, we will work towards integrating disaster management and social resilience frameworks into development agenda by bringing together the national government, provincial governments and the private sector to understand their respective roles in alleviating the vulnerability of the poorest and most vulnerable. We will work towards a more disaster resilient Sri Lanka, able to recognise current and future risk, reduce and manage those risks, and be better able to adapt to change and recover from disasters. We will highlight the stages of managing natural disasters while paying attention to the roles played by various stakeholders in the process of institutional building in disaster management.

We believe participation, especially by the poor and the vulnerable and technology justice are critical to ensure a sustainable, fair and just future for all. Hence, we shall use a participatory approach that involves people in decision making and technological innovation in line with the principles of technology justice.

Despite technology being at the heart of human development, access to technology and its benefits are not fairly shared. This absence or lack of technology is starkly obvious, and it has become a defining feature of the poverty and hardship of most villagers. Technology justice requires the involvement of the poorest and most vulnerable in the development of technological solutions that will deliver the biggest impacts. This requires a critical examination of how technology may reduce vulnerability, but also how the use of some technologies can exacerbate vulnerability, for example by degrading the local environment or contributing to climate change. Technological injustice is a major obstacle to achieving the UN's sustainable development goals. A just and responsible approach to technology is fundamental if we are to address climate change and defuse future resource-based conflicts.

Digitalisation with rapid innovations offer better opportunities to share information and hold people accountable. Diverse actors are creating new partnerships with the aim of developing more shared and open technologies. We will harness Technology Justice, a new path for technology development and use. Here technology will be used to ensure everyone in the country can enjoy a basic standard of living while technology is being used in an environmentally sustainable manner.

## **8. Responsible Global Citizen**

## 8.1 International Relations and Foreign Policy

Foreign policy of Sri Lanka will always be an extension of the domestic policy of the country. The internal policy positions operating within a rule-based structure placing human rights on top of the agenda attracts utmost respect for the island of Sri Lanka from the international community including not only major but also middle powered global players.

In the rest of the policy document we have articulated policy positions necessary to create a rule-based structure recognising our multi ethnic, multi-faith societal nature with a strong emphasis on law and order.

This makes it not only easier for Sri Lanka as a nation to roam through international circles holding its head high but also maintain our traditional foreign policy of non-alignment. Sri Lanka has a proud history of pioneering the non-aligned movement along with India, former Yugoslavia, Indonesia, Egypt, Ghana amongst others. It is not in Sri Lanka's interest to become a pawn in big power manoeuvrings in our region, surrendering our sovereignty for short term political gains.

As a third world country we rightfully deserve foreign aid from international agencies mainly funded individually and collectively by the wealthy members of the global community. As a country, in terms of our domestic policy, if we are doing the right thing, even the foreign aid will not necessarily sway our support of one or the other camp but will give us the strength to take measured decisions.

As a globally respected independent nation state we will work towards building global community's trust that will help us in bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations.

Due to our geographical location it certainly makes sense to treat India as our Big Brother and Pakistan and Bangladesh as smaller brothers in the neighbourhood. However, with its own infrastructure overhaul requirements, India or other members in the south Asia cannot entirely fulfil the needs of Sri Lanka. Invariably Sri Lanka will have to look toward investments from big powers across the globe.

The most important countries that Sri Lanka can turn to are the US, Japan, China and Australia. All these countries are highly interested in deepening their footprints in the Indian Ocean Region. Therefore, it is important to maintain a sensible non-aligned foreign policy to benefit from that interest.

### **Safety in the Indian Ocean**

The Indian Ocean is one of the world's busiest and crucial trade corridors; Sri Lanka is therefore geographically vulnerable to any adverse Indian Ocean movements such as wars, drug smuggling, human trafficking etc.

In 1971 Sri Lanka proposed to the UN General Assembly to make the Indian Ocean a 'zone of peace'. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) had introduced a stable system of maritime law for our region in the early 1980s.

The global political order had undergone radical transformation since then. A new agreement is urgently needed, based on the consensus between neighbouring Indian Ocean countries. We will pursue a new agreement with consideration to, but not just limited to seabed mining, hydrographical surveying, fisheries, the environmental considerations, bio-prospecting and maritime research.

The Indian Ocean code of conduct can be similar to the memorandum of understanding between the United States and China regarding the rules of engagement for safety in the air and maritime encounters. This code must be in conformity with the principles of the freedom of navigation including an effective – and realistic – dispute resolution process on navigation.

We fully endorse the former Sri Lankan Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike's proposal made as far back as in 1960 at the UN Summit to turn the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace. The collaboration of all countries on the security of the Indian Ocean is paramount. We will continue to call on each and every country in the Indian Ocean region to be committed to ensuring the international peace, reconciliation and brotherhood.

## 8.2 International Trade and Partnerships

### Status quo

#### Trade

Sri Lanka currently exports mostly textiles, garments, tea, spices, gems, coconut products, rubber and fish. The major export destinations are the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium and Italy.

Sri Lanka currently imports petroleum, textile fabrics, food stuffs, machinery and transportation equipment. The main import partners are India, China, Iran and Singapore.

Sri Lanka signed the first ever bilateral free trade agreement with India in 1998. It is a member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

SAARC promotes development of economic and regional integration. It launched the South Asian Free Trade Area in 2006. Under the agreement, SAARC members have brought down their duties to 20 percent in 2009.

The purpose of the WTO is to ensure global trade flows smoothly, free and predictably. The WTO creates and embodies the ground rules for global trade among member nations, offering a system for international commerce. Being members in the WTO, the countries will have the advantage of lower trade -related barriers among themselves.

The WTO has following objectives:

- to set and enforce rules for international trade;
- to provide a forum for negotiating and monitoring further trade liberalisation;
- to resolve trade disputes;
- increase the transparency of decision-making processes; and
- to cooperate with other major international economies.

WTO decisions are absolute, and every member must abide by its rulings. WTO acts as judge and jury. WTO members are empowered by the organisation to enforce its decisions by imposing trade sanctions against countries that have breached the rules.

#### Investment

The highest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into Sri Lanka in 2017 came from China according to Sri Lanka's board of investment (BOI). As a percentage of GDP, FDI currently stands at a mere 2 percent compared to Malaysia at 3-4 percent and Vietnam at 5-6 percent.

Currently, the larger share of FDI inflows has been focused on infrastructure. They will only boost jobs and growth temporarily during the construction period. These investments have little long-term impact. Other businesses such as manufacturing and IT services which would employ people as long as it makes a profit, and export, pay taxes and contribute to Sri Lanka's growth for decades.

#### Stability

Policy uncertainty in Sri Lanka has proven daunting for investors, with lack of information on regulations. Inconsistency in policy-making, frequent policy changes and slow policy implementation are impediments to investment and trade. It is important to have long-term policy strategies and commitment to policy continuity.

One of the most important actions is to eradicate corruption at all levels to make trading and investment partners comfortable. This can be done using the mechanism to report to The Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) recommended to set up as discussed previously.

## **Study**

It is important to commission a study to identify drawbacks and finding solutions to the logistics issues such as port operations, customer operations and creating a business-friendly environment mutually beneficial to both, investors/trading partners and Sri Lanka. The terms of reference should include investigating the democratisation of port operations as well.

It is also important to conduct further studies on how to increase export volumes, expand export product range and find local substitutes for imports wherever it is possible. The study should extend to investigate the restrictions and opportunities Sri Lanka's memberships with WTO and SAARC entail.

## **Global Political Challenges**

To improve on a healthy trade and investment regime, it is imperative to be a responsible global citizen. Nowadays, when international community chose to take punitive action against recalcitrant players, the trade sanctions are the most powerful weapon used.

Therefore, it is important to comply with Paris agreement by taking measures to reduce carbon footprint. We will endeavour to foster bilateral and multilateral trade deals that can be in either short- or long-term best interest of the country.

Human rights violations and discrimination against minorities could be major stumbling blocks in the road to improving trade relations and investment opportunities. If Sri Lanka is accused of such behaviour, it is important to work through those accusations and improve rather than treating the accuser as an enemy and ignore at our peril. Sri Lanka's majority population being Buddhist, we should be able to utilise the teachings of the Buddha on nonviolence and compassion for all life and resolve such issues easily.

It is a globally accepted notion that nation states belong to all its citizens irrespective of their ethnic or religious background. Therefore, internationally accepted norm is not to deal with the nation states that will not distribute benefits to all its citizens in an equitable and fair manner.

Those who point out these shortcomings to Sri Lanka with the intention of fixing them are certainly our friends. They have a rule-based order and not dangerous to deal with. Sooner the broader masses in Sri Lanka realise this, it is better for the prosperity of the country. For example, on 19 May 2017 the European Union granted Sri Lanka better access to EU for its exports. It did so under the EU's Generalised Scheme of Plus (GSP+) and this was conditional on Sri Lanka advancing human and labour rights and working towards sustainable development.

As a result of this initiative Sri Lanka gained enhanced market access to the EU. These one-way trade preferences will consist of the full removal of duties on 66 percent of tariff lines, covering a wide array of products including textiles and fisheries.

Sri Lanka will have to be cautious about those who would like to liberally offer massive loans without giving consideration to anything else, not even the repayment capacity. That is how a country is risking losing chunks of the land, valuable assets, independence and finally end up being bullied to fall in to line with them in international forums. In the longer term their trade and investment terms will also not be favourable to Sri Lanka. We need to investigate the situation and try to get out of such arrangements.

## **Non-Government level relationships**

People to people relationships and relationships between entities with similar philosophies and ethics would play a vital role in heightening the level of trade and investment opportunities.

People to people relationships can be established through sports, arts, tourism and diaspora. For example, the government could take initiatives to facilitate building relationship between the cricketers of cricketing nations and Sri Lankan cricketer fraternity. This could apply to other sporting and arts communities participating at an international



level. In this way, friendly gestures could be displayed inviting them to visit Sri Lanka and learn about the people of Sri Lanka and the opportunities presented. It certainly is a good strategy in introducing sporting activities very close to the hearts of certain nations. For example; Australian rules football, American baseball, Gridiron etc. It is noteworthy that Australian Rules football (AFL) is treated as a religion in the Australian state of Victoria where 50 percent of the people of Sri Lankan ancestry in Australia live.

The government should have a plan to induce tourism from first world countries to Sri Lanka by subsidising chosen tour itineraries to provide maximum exposure. It is also important for the government to provide a safe friendly environment for our visitors.

The expansion of tourist numbers in itself is an investment for the country.

The government should have a mechanism to work with the Sri Lankan Diaspora communities from first world countries providing them an opportunity to reminisce about their past in the birthplace and welcoming them to embark on trade and investment just by themselves or with the compatriots of their adopted countries. The Sri Lankan Diaspora community that has relinquished their Sri Lankan citizenship should be able to resume that without impediment. This will encourage them to rebuild the connection with the land where their umbilical cords were buried.

The cooperative businesses are growing fast in Europe, UK and many other parts of the world. The cooperative entities affiliated with the International Cooperative Alliance prefer to do business with other cooperative entities rather than with conventional businesses as a matter of ethical behaviour. There are organisations that are happy to help out in passing technical know-how to set up cooperative business units in less affluent areas. The building of relationships with global cooperative entities would certainly help opportunities for trade and investment as we are strongly promoting the expansion of the cooperative sector.

### **Government initiatives**

All the above measures have to be complemented by government's direct action. The government has to proactively look for opportunities in the international arena and explore all the connections stated previously. In the end, the government has the authority and resources to take such initiatives.

The Minister with the Trade and Investment portfolio needs to generally work closely with Ministers holding other portfolios in the cabinet, particularly with the portfolios of Industry, Agriculture and Treasury.

The government needs to make decisions on providing incentives to potential investors and conduct research on international markets where there is a potential for Sri Lankan products to be marketed. It is also necessary to identify what new goods and services Sri Lanka should produce for an international market. Sri Lanka also needs to diversify the product range for bigger and better trading opportunities. It could range from small scale operations such as providing technical services to small businesses around the world to large scale manufacturing opportunities such as building motor vehicles.

The government also should reassess its procurement practices and tariff arrangements to support locally manufactured goods attracting foreign capital investment. For example, we would strongly advocate that government will signal to the international vehicle manufacturers its preparedness to purchase all government vehicles locally if they want to relocate their manufacturing plants to Sri Lanka.

### 8.3 Regional Collaboration and Integration

We will promote a policy of regional collaboration and integration in South Asia to enhance the regional agreements and establishments that already exist, so that we can better address joint challenges and opportunities among the countries in the region. At the same time, we have huge political and security complexities due to unresolved ethnic, religious, linguistic and hegemonistic issues. In addition, this is complicated by the way any aspect of an endeavour for regional integration would impact on the national interest of a particular member.

We see regional collaboration being essential for economic integration that may allow sharing the benefits of a larger regional market and for coordinating large-scale, multi-country infrastructure projects, dealing with intra-regional migration streams, adopting common approaches to shared healthcare, education, justice, tourism and environmental issues etc. Regional collaboration would also contribute to raising a unified voice on behalf of the region on the global stage.

Due to the diverse nature of the issues being tackled regional establishments could represent a truly regional character, but some may take an intra-governmental, sub-regional or supra-national scope. These establishments assist inter-regional dialogue and cooperation in multiple disciplines such as the economy, science, technology, transport, health and environment, security etc. This will strengthen economic ties and bring forth mutually beneficial learning experiences in diverse disciplines.

There are global issues of common interest such as the implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change, and the Belt and Road Initiative of China for better connecting Asia with Africa and Europe. These need to be further explored to assess the national benefit gained from such initiatives in terms of South Asian regional collaboration and integration agenda.

However, due to the multi-polar nature of Asian powers, these will be formidable obstacles, particularly in terms of economic integration. Despite the fragmented nature of the regional market, several intra-governmental agreements exist. From treatment of foreign direct investment, to product standards and government procurement regulatory discrepancies exist. Such discrepancies impose high burdens, particularly in terms of costs on firms in general and SMEs in particular, that attempt to export to or invest in regional markets. Thus, the great potential of a regional market of almost two billion people, or about one fourth of the world's population, remains underexplored.

The countries in the South Asian region have a shared culture, language and history as well as political and diplomatic concerns and significant issues due to terrorist activities. South Asia also has the youngest working age population in the world. Thus, this region offers a great development potential and immense scope for effective regional collaboration. Effective regional collaboration and integration can make a significant contribution by accelerating economic growth, generating employment and ensuring the well-being of its citizens.

Regional collaboration and integration move beyond trade liberalisation underpinned by trade expansion. This is vital for long-term inclusive growth, sustainability and stability. Regional collaboration through improved logistics, trade facilitation and connectivity combined with the removal of non-tariff barriers will provide a large market with better economies of scale and reduced trading costs. Working together and learning from each other will lead to better regional connectivity, investment, infrastructure, supply chains, energy development and food security.

Regional integration will require greater cooperation in investment and transport connectivity. This needs effective cooperation leading to mobilisation of both intra and extra-regional resources for productive utilisation. As a result, food and energy security also become critical issues. However, due to its natural location, Sri Lanka does not have border disputes with any country in the region. In terms of its economic policy, it has been liberal and outward oriented. Still for the country to stand on its feet, resolution of ethnic and religious tensions through a process of devolution of power is essential. Till these matters are resolved, the role Sri Lanka could play in any regional collaboration and integration role will be limited.

## 8.4 Sri Lankan Diaspora Communities

Sri Lankan Diaspora (SLD) communities will potentially join hands with the task of helping Sri Lanka if there is a friendly environment to do so. They need assurances that every dollar they spent in their country of birth is not wasted or ends up in unintended places.

If elected, we will deal with the SLD communities as follows:

We consider it the responsibility of the government to officially recognize the importance of the SLD communities and their entitlement in making contributions to political decision making and policy making for the future of Sri Lanka. After a review of all institutional, structural and cultural barriers, facilitating processes will be introduced wherein the SLD communities can play an active role. They need concrete policies and procedures that will ensure them that Sri Lanka will be a rule-based society.

If elected, by educating the public about the positive contribution the SLD communities can make in nation building we will work to change the current stereotyping of them as a negative force, using media, opinion leaders and politicians. This will help improve the motivation and interest of the SLD communities in engaging with Sri Lanka and alleviate any discrimination they face in dealing with issues back home.

We will recognize the SLD communities as an integral part of the Sri Lankan Nation by introducing legislation to encourage dual citizenship with the right to vote and land/property ownership. We will take measures to implant a culture of accepting the SLD communities as internal stakeholders through a new set of social norms including dealing with the terminology, social taboos, literature etc.

Formal institutional arrangements will be set up to consult the SLD communities for policy and decision-making purposes. This will be important in the national planning process, particularly in the domains of foreign policy making, economic development and human resource development.

In studying international best practices, we will look for international success stories of other countries cooperating with their non-resident communities in building knowledge economies. We will particularly look at countries such as India, China, Israel, Caribbean nations and African countries. Based on this learning, we will develop our own SLD community knowledge sharing models. Tertiary educational institutions will act as the main knowledge interface between public policy making and the SLD communities. Such institutions will act with autonomy in facilitating this process. Facilities and funding for such collaborative efforts will be provided.

We will look into Public Private Partnership (PPP) models that can be developed with the SLD communities, particularly on investment and economic development activities. These partnerships will not only invest private capital and expertise in implementing projects but will enable the public sector to play an active and constructive role in defining the role of various players according to the national requirements.

With the recent Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) and emergency and dynamics of social media, the power of ICT and social media should be leveraged not only for studying and researching on knowledge, preference, behaviours of SLD communities, but also for using appropriate web technologies in positively engaging and interacting with them. A multi-dimensional, multi-stakeholder strategic plan can be developed in achieving this goal.

People residing in different parts of the world with the highest SLD residencies will be appointed as their representatives to deal with the Sri Lankan Government. A bipartisan parliamentary committee with a representation from each province will be established to identify small to medium projects of philanthropic nature that would have the potential for the SLD communities to assist.

## **9. Agriculture and Livestock**

## 9.1 Reforming The Agricultural Sector

Over 80 percent of the total population was found to live in rural areas, of which almost 90 percent were considered poor. Due to the fragmented nature of agricultural land distribution, rural development is crucial for alleviating poverty of this demographic.

As the living standards of rural wage earners and peasantry are below subsistence level, they continue to live in increasing poverty dogged by indebtedness, unemployment, under-employment, malnutrition and starvation. Recurring cycles of floods in the wet zone and droughts in the dry zone combined with soil erosion have made the life of rural people a miserable one. Resulting in tens of thousands from impoverished villages joining the armed forces and the Police during the civil war as a way to escape rural poverty. Encouraging ecologically friendly small-scale farming through farmer co-ops will benefit assuring food security and addressing climate change. Collective purchasing and distribution networks will also encourage farmer co-ops.

In order to reduce rural poverty, infrastructure development is essential. Provision of better roads and transport networks and long-term credit facilities to satisfy their capital needs to engage in modern farming techniques and start micro and small businesses will make their situation better. Development of physical infrastructure such as roads and bridges, long-term credit facilities, provision of better educational and training facilities as discussed previously and creating better employment opportunities for people to become financially independent and enjoy a better standard of living will help in convincing villages to become self-governing co-ops with the capacity to serve their community's economic and social needs.

In this regard, it will be important to provide a reference to the parliamentary investigatory committee on agriculture. For this purpose, a study will be carried out by widely consulting the farming sector to identify issues and recommend solutions based on the evidence the study gleans. Possibilities of setting up Farmer Cooperatives or combinations of Farmer-Consumer-worker cooperatives along with credit unions will be explored.

Provision of long-term loans can be used as an incentive to leverage farming cooperatives. Introduction of new plant and seed varieties, fertilisers and new technology can be used to boost agricultural production. Socially responsible financial institutions could manage and distribute these funds. The result will be a stronger economy that works better for both people and the climate.

There could be possibilities of diversifying production lines and helping out setting up different types of cooperatives for the rural communities to involve. A suitable farm cooperative model as a basis for collective action of agricultural workers, particularly, in the estate sector could be developed. Facilitating such initiatives will be one of the many roles of the WSDE authority. It will be possible to call upon advice and guidance from Legacoop, Emilia Romagna, Italy, who have successfully embarked on a similar rural program.

## 9.2 Reforming the Fisheries and Marine Resources Sector

Fisheries is an enormous resource and a major livelihood of the coastal communities in Sri Lanka. In addition to inland water bodies, the island has exclusive fishing and economic rights for an ocean area of 500,000 square kilometers; and a coastline of 1700 km, in an exclusive economic zone of 200 nautical miles. The fisheries sector employs more than 500,000 people and caters for the livelihood about 2.5 million people. The fisheries sector is a source of income generation, nutrition and foreign exchange earner and it has the potential to expand further. This resource has to be managed for the benefit of all residents and should be harvested in an environmentally responsible manner. Fish as food should be safe and meet the quality standards set by consumers and public regulations.

### **Problem areas**

The three-decade long war, over exploitation and lack of coastal and ocean security, use of illicit fishing methods as well as lack of awareness on sustainable fishing methods are among the factors that have had and are still having a devastating effect on the sector. Fisheries and aquaculture in Sri Lanka are also impacted by the effects of climate change. Increased intrusion of saline water inland will start harming fish breeding grounds. Higher temperatures are reducing river flows, further damaging habitat quality. Higher sea surface temperatures will cause harmful effects threatening fish breeding locations.

Supporting viable fisheries in a sustainable manner requires replacing the top-down management approach with a more inclusive and participatory one. The decision-making processes in fisheries management need to be fair, transparent and subject to clear and consistent rules and procedures. If those processes are more inclusive, then resource users and others will have better opportunities to participate. Operational decision making needs to involve stakeholders and be as close to those fisheries as possible.

### **Innovation**

We will drive innovation and adopt new technologies in the effort to safeguard the marine environment and maintain healthy fish stocks. Health and safety standards need to be maintained for the local fish supply to assure that our seafood remains healthy and safe as a food source. The risk of acute diseases seafood could cause need to be reduced by organising technical training related to fish genetics and brood stock management. Marine biologists and scientists will need to ensure that any exotic diseases that would threaten marine resources will be identified on time and dealt with. We will internationally engage to ensure that our marine animal health standards are practical and based on the sound scientific advice.

Production and exploitation of offshore and deep-sea fisheries resources will be diversified through the introduction of modern technology giving high priority to efficient fishing methods. Preventing high post-harvest losses using modern practices and raising awareness about better fish handling techniques will avoid the prevailing serious impediments to marketing and high producer prices in the fishing industry.

### **Cooperatives**

Implementing a clear, consistent, stable and predictable approach to access and allocation of fisheries resources; and developing fair, transparent and rule-based decision-making and conflict resolution processes will create appropriate conditions for a cooperative and shared management of fisheries resources. Through Worker Self Driven Enterprise Authority, we will provide incentives for the industries in the fisheries and marine resources sector to establish self-driven fishery worker cooperatives. Everybody with a stake in the fisheries thus becomes more effective in managing the resource, the fisheries industry will become self-reliant and economically viable.

Engagement with the fisheries industry is necessary for the elimination of illegal fishing, introduction of appropriate new technology, minimizing post-harvest losses, increasing national fish consumption, promotion of fish and fish product exports. Our aim will be to help workers from fisheries, aquaculture and along the seafood value chain not only to act as resource users, but also be active managers for the benefit of future generations.

### **Overfishing**

In addition, the present alarming levels of overfishing needs to stop if we were to preserve marine resources for future generations. We will follow international standards on preventing over-fishing, such as policing our waters for unlicensed fishing vessels and imposing sanctions. The use of any gear like purse seines, oxygen tanks and bottom trawling or techniques that are deemed harmful to fish resources and the ecosystem will be prevented. The reasons for these illegal practices are many and include weakness in law enforcement, corruption, poverty and lack of awareness about the damaging impact of certain fishing gear and fishing techniques. Programs will be developed to create awareness among the fisher folk; we will provide them with appropriate training, make better gear available to them and firmly implement the law to protect the future.

### **Law enforcement**

The law enforcement staff such as Fisheries Inspectors are currently over-burdened with administrative matters such as assisting securing crafts, gear, credit, and public goods in addition to law enforcement. These are in themselves contradictory roles to perform. The best way to enforce laws at the landing site level is for the fishery worker cooperatives to assume managing their own affairs. These cooperatives can impose internal sanctions for those who break the laws. More damaging practices such as dynamiting, bottom trawling, stake nets with galvanised pipes etc. are employed by the more affluent and the powerful in the industry. Fisher migration from 'outside' is another factor influencing the increased use of destructive fishing practices. Information on aspects such as environmental impact, better and efficient means of harvesting and fishing laws need to be disseminated in the language the fishing communities speak.

We will co-operate with regional fishery management organizations and follow international conventions and treaties in managing fisheries on the high seas. Through international agreements, particularly with our South Asian neighbours, measures will be taken to closing any loopholes that are being exploited by those who threaten our fish stocks. A vessel monitoring system will be established for enhancing monitoring, control and surveillance with the participation of fishers for the purpose of preventing unauthorized fishing activities. We will also take measures to promote local and foreign private sector investments in deep-sea fisheries.

### **Exports**

Fish exports are important to the economy and is a growing component in the fisheries sector. Fish imports are relatively small. With the reinstatement of GSP Plus from the European Union (EU), fish exports have been boosted. Sri Lanka is one of the biggest exporters to the EU of high value fishing products. We will improve the standard of the fishing and marine industries as major export earning sectors. Our fisheries exports could thus capture a bigger percentage of overseas markets. However, to meet EU and US quality standards, processing plants and supply chain management of seafood will need to improve further.

Developing resources such as fish farming could cater to meet national and international market demand for sea food and marine products. Production, local consumption and export of value-added fish products will be promoted. Measures to facilitate trade in marine species and fish products will also be adopted. All packaged and unpackaged seafood sold in retail outlets will be required to be labelled with the country of origin. To prevent overfishing and preserve threatened

fish species, we will work towards establishing a framework for setting harvest levels designed through science-based approaches.

Selected commercial activities like marine eco-tourism and angling without disturbing fishing activities or affecting the coastal communities will be promoted. We will also promote local and foreign investment in the utilization of non-living aquatic resources and harnessing ocean energy. Appropriate measures will be taken to make recreational fishing more attractive to both our people and tourists. Assistance of countries such as Norway and South Korea will be sought in developing multi-purpose harbours and processing plants, management systems and training on fishery management. We will collaborate with countries who have similar waterways to us like New Zealand and Japan.

### **Aquaculture**

Development of freshwater fisheries and aquaculture in our extensive inland water bodies can also be a viable industry. We will pursue developing aquaculture as an environmentally friendly, socially acceptable and market-driven industry, by promoting local and foreign private sector investment in aquaculture development. We will do this by encouraging them to commence projects with community participation. Shrimp farms development will be promoted according to zonal plans and arrangements will be made to provide common infrastructure facilities to those farms. Rehabilitating the environment affected by shrimp farming activities will be prioritised and the best management practices will be introduced coupled with inducements to shrimp farmers to follow such practices.

### **Fisheries Development Board**

We will establish a Fisheries Development Board (FDB) to examine and enact new aquaculture approaches in Sri Lanka. Its decision making on management of fisheries and marine resources will be based on the best science advice. The FDB will work in partnership with the private sector to support the development and expansion of aquaculture by determining locally-appropriate and cost-effective production methods. FDB with the concurrence of the Minister will retain authority for sustainable use of fisheries resources and their habitat, and for the access and allocation thereof. Aquaculture and marine industry parks will be established in the Southern and Eastern coastal areas as they are the most productive regions in marine fisheries.

### **Regulatory Framework**

An effective legislative and regulatory framework is needed to achieve the above objectives. We will initiate a parliamentary inquiry to review the current status of Sri Lanka's fisheries and marine resources industry against the international standards of the Marine Stewardship Council. This committee will also review fisheries legislation to inform the legislative and regulatory changes needed to ensure the industry's sustainability. It will also examine the appropriateness to formulate such legislation specifically to apply to particular geographic demarcations, depending on the type and abundance of resources, ecology, oceanography, society, etc.

This inquiry will need the active participation of all stakeholders including the fisher communities, aquaculture farmers, exporters, academics, civil society organisations and the general public. Based on its report and recommendations, appropriate measures will be taken to upgrade the quality of local industry to international standards. The parliamentary inquiry will also look at the way in which the Fisheries Co-management Committees legislated under the current legislation can be transformed into genuinely participative and inclusive communities such as self-driven fishery worker cooperatives. Law enforcement can be strengthened with such cooperatives imposing sanctions on members breaking the law. These cooperatives will be recognised, empowered and assisted in performing management functions and linking up with similar cooperatives to form Fisheries Cooperative Federations.



### 9.3 Animal Welfare

Most of us love animals. Animals can be part of normal human living such as guide dogs for the blind. Yet in Sri Lanka, animals are exposed to immense cruelty at an increasing and alarming rate. Given the data that has been amassed on how to best treat animals and the scientific advances made in the field of animal husbandry and welfare, we are now able to easily educate ourselves on how to avoid the atrocities committed towards animals. Cruelty to animals take many forms. These forms include holding them in cages; sacrificing them for spiritual reasons; breeding them for produce while subjected to brutality and often being beaten to death; using them for gambling and public entertainment; ruthless practices of breeding them to be sold as pets; treating them cruelly while held in cages in pet shops; the poisoning and electrocution of stray animals. This is wrong and against our better instincts.

We believe that everybody has a right to life. Our empathy towards living beings extend to all living beings including animals and plants. However, for survival needs, life depends on the natural food chain. Humans have a choice in deciding what forms of life we consume for survival. This needs to be carried out without disturbing the planet's natural eco-systems. This aligns with the principle of loving-kindness to all living beings most of us believe in.

Individual owners and users of animals have a duty of care for the animals in their charge. To assure that this duty of care is upheld, such animals need to be, if feasible, micro-chipped. Owners have a responsibility to ensure that they have adequate knowledge, training and skills to apply in sheltering their animals and looking after their welfare.

There is said to be about three million street animals in Sri Lanka. It is agonising to see them suffering with malnutrition, diseases and injuries due to accidents. Stray cats and dogs are exterminated within public and private premises. Culling of tuskers and cruelty towards captive animals such as elephants and monkeys are known to be common occurrences. Millions of animals annually bred and raised in factory farms for food and likewise pet animals commercially bred undergo horrible pain and suffering, as appropriate measures to prevent such cruelty do not exist. To ensure that animal industries remain as profitable as possible, the legal system actively and deliberately excludes these animals from protection against cruel treatment.

Animal protection agencies associated with provincial councils responsible for administering animal protection statutes have been found wanting as they mostly favour producer interests over animal welfare. Few in the community are aware that animals raised for food are denied the same legal protection from cruelty as their pets are. Animal industries and associated stakeholders both state and private such as circuses, theme parks and hunting grounds for sport, may prefer the status quo to remain. Maximising profits is the motivation of industry operators and governments. There is no justifiable excuse in any civilised society for permitting abhorrent acts of such cruelty to millions of animals.

Except for several sanctuaries maintained by volunteers and assistance received from those who care for animals, stray animals lack any safe havens and veterinary care institutions for them. Diseases like rabies spread among people due to this inhumane situation. Hence, there is a necessity to control and stabilise the stray animal population through neutering and sterilisation programs and to create better environments for both humans and animals to prevent the spread of such diseases. Programs need to be established to rescue animals in dire need and to provide quality veterinary care and rehabilitation and to promote public interest through education in the welfare and protection of animals.

An Animal Welfare Bill was drafted in Sri Lanka in 2006. The Cabinet approved the Bill in 2016, yet it is still to be debated and enacted in the Parliament. Even existing legislation, such as the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance of 1907 is implemented in an extremely lax manner. Except for minor fines, no one has yet been convicted to the maximum penalty of six months imprisonment prescribed under this Ordinance, even in cases where extreme and wanton cruelty had been perpetrated against animals.

Instead of the limited and narrow definition used to define an animal under law, we will define, amend and/or enact legislation so that any living being other than a human being will be construed as an animal. In the same vein, pet

owners and animal keepers will be held responsible for keeping animals without abandoning them and for continuously upkeeping the welfare of animals they keep.

We will work towards developing a National Code of Practice for the care and use of animals for scientific experimentation. In toxicological testing, commercial products and substances are tested on animals to identify hazards and determine any adverse effects that may result from exposure to those products and substances. The Health and Medical Research Council of Sri Lanka will develop this in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. This Code will be incorporated into all state and provincial animal welfare or animal research legislation. Such a Code will specify structures and processes by which such animal testing activities will be subject to ethical review by an Animal Ethics Committee.

We will also establish an Animal Rights and Welfare Committee (ARWC) to comprehensively review existing legislation and their implementation. The ARWC will conduct public consultations with diverse stakeholders who are relevant to the issue, including the broader community. This Committee will make a set of recommendations that will address the discrepancies and shortfalls identified in ensuring the humane treatment of animals. An Animal Rights and Welfare Authority (ARWA) will be established to monitor compliance with legislative provisions and take appropriate steps to ensure that the objectives of the policy are met. The Authority will also take measures to address any issues relating to urban wildlife and captive animals in a comprehensive manner.

We will work towards establishing an agreed Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for the care of animals. These will serve as guides for people responsible for the welfare and husbandry of a range of livestock animals. Within a legally accorded transition period, all animals kept under chains or caged will be required under law to be allowed to move freely, preferably in open spaces. Any violations will be dealt firmly under the law. We will also work towards establishing a code of practice for the welfare of domestic poultry. The government will provide incentives for establishing free range systems for poultry raised for meat and for production of eggs. Consumers can exercise their preferences through their purchasing practices. Meat and eggs will be mandated by law to be labelled, describing the production system used for their production.

We will encourage slaughter practices that follow the internationally accepted guidance on animal welfare such as that of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). Abattoirs in the country as a whole need to comply with animal welfare legislation put in place by the central government and the provincial councils. We will work towards establishing a national standard for the hygienic production and transportation of meat and meat products for human consumption. In consultation with the relevant stakeholders, standards will be developed which will specify how animals for human consumption can be slaughtered humanely, thus preventing them from unnecessary injury, pain and suffering. The practices of abattoirs will be closely overseen by veterinarians employed by the relevant government agency.

In addition to the existing provisions, we will work towards establishing an Animal Cruelty Prevention Authority (ACPA) for the purpose of enforcing animal welfare legislation. Provincial Councils will also make and enforce local laws on animal welfare and management. If any offences are proved, penalties such as fines and jail terms will apply.