

Victory for Sri Lanka

Presidential Election 2005

Mahinda

Chintana

Towards a new Sri Lanka

..1..

Mahinda Chintana.....

Mahinda Chintana (Mahinda Vision) has been based upon the proposals and suggestions of thousands of my beloved fellow citizens who have been closely associated with me over the past 37 years of my political journey.

It is presented to religious dignitaries, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and children of my motherland with deep affection.

MAHINDA RAJAPAKSA

'This earth and its vegetation is yours.
But they should be protected not only for your benefit but also for the benefit of future generations. A ruler is only a temporary trustee and not an owner of your

..2..

children's heritage'

Contents

- Towards a disciplined society
- An affectionate family
- To ease the family burdens
- 'Samurdhi' programme to eradicate poverty
- 'Jana Sevana' programme to provide shelter
- A prosperous village
- Let's build our country
- An undivided country, a national consensus, an honourable peace.
- Protecting the State
- A flourishing society - sustainable development
- Agricultural Renaissance
- Industrial development
- A land in harmony with nature
- Energy policy
- Sustainable mobility
- Harnessing the blue skies and seas
- Science and technology
- Towards a healthy nation
- Enhancing knowledge and virtues
- Defeating the Tsunami
- Regional development
- Enrichment of art and culture
- Fitness through sports
- Strengthening the Peoples' will

TOWARDS A DISCIPLINED SOCIETY

A Virtuous citizen

Wisdom and virtue are essential for the physical and spiritual development of a person. My intention, is therefore to eliminate hatred and promote favorable and fruitful bonds between parents and children, husbands and wives, teachers and students, employers and employees and rulers and followers.

My firm resolve is to ensure that children of all religions would be able to obtain an education in keeping with their religious beliefs.

An end to the drug menace

I will be dedicated to the task of totally eradicating the drug menace presently experienced in Sri Lanka. I will do so within a period of three years through a coordinated effort covering the implementation of laws, the actions of police and other social institutions.

Financial assistance will be extended by the Government to intensify educational and awareness programs against the use of drugs.

Steps will be taken to prohibit consumption of alcohol and cigarettes in common public places.

Government assistance will be accorded to voluntary organizations operating counseling centers to rescue and rehabilitate those addicted to alcohol, drugs and

smoking. Towards this aim, Model Rehabilitation Centers will be set up by the Government covering the entire island.

I will work towards the elimination of child abuse, rape, underworld and organized crime. The legal framework for such purpose will be restructured and the National Child Protection Authority will be further strengthened.

Irreparable damage has been caused to life and property consequent to the violation of traffic rules and road safety practices. We experience the repercussions of such violations as a daily occurrence. Ending this unfortunate situation has become an absolute necessity and for this purpose, steps will be taken to ensure that institutionalized arrangements will be fully strengthened for law enforcement.

AN AFFECTIONATE FAMILY

Foremost place to the Mother

Our society's foundation is the family, in which the Mother takes the prime place. It is only through the improvement of the close and intimate family bonds that we can ensure a pleasant society. It is my belief that economic hardships and pressures erode such intimate bonds between family members. Therefore, I have prepared a plan to overcome such obstacles, relieve the sufferings of every member of the family and thereby strengthen the family, economically.

A Program for Expectant Mothers

I will take steps to provide **all expectant mothers who cannot afford a nutritional meal, a basket of nutritional food items as required by them, free of charge.** A programme will also be launched to provide maternity clinics and medical advice and related services, in every village.

The First Five Year Program

A new ministry dedicated to providing the necessary requirements for children will be established to make their blossoming lives meaningful.

A monthly allowance of Rs.200 will be provided to purchase milk for every child from birth up to 5 years of age.

The conditions of Pre – Schools and Day-care Centers will be improved by bringing them on par with international standards through the provision of training, technology and financial assistance to those in charge.

New educational methods will be introduced for the benefit of children who suffer setbacks in their early stages of life.

Steps will also be taken to improve the management of all children's homes and to double the monthly allowance paid on account of each such child.

“Yovun Diriya ” Program

Graduates will be provided 10,000 more jobs during the year 2006, in addition to the 42,000 jobs already provided by the UPFA government to those graduates who were compelled to join the queue of the unemployed, due to ill-conceived policies of the UNP regime during the years 2001-2003.

Around 33,000 vacancies existing in the Public Sector will be filled early.

Action will be taken to ensure that all those who have been recruited on casual and temporary basis will be made permanent.

Graduate placement schemes will be formulated to correct the salary anomalies of graduates who are presently employed in posts not commensurate with their respective degrees, and to ensure that appropriate salaries are paid in line with such qualifications.

Steps will be taken to offer permanent employment to all volunteer teachers serving in Government schools.

During the time I served as the Minister of Vocational Training, I structured the vocational training arrangements of this country under the theme ‘Jeevithayata - Hekiyawak, Hekiyawata, Rekiyawak’ (“Skills for Life – Jobs for Skills”). This programme will be broadened for the benefit of those who have lost hope and opportunities due to lack of skills and opportunities. They will be provided with training in

line with modern technology to meet the demand not only in the domestic market but also in foreign markets.

Through this program named “Yovun Diriya”, well paid job opportunities will be provided to 50,000 youth during 2006 and an additional 50,000 during 2007.

Employment of skilled personnel

A scheme will be introduced to ensure that around 100,000 personnel skilled in masonry, carpentry, electrical, plumbing and other technical fields are provided with the required tools and equipment to be gainfully employed in their respective fields.

Through the job opportunities expected to be generated in the public, private and self-employment sectors due to the rapid development and proper management envisaged through our new economic programme as well as the additional foreign employment opportunities, I expect to create 2,400,000 job opportunities during the next 6 years.

Income earners

Even though a bulk of the labour force is employed in the private sector, I am aware that the public sector appears to be more attractive to many persons. Therefore, I will not prune the public sector during my tenure of office. However, I also believe that our attitudes towards the private sector should change.

What we should expect from both these sectors is efficient and friendly services to our people. Since the private sector has already forged ahead in several fields, it is our duty to initiate action to increase the productivity and efficiency of the public sector leading to customer oriented services. For this purpose, I will restore the dignity and independence of the public service.

Benefits to the Public Sector employees

- The balance part of the salary increase promised in 2005 Budget will be paid with effect from January 2006
- In addition, a monthly payment of Rs.1,000 to compensate the effect of the increase in cost of living will be paid. Thereafter an additional sum calculated at Rs.2/50 per month for each point of cost of living will be added to such payment and paid bi-annually.
- A payment for each days unutilized leave commencing with the unutilized leave for 2005, at the rate of double the daily salary will be paid from January 2006 onwards to all public servants including members of the police and armed services.
- Male public servants will be granted 3 days special leave on the birth of his child.

- An incentive payment based on performance will be introduced.
- A new medical insurance scheme covering members of the family will be offered to public servants.
- As it was done in the past by our previous Governments, a facility to import a motor vehicle free of import duty will be provided to officers of government, semi-government and public corporations.
- The five year housing loan now offered to government servants will be extended to the officers of public corporations if they do not have similar schemes. The amount of the loan will be increased from the present level of Rs. 2 million or 5 years salary to Rs. 3 million or 7 years salary.
- The amendments introduced to the public servants pension scheme in the recent past will be removed and pension rights will be assured to all public servants and future recruits.
- A hospital with specialized medical services will be established with the Employees Trust Fund for the benefit of its members.
- Early steps will be taken to solve the problems of the July 1980 strikers that have not yet been resolved.

Benefits to the Private Sector employees

I intend to recognize in a special way, those who have paid income taxes diligently and contributed towards the development of our country. Accordingly, those who have paid a minimum of Rs. 250,000 each year over a 5 year period will be entitled a duty free permit to import a vehicle.

A low interest housing loan scheme will be offered to the private sector employees with the participation of the Employees Trust Fund, State and the private banks.

Persons in Foreign Employment

I deeply appreciate the contribution made to our economy by those who go abroad for employment. Several schemes will therefore be formulated to provide the maximum benefits to those who work abroad. Accordingly;

- I will make arrangements to secure 100,000 overseas job opportunities in 2006 in Korea, Malaysia, Italy and other countries on the basis of agreements already entered into by the Foreign Employment Bureau. Arrangements will also be made to increase this number by entering into new agreements.
- I will open new avenues for skilled labour in fields such as nursing, shipping, computer science, etc., to secure foreign employment.

- The duty free allowance presently available for returnees from employment abroad will be increased to US\$ 5,000. Laws will be amended to allow the use of this facility during the first 6 months from the date of returning to Sri Lanka.
- Special housing loan schemes will be arranged through state and private banks, with a 30% contribution being made by the Government through a suitable mechanism.
- A Bank loan scheme will be introduced to cover the initial expenses of those who secure foreign employment.
- Welfare projects will be introduced at village level for the benefit of the children of those who are employed abroad.
- Special arrangements will be made to protect the female expatriate workers.
- Youth who are interested in securing employment overseas will be registered at the divisional secretariat and the required training will be provided to them.
- An English medium nursing college will be established, which is aimed at fulfilling the growing demand for nurses in European countries.

- A Pension Scheme will be introduced for those who are employed abroad.

"Diriya Kantha" programme for women

The woman provides a solid foundation to the family as well as to the society. She devotes her life to raise children, manage the family budget and ensure peace in the family. Therefore, the empowerment of women leads to the empowerment of the entire society. In order to provide the institutional framework for such a foundation, the "Diriya Kantha" program will be launched.

A special self-employment scheme for the women will be launched with the assistance of private establishments who are leaders in the field of exports. Through such scheme, I will arrange new income earning opportunities to 10 selected women in each village annually. Handlooms, textiles, toys and handicraft items for overseas markets can then be produced at home and through such activity, thousands of women can become economically independent.

Further, those who are engaged in small scale enterprises but are not in a position to obtain bank loans for the expansion of their businesses due to the non-availability of acceptable collateral will be assisted through the "Lanka Putra" bank scheme that will be introduced.

In order to provide assistance to women who are subjected to violence and mental torture or depression, "Kantha Pilisarana" (assistance to women) scheme will be implemented. In this regard, special attention will be paid to the victims of Tsunami and the ethnic conflict.

Required guidance and counseling will be arranged to provide assistance to women who have been subject to violence. In order to prevent others falling into such situations, an effective institutional framework will also be created.

Laws will be introduced to remove inequalities among men and women in relation to salaries, property rights, treatment at the public institutions, public service and in many other areas. Women will be assured of enjoying equal status in the society.

Within one year, a Women's Charter of Rights which provides protection and equality for women will be enacted. In order to make this effort more effective, I shall seek the fullest cooperation of the organizations set up for women's rights and the relevant NGOs.

I will arrange to increase the number of nominations of women to a minimum of 25% of the total number of candidates in respect of Provisional Councils and Local Government authorities.

"Respected Senior Citizens" programme

I will not allow senior citizens who have devoted their lives for their children and the country, to be lonely.

Their pensions will be increased in line with the public servants' salary increases.

Anomalies in the present pension payments will be rectified and the pension system will be amended to reflect the self-respect of the Pensioners. Those senior citizens with visual impairment will be provided with spectacles free of charge.

A deduction of 50% of the fares as levied by public sector transport operators will be offered to senior citizens who are above 70 years of age.

A free railway warrant will be issued once a year to senior citizens to go on a pilgrimage.

A series of Homes for the Aged will be established for the benefit of destitute senior citizens with the assistance of NGOs and private sector.

For the benefit of farmers, fishermen, three wheeler drivers, small businessman and those who do not receive pensions or EPF benefits and for whom employers do not contribute any EPF contributions, a national pension scheme for self employed will be launched.

Differently able Persons

I consider it vital that we treat all differently abled persons as respected citizens without any discrimination.

Each family with a differently abled person and not having any income will be provided with a monthly grant of Rs.3,000.

I will also take appropriate steps to provide facilities for differently abled children to receive education in popular government schools, in order to move away from the present practice of having separate schools for those with different disabilities which results in a sense of alienation. Through this approach, I believe we would be able to dispel the view that differently able persons are a burden to our society.

For all physically disabled persons who do not have a shelter, the government will establish homes termed "Rakawarana Nivasa". This category of persons will also be equipped with necessary vocational skills to ensure better living standards.

Establishments with over 100 employees will be required to reserve at least 3% of employment opportunities to differently abled persons.

Convenient access facilities for differently abled persons will be provided as matter of priority in all public buildings.

All disabled soldiers who have sacrificed their hands, limbs and any other organs for the security of the country will be given houses within a period of 3 years.

Small and Medium scale Enterprises where differently abled persons can be given employment will be established.

All problems pertaining to the pensions of differently abled persons will be rectified expeditiously.

Funds will be made available from the President's Fund to meet the entire cost of heart operations, kidney transplant, etc., of differently abled persons instead of the 50% of the cost now being provided.

Action will be taken to enact legislation to protect the rights of the differently abled persons.

TO EASE THE FAMILY BURDEN

The increase in personal incomes is the main answer to the reduction in the cost of living. The initiatives outlined in this manifesto are centered on projects aimed at increasing individual and family income levels. I acknowledge that it takes time to reap the benefits of such projects. Therefore, I intend to implement the follows programmes to solve the day to day problems of the people.

1. A monthly payment of Rs.200 will be made for the purchase of milk for children from birth upto 5 years of age.
2. An initial payment of Rs.1,000 will be made to public servants in order to ease the burden of the rising cost of living together with an additional payment of Rs. 2/50 per cost of living index point that increases.
3. The following steps will be taken to ease the burden with effect from March 2006.
 - a. A discount of Rs.20 per month for those under the category of the minimum user of water.
 - b. A discount of Rs.30 per month for electricity consumption under the category of a minimum user
 - c. A subsidy of 2 litres of Kerosene for households not provided with electricity.

Action will be taken to maintain the cost of these services at levels affordable to the public on a long term basis through the use of low cost power generation methods and by raising the efficiency of the public enterprises concerned.

4. Expectant mothers will be provided with a bag of nutritious food free of charge.

5. Children will be provided a mid-day meal of rice and curry.
6. Action will be taken to open "New Lanka CWEs" throughout the country and bring down the prices of essential food items including rice, dhal, milk foods, spices and coconut oil. In this manner, a weekly food basket to each of the poor families will be made available at an affordable price.
7. The Government will competitively intervene in the purchase of rice, vegetables, onions, etc., directly from the farmers and offer them to consumer at reasonable prices. For this purpose, the Paddy Marketing Board, the New Lanka CWE and the network of cooperatives would be accessed.
8. The importation of widely used food items and essential drugs will be undertaken by the state in competition with the private sector. Facilities would be provided for the consumers to purchase these items without difficulties in times of shortages.
9. The price of a 50 kg bag of fertilizer of all types will be reduced to Rs.350. Through the reduction of the cost of production and increase in output of rice, vegetables, fruits and other local products, consumers could obtain them at affordable prices.

SAMURDHI PROGRAMME TO ERADICATE POVERTY

I am pleased with the success of the Samurdhi programme initiated by us for the elimination of poverty. Hence I will pursue action to further strengthen the programme to enhance the empowerment of people for effective eradication of poverty.

Samurdhi Relief

- Projects with potential to increase the monthly income of recipients to Rs.5,000 will be implemented. Rs.3,000 million would be provided under capital expenditure in the 2006 Budget for this purpose.
- Those who are eligible for Samurdhi benefits but are denied due to various reasons would be admitted to the programme.
- The Samurdhi payment would be increased by 50%.
- Samurdhi families with aged and disabled persons would be paid Rs.3000 per month
- The payment of Rs.5,000 in the event of a death in the family would be increased to Rs.10,000

- The Rs.2,500 payment in respect of child birth would be increased to Rs.5,000 with immediate effect
- A loan of Rs.100,000 would be provided for the economic empowerment of Samurdhi families.
- In the event of death or incapacitation of the head of the family a payment of Rs.250,000 would be granted under an insurance scheme to ensure that the family income is maintained.
- The Scholarship allowance for the children of Samurdhi families will be increased by 50%.
- Programmes such as Samurdhi banks , Loan aid and insurance schemes, "Jana Pubudu" and Gami Pubudu" would be expanded.
- Programmes would be initiated to purchase agricultural and dairy products produced by Samurdhi families.

JANA SEVANA PROGRAMME TO PROVIDE SHELTER

I firmly believe that every family in Sri Lanka should own a house. In order to realize this objective:

- o 100,000 plots of land would be provided for construction of houses.
- o 4 housing schemes (condominium property) would be implemented for public servants in Colombo and the suburbs.
- o 65,000 Housing units will be constructed for those presently living in unauthorized and temporary dwellings in the City of Colombo.
- o Steps will be taken to introduce a housing loan scheme where only the interest would be payable during the first five years.
- o Houses will be constructed in all villages at the rate of 25 per village.
- o Less expensive condominium houses will be constructed for the middle classes.
- o Housing loan schemes with a 30% contribution by the State will be implemented for those who are employed abroad.

Resolution of difficulties faced by Samurdhi staff

- A Commission would be set up to look into the pension related and other problems of Samurdhi staff and managers.
- Action would be pursued to provide housing loans to Samurdhi staff as in the case of public servants.
- The scheme to provide motorcycles would be completed in 3 months time.

The ownership of the two perch plots of land given under the low income urban settlement programme would be transferred to the present occupants. No stamp duty or other charges would be levied on this transfer.

The full ownership of urban condominium properties and houses in state housing schemes will be transferred to the occupants.

Housing Loan granted under diverse housing schemes i.e., "Diyawara", "Diyawara Visire", "Jana Udana", "Gam Udana", together with the interest thereon will be written off and full ownership transferred to the occupants

A PROSPEROUS VILLAGE

My life has been blessed by the winds of purity and fragrance that sweeps across the fields of Kurakkan (millet) in our villages. The village life has also created a deep sense of love, affection environmental concourses and a spirit of innovation that had helped nurture the dream that I have for all village communities of Sri Lanka. I am very keen to realise such dream through the implementation of the "Gama Neguma", the village up-liftment programme. Under such programme, I wish to have all villages of the country emerging as micro-centers of growth on modern lines, whilst retaining the strengths and impressive features of rural life that had perished over the past few years.

For this purpose I will establish a People's Council, "Jana Sabha" with a novel administrative structure. This will include the Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic and Christian dignitaries. It will also include the heads of village organizations, representatives of the Pradeshiya

Sabhas, and public servants representing the village. This will enable the right decisions to be taken for the benefit of the village. I will introduce a system of Jana Sabha secretariats and through such system make public service at the village level efficient. This will enable the wealth of village to be exchanged with that of the world at large. Knowledge centres and e-libraries will be an integral part of this new mechanism. These centres will be linked to the Jana Sabaha Secretariat.

- Electricity for each village
- A common telecommunication system
- Drinking water without restrictions
- Irrigation water for the paddy fields
- Access roads through Maga Neguma
- Infrastructure development
- Schools with adequate human and physical resources
- Health centre to take care of the health of the village
- Market centre with the co-operative to provide the village needs cheaper and conveniently
- Paddy stores, fertilizer stores and the rice mill.
- Factory to generate employment
- Pre-school
- Play ground and a community centre
- Village forest
- Cemetery

The above will contribute to realize the aspirations and objectives of the Gama Neguma concept.

Within five years 125 Houses will be constructed in every village. 25 Houses will be completed in the first year itself. In that context, I also expect to generate employment in the village through the development of activities such as brick making, carpentry and other self employment activities.

Small industries will be commenced in every village. Cottage industries and crafts such as brass works, steel work, small sculptures, weaving of coarse material, mat weaving, toy making, pottery, traditional painting, food preparations, will be encouraged. Some of such industries have been in existence for a long time and those reflect the village specific services and activities that could be developed. Assistance up to Rs.100,000 per project will be extended to persons commencing such industries and crafts.

In farming villages, assistance of Rs.10,000 will be extended to any farming family to construct a paddy storage facility in their premises to store paddy after the harvest.

In addition, steps will be taken to commence common paddy and food storage facilities as well as a Rice milling plant according to the needs of the village.

Schools in the villages will be developed and strengthened instead of being closed. Assistance will be obtained from Buddhist priests and other religious leaders in the villages to safeguard the rural communities from anti-social practices such as alcoholism and betting.

Steps will also be taken to initiate a project named "Wana Piyasa" (Forest cover) in watershed upland areas in villages to meet the timber requirements of the villages in the future.

"The village" that I am proposing to have in this new form will be a reality only if the project is properly managed. For this purpose I intend to hire the services of a specially trained graduate who will provide management inputs to coordinate the work of village officers and the community, and for the community council secretariat to have direct link with the Presidential Secretariat. Furthermore, I believe that the "Nena Sala" - Knowledge Centre which links the people of the village to the outside world of knowledge can be considered as a step in the direction of making the concept of the global village more meaningful.

LET'S BUILD OUR COUNTRY

The freedom of our country is supreme. I will not permit any separatism. I will also not permit anyone to destroy democracy in our country. It is through loving kindness, compassion and altruistic joy (mettha, muditha, karuna) that the civilization of our country was built upon. Its foundation was based on compassion not only to human beings but to all animals, living things, leaves, trees and the entire earth. My aim is to direct all minds towards a national objective. I will respect all ethnic and religious identities, refrain from using force against anyone and

build a new society that protects individuals and social freedoms.

A Virtuous State

Due to actions on the part of some of our rulers who distanced us from our respective religions, our country which was once known as a "Daham Divaina" (sacred island) has been engulfed by a wave of crime. In order to move away from this trend, I propose that people develop closer links with the temples, churches, kovils and mosques. Towards such objective, I propose the following;

While preference given to Buddhism in terms of the Constitution will be consolidated, all other religions including Hinduism, Islam, Catholicism and Christianity will be treated on an equal footing.

A Supreme Inter-Religious Council will be established to enable the Head of State to seek advice from religious dignitaries led by the Maha Sanga, in any crucial crises facing the country.

A Buddhist Clergy University will be established in Sri Lanka which will be capable of providing Buddhist education to local and expatriate Buddhist monks.

A scheme will be introduced to enable the payment of an allowance to all voluntary teachers imparting religious knowledge of different religions at "Daham Pasal".

The existing provision of Rs.1,000 paid by the Government to all students attached to 'Pirivenas' will be enhanced to Rs. 2,000.

'Nana Salas' ('Wisdom Outlets') will be established and based at places of religious worship.

A special programme will be implemented to extend assistance towards maintenance of religious places which are confronted with serious economic difficulties.

A new statute including appropriate amendments capable of addressing current administrative issues associated with properties belonging to Buddhist temples, etc., will be introduced in place of the outdated Buddhist Temporalities Act which had been enacted during the British Regime.

All places of worship belonging to Buddhist, Catholic, Islamic or Hindu religions destroyed by the Tsunami or conflicts will be restored urgently.

An arrangement will be introduced to ensure security and minimum facilities to Buddhists touring India, Muslims touring Makkah and Catholics and Christians touring the Holy Land.

The premises of the Madu Church will be declared as a special site and will be maintained throughout the year under the supervision of the Catholic Church. It is expected to minimize the illegal deforestation taking place in this area and build 500 houses in the this area

for the benefit of pilgrims. This area will be developed according to a broad development plan and other amenities and services will also be provided to conserve the honour and sacredness of this site.

All facilities required in places of Catholic worship such as Talawila, Tewatte, Wahakotte, Hiniduma and Matara will be developed.

The right of Hindus to follow their religion will be strengthened and any state intervention required in that regard will be extended without reservation.

Action will be taken to ensure that places of Hindu worship with cultural values will be preserved and declared as national places of worship.

Steps will be taken to provide required resources and financial assistance to all Hindu schools in the island.

Immediate action will be taken to fill existing vacancies for Islamic marriage registrars and coroners and such new posts will be created in identified areas.

A legal background will be created to remove any obstacles that may arise when last rights are carried out in terms of existing laws.

Historical and Cultural Heritage

I believe it is the prime responsibility of the Government to ensure that all historical and cultural heritage sites of Sri Lanka are preserved and gifted to our future generations.

Consequently, 10,000 historical and cultural heritage sites will be preserved under the 'Uruma Aruna' programme. Laws will be enacted to severely punish any person who destroys, sells or buys any cultural monuments which have become our historical treasures.

AN UNDIVIDED COUNTRY, A NATIONAL CONSENSUS, AN HONOURABLE PEACE

I am deeply convinced that we need to think from a fresh perspective and devise a new approach if we are to find a sustainable solution to the conflict in the North and the East. The violent conflict and the stalemate in the peace talks over the past years have gradually led to this issue progressing beyond the North and the East to engulf the entire country. Thereafter it widened further and became regionalised and internationalised. This situation also led to external interferences into the issue, thereby making it even more complex.

The ceasefire agreement entered into by the United National Front Government in much haste and in a short-sighted manner without consultations further complicated this problem. Democratic institutions in the North were destroyed. The Muslim and Sinhala people living in the East were subjected to abuse, resulting in continuous unrest in the areas. National security was compromised. Agreements were reached at various international fora without reference to the people of the country. Attempts were made to foist such agreements on the people of our country while the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam did not abide by such agreements. It was also proved that the so called international safety net has not been able to deal with the realistic situations that have arisen. Notwithstanding such failures, there are certain persons who are still advocating that we follow the same old path. If this unfortunate process continues, it is very likely that some of those persons who are today following democratic and non-violent courses of action, may also be driven to violence at a future date.

It is my intention to critically examine the merits and demerits of the steps taken so far to deal with this complex problem and consider a fresh approach. In doing so, the fundamental platform that I would base my initiative would be an undivided country, a national consensus and an honourable peace.

No sooner I am elected to office, I shall commence extensive discussions with all political parties

represented in Parliament, based upon the above stated fundamental concepts. At the same time, I shall start discussions with political parties that are not represented in Parliament as well. The discussions would also be extended to the Maha Sangha, leaders and priests of other religions, civil society organizations, and more particularly to the Tamil, Muslim and Sinhala organizations operating in the North and the East.

It is my belief that we would be able to conclude such initial round of discussions within a period of three months. Whilst doing so, we would be able to identify issues where there is agreement or disagreement. Where there appears to be disagreement, I shall endeavour to develop a national consensus. In developing such a consensus, the sovereignty of Sri Lanka, the territorial integrity, the unitary structure of the State, the identities of the different communities, the need to ensure peaceful co-existence amongst such communities, would be preserved.

My primary aim would be to arrive at a peaceful political settlement where the power of each and every citizen is strengthened to the maximum, without being trapped within concepts such as traditional homelands and right to self determination. My intention is to devolve power to the level of the citizen. I believe that by developing a strong citizen, we would be able to reach a solution in this national conflict.

In that endeavour, I would abide by the majority consensus which is a fundamental premise of democracy. The majority national view shall prevail over my individual view.

I shall submit the national consensus that emerges from the consultative process to a referendum of the people as soon as such consensus is reached.

In the course the consultative process, I shall initiate direct talks with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. I also intend to meet their leader and other representatives for such discussions. At such talks, I shall present the consensus reached to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

In this process, the rights of the Muslim people will be safeguarded and their representation will be assured.

The talks during the period 2002 - 2004 undertaken by the government of the United National Front failed because such talks were not based upon any clear plans or pre-determined time frames. Hence such talks did not deliver any tangible or positive results. In contrast to such attempts, I shall present a specific time frame and a clear agenda to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in order to recommence discussions. Our agenda which shall be open and transparent, shall include vital concerns such as renouncing separatism, demilitarization, entry into the democratic process, a

discussion towards a final solution and the implementation of such solution.

It is my belief that since 1977 the short-sighted policies followed by the United National Party governments contributed to the unfortunate situation where we have been compelled to have foreign countries unnecessarily intervening into our internal affairs. The bloodshed that has resulted has been immense. That was the past. Even the present has been affected by the imposition of various external conditions into our country's affairs. It is my intention to rectify this imbalance.

In this context, I shall as a matter of priority, commence talks with our immediate neighbour, India and arrive at an agreement in relation to regional security and peace.

In addition, I shall also seek and obtain an Asian cooperation with China, Russia and Pakistan, who have been extremely helpful to us. I shall also hold open and frank discussions with the Co-chairs of the peace talks, United States of America, European Commission, Japan and Norway.

When such talks, consultations and discussions are successfully completed, I shall appoint a Constitution Re-drafting Council which shall be responsible for drafting a new Constitution. Such Council shall have representation of the Opposition as well. The new

Constitution that would be so drafted would be submitted to the People at a Referendum. If such reforms are approved by our People, I shall take immediate steps to implement such new Constitution.

Whilst these talks and reform processes are continuing, I shall implement my development plans which would include special programs for the North and the East as well.

The ceasefire agreement will be amended so as to ensure that acts of terrorism would not be permitted in any way. The ceasefire monitoring mechanism would also be reviewed and new steps taken. In doing so, it would be endeavoured to obtain a regional co-operation as well.

Further, in order that all persons who have been displaced as a result of the war and violence would be re-settled expeditiously, a new Authority titled "Jathika Saviya" shall be set up. I shall arrange for the payment of Rs.150,000 for resettlement to every family at the interim, and a further Rs.250,000 in respect of a permanent abode. In doing so, I shall also seek the assistance of volunteer organizations and foreign donors.

I shall initiate an expanded and accelerated national program to rehabilitate the areas affected by the Tsunami. In that context, special emphasis would also

be given to the North and the East. Since the proposed Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure would not be implemented, it would be replaced with the "Jaya Lanka" programme, which would be designed to immediately provide for rehabilitation in keeping with the views and proposals of the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslims, and which would ensure the participation and leadership of the affected people.

PROTECTING THE STATE

National Security and Security Forces

I shall introduce a National Security Policy which will preserve the Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity of the country.

A new National Security University providing theoretical and practical course programmes required to build up a national security force with high morale, excellent training and strict discipline.

Unlike in other professions in the public service, the soldiers and non-staff grades have to compulsorily retire when they complete 22 years of service. Consequently, any person who retires after having completed this period of service will be granted the entitlement of the full pension.

50,000 new houses will be built on an urgent basis under the 'Ranaviru Gammana' concept, to provide housing facilities to officers and soldiers in the Security Forces.

A Committee with wide powers will be appointed to make recommendations on employment and welfare related concerns of the Security Forces including the deduction of rent and pension gratuity.

A long - term loan to purchase a vehicle or a motor-cycle will be made available to all those in the Security Forces.

I will endeavour to develop a mechanism of sharing information, knowledge and training pertaining to combating terrorism with countries such as India, Pakistan, China, Russia, UK and the USA.

Public Security, Judiciary and the Law

A judicial process will be introduced to prevent breach of fundamental rights of all citizens, and to provide redress expeditiously in an inexpensive manner in the event of violation of fundamental rights.

A mechanism will be established to provide Legal Aid to the less privileged and the needy so as to ensure that all persons are treated alike in the eyes of the law.

New legal provisions will be introduced through amendments to the Criminal and Civil Procedure Codes, in order to avert delays in administering justice and to avoid lengthy judicial procedures.

I will decentralise the activities of the Court of Appeal.

Employment related issues and other grievances of the staff of prisons will be resolved through broad reforms with regard to prison administration. A new program will also be launched to ensure easy integration of prisoners into society after completing jail sentences.

The Department of Registration of Persons will be extensively computerized in order to commence a programme to issue National Identity Card to all citizens. This data will be made accessible by other departments as well. It is expected that the hardships faced by the people of the Plantations and those from the North and the East, will be reduced considerably through this process.

Police Service

The Police Department will be modernized so as to improve the prevention and investigation of crime, enforcement of law and order and protection of life and property while transforming the police service into a people-friendly and impartial service.

All police officers will be given the required training and the technical know-how. In order to ensure that proper investigations are carried out by the Police, the direct assistance of Lawyers, Auditors, Accountants and other technical officers will be provided.

The short comings faced by the Police Commission will be addressed thereby ensuring that recruitments, promotions and transfers are effected in a justifiable and expeditious manner.

The 140 year old Police Ordinance will be amended for the betterment of the police service.

A long-term loan to purchase vehicles or motor-cycles will be provided to all police officers.

Measures will be taken to absorb the reserve police officers into the permanent police service.

A Committee will be appointed to look into the grievances of Home Guards.

A FLOURISHING SOCIETY - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A new National Economic Policy

A national economic policy will be formulated by integrating the positive attributes of free market economy with domestic aspirations in order to ensure a modern and balanced approach where domestic enterprises can be supported while encouraging foreign investments.

My target is to achieve a GDP growth of 8% per annum over the next 6 year period through this approach. Measures will also be adopted to filter the benefits of such economic development to the general public of the country, and particularly to the lower income groups which is almost 50% of our population.

A programme will be launched to provide capital, technology and knowledge required by the local entrepreneurs to penetrate into international markets.

Government ownership in the strategically important enterprises of banking, power and energy and transport and ports as well as national assets will be continued. Such assets or such public enterprises will not be privatized.

Legislation will be enacted clearly spelling out the responsibility of the government in acting as a custodian in the management of institutions and resources in order to protect the people's ownership of national assets. Management of national assets and public institutions in a more professional and independent manner without being politicized will also be ensured by this legislation.

Macro Economic Management.

The mere reduction of public expenditure and the resulting reduction of the Budget deficit per se is not a characteristic of prudent public finance management. One of the most important factors is to direct government expenditure to the essential priority areas and thereby ensure maximum returns to the national economy. I will follow such a policy.

The Budget deficit will be reduced to a sustainable level by managing public expenditure efficiently. The government expenditure will be subject to continuous review.

So far, funds have been allocated to Ministries to meet their expenditure as determined in terms of line items appearing in the printed estimates. However, I intend to allocate resources on the basis of sector policies and performance targets, with effect from the next year.

A specific percentage will also be allocated to Research and Development activities of all ministries.

Measures will be taken to make the tax system simple and efficient.

Banking, Finance and Insurance

A new banking, scheme named "Lanka Puthra" will be introduced under the SME Bank. Financing facilities will be made available to local small and medium entrepreneurs to become internationally competitive through this new window of finance.

In addition, an "Agri Bank" will be set up for the benefit of the farmers.

A simple housing loan scheme will be implemented for the benefit of low income groups through the existing banking structure.

Samurdhi, "Sanasa" and similar rural banks will be further strengthened to provide financial support to revive the rural economy.

A new credit insurance scheme will be implemented.

Incentives and guidance to local entrepreneurs will be given to induce them to list their companies in the Colombo Stock Exchange and action will be taken to increase the new listings by 40% during the next 6 years.

Trade and Commerce

Rapid measures will be taken to resolve financial and other problems faced by wholesale and retail traders who are vital elements in the national economy. Concessional lending such as daily loans and bonded credit will be arranged to traders at all levels, commencing from pavement vendors to the large Wholesale Traders.

Another endeavour of mine will be to strengthen the Cooperative movement of Sri Lanka to supply goods to consumers at reasonable prices. To achieve this objective the present policy pertaining to cooperatives will be revisited.

The Cooperative movement will be freed from political interference and brought under true public control under our "Gama Neguma" (village up-liftment) programme and a modernized cooperative retail outlet network will be established in each village through this programme.

State institutions such as the "New Lanka CWE", Paddy Marketing Board including a Fruit and

Vegetable Board will be established to provide efficient market networks to service the general public.

AGRICULTURAL RENAISSANCE

Agricultural Policy

Our farmers undergo severe suffering due to the scarcity of water, non availability of land, crop losses, poor markets for their produce and lack of access to technology. I am fully aware and familiar with their problems and expectations. Hence, I am firmly of the view that a new approach is necessary to resolve problems faced by farmers. This new approach has to be vastly different from the election promises given by politicians who represent the elite and live in luxury mansions in Colombo and are therefore attempting to force alien values on our farming community.

Water: the lifeblood of farming

Water is one of the prime resources of our country. The owner of this valuable resources should be the people of this country. I will firmly assure this position.

I intend to present a national irrigation plan where the main rivers, regional tanks, anicuts and water streams in villages will be connected. Dry lands in the North, South, East and West will be transformed to fertile agricultural lands.

It is my intention to complete the 10,000 tanks programme and implement multipurpose irrigation schemes such as Moragahakanda, Uma Oya, North Central Main Canal, Deduru Oya, Menik Ganga, Kubukkan Oya, Yan Oya, Hada Oya, Kirima Oya and Urawa.

Land for cultivation

The availability of Land is one of the major issues in our country. Due to the abandoning of arable lands, traditional attitudes and a multitude of other problems, farmers are gradually getting discouraged. This is a serious challenge facing our farming community. I am determined to meet this challenge and for that purpose a National Land Policy will be formulated.

Under this program, 100,000 plots of land will be given for cultivation to farmers who do not possess land.

Land will also be provided to those in the next generation of settlement schemes and Mahaweli farmers.

Laws will be enacted to confer freehold rights of crown lands already allocated to farmers.

Paddy and other Food Crop production

My father washed his hands from the waters flowing from the sluices of the paddy fields before signing his

nomination papers. Therefore, the terminology associated with paddy farming is not alien to me. Over the past 40 years, I have been dreaming about farmer families in their own decent homes, with two wheel tractors and paddy storage facilities. I believe that I will be able to finally realize this dream.

Seed Production

With a view to reducing the cost of production of paddy, I will launch a programme to produce seeds in a competitive manner, by ensuring the development of state owned seed research farms and seed production farms. I will also ensure that good quality seeds are available at cheaper prices and also increase the overall seed production which is now well below the expected levels.

Fertilizer

I will make arrangements to offer 50 Kg bags of all types of inorganic Fertilizer at Rs.350 to farmers in order to increase the agricultural and plantation productivity. The Government will also launch a scheme to encourage farmers to cultivate crops without using chemical fertilizers. Farmers who will opt for this method will be given financial assistance by the Government.

A new fertilizer factory will be established to ensure the supply of fertilizer at cheaper prices in the long term.

Essential insecticides and weedicides will be made available through Cooperatives at competitive prices.

Agro Technology and financial resources

Arrangements will be made to provide the funds required by the Cooperative societies so that they could, in turn, provide agricultural equipment and tractors on concessional rental basis to farmers.

All taxes levied on two wheel tractors and other agricultural equipment will be removed.

Each farmer will be provided with a mammoth of their choice, free of charge, for the next Maha season.

Agriculture insurance schemes and farmer pension schemes will be streamlined so that benefits can accrue to the beneficiaries without delay.

Cultivation loans that cannot be repaid by farmers will be written off.

Agricultural advisory services

Schools of Agriculture will be revived and agricultural faculties in the Universities will be strengthened once again.

The advise of local and overseas trained specialists will be made available directly to the farmer. Farmers will be equipped with the required technological and other

skills and arrangements will be made to train them locally and overseas, through a scheme of scholarships.

I will launch gene-technology projects throughout the country with the participation of universities.

Purchase and Storage of Agricultural Produce

I will re-establish the Paddy Marketing Board in order to intervene in the process of paddy purchasing and rice markets.

With effect from the next Maha season, the guaranteed price for Nadu rice will be fixed at Rs.16/50 and for Red rice and Samba Rice at Rs.17/50 per kg.

I will launch a special programme to enhance the paddy production in the wet zone under a special programme to re-cultivate abandoned fields. The aim of this programme is to ensure national food security.

A buffer stock of 100,000 metric tons of paddy and rice will be maintained jointly by the Agricultural Department and the Trade Ministry.

I will make arrangements to grant loans up to Rs.10 million at concessionary rates, in order to rehabilitate the presently defunct small and medium scale paddy mills.

I will also establish "Rice Processing Villages" for the purpose of decentralizing the rice market to village level.

I will ensure that rice, cereals and vegetables produced by our local framers are used in the preparation of the mid day meal that is to be given to our school children.

I will make arrangements to popularize rice based food with a view to ensuring that our farmers obtain a competitive price while also ensuring that our future generations are strong and healthy. I believe that such strategy would also revitalize the national economy.

Other Crops

I will not permit the importation of crops such as potatoes, onions and chillies during the local harvesting seasons.

I intend to introduce high quality plantain varieties of international specifications to boost banana production aiming at overseas markets.

Post-harvest losses of vegetable and fruits will be minimized. I will launch projects to preserve these crops as well as add value in order to market such crops as processed / packed foods.

"Regional Distribution Centres" will be established and arrangements will be made to store vegetables and fruits in fully equipped cool rooms.

I will boost the export of our vegetables, fruits and spices to Middle Eastern and European markets, as well as airlines and ships.

The cultivation of Betal leaves will be encouraged to cater to the Pakistan and Indian markets and to benefit by the quotas offered by those countries.

Lands will be provided to traditional chena cultivators so that such cultivation can be done without hindrance.

The Agrarian Development Act will be amended to extend more benefits to the farmers.

A new era for Plantations

Tea, Rubber and Coconut plantations play a pivotal role in our national economy. Hence, I will take action to develop these sectors.

I will provide land in the extent of one acre each out of the government owned lands vested with the Land Reform Commission and Janawasama to landless people in Kalutara, Ratnapura, Galle and Kegalle districts to enable the cultivation of low grown tea.

I will make arrangements to reinvest the proceeds of the "Cess" levied on tea small holdings. In addition, the subsidies provided for tea plantations and new plantations will be increased by 25%.

The capital and know-how required by the private sector to enhance the production of value added tea in place of traditional black tea will be facilitated.

Incentives to planters to produce organic tea and specialty tea, will be provided to the producers.

I will also arrange the required financial facilities and tax concessions in order to encourage the modernization of tea factories which are facing difficulties.

Coconut cultivation will be developed in the South, East and other coastal areas in addition to the traditional Coconut Triangle.

I will take action to preserve prime coconut lands and increase the productivity through the introduction of new planting varieties and methods of cultivation.

I will provide financial assistance to undertake coconut cultivation, using drip irrigation.

I will also launch a programme to develop a market for dessiccated coconut, and to develop the coconut oil industry.

The subsidy payment provided for the replanting of coconut will be increased annually in keeping with the increases in costs of cultivation.

I will take action to extend the cultivation of rubber into Moneragala and Wellawaya regions without

confining them to the wet zone only. Financial and technical assistance will be provided to develop rubber based industries and assistance will be given to source new overseas markets. The Replanting subsidy for rubber will be increased to Rs.106,000 per hectare.

70% of the global requirement of cinnamon is fulfilled by Sri Lankan producers. It is regrettable to note that due prominence has yet not been given to this industry. Therefore, I will introduce new technology to this plantation sector and take the necessary action to remove obstacles in relation to its international trading.

I will encourage the private sector to export spices and other export agricultural crops in a greater value added form rather than in the present primary product form.

I will popularize the cultivation of sugar cane among small holders. Hingurana and Kantale sugar factories will be revitalized to make Sri Lanka self sufficient in sugar.

Dairy Industry

Only 15% of the domestic demand for milk is met by local production. We have to change this unfortunate situation. Instead of enriching multinational companies by granting subsidies on imported milk powder, every effort will be made to ensure self-sufficiency in milk production.

I will pay attention to the need to strengthen the local dairy farmer and dairy industry. I will provide cross-

bred milking cows to rural families on concessionary loans. Land, water, equipment and technology required by local entrepreneurs to establish Small and Medium scale livestock farms will also be provided.

I will encourage the consumption and marketing of fresh milk. Retail outlets for fresh milk will be established in close proximity to every government hospital. Fresh milk factories with UHT technology will be established in Kurunegala, Trincomale and Hambantota districts.

I will offer a guaranteed price of Rs.25 per litre of milk from January 2006 onwards. At present, the farm gate price of milk is only 40% of the price paid by the consumer. Action will therefore be taken to gradually increase this percentage to 60% over the next 3 years to ensure that the farm gate price will be Rs.35 per litre.

I will also provide incentives to establish small and medium scale factories to produce dairy products: cheese, yogurt, ice-cream, etc.

Fisheries and Ocean Resources

We have so far failed to tap the vast potential of the ocean resources surrounding us. I am determined to change this situation and develop the fisheries industry and to bring it to a level of the industry in Japan and Thailand. While I was the Minister of Fisheries, I established an Ocean University as a first step towards this goal.

The coastal guard which was initiated by me will be strengthened further in order to protect our ocean resources. I will take action to utilize these resources to the maximum, enhancing the employment opportunities and increasing the national production.

My priority will be to realise the potential of the deep seas around Sri Lanka which posses large quantities of fish. To do so 50 trawlers will be deployed to engage in deep sea fishing.

I will also make arrangements to provide 500 multi-day boats at concessionary prices to the costal fisherman in Sri Lanka, within a period of 3 years.

I will develop 100 fishery harbours, anchorages, boat yards and fishery crafts centres along the coastal line.

A fuel subsidy will also be given to fishermen with effect from January 2006.

I will provide the required incentives to the private sector to make available fisheries craft with new technology and to provide fishing gear to fisherman. Action will also be taken to develop fresh water fishing in new rehabilitated tanks, reservoirs and ponds.]

I will provide land, capital, knowledge and technology to set up 150 brackish and fresh water prawn farms in 10 zones.

Factories for fish processing and canning will be set up in the North, East and South in close proximity to fishery harbours and anchorages.

I will popularize the breeding of ornamental fish. The government will intervene in securing new technology, information and incentives to our small and medium scale ornamental fish breeders to penetrate into the international markets.

I will take measures to prohibit poaching by foreign fisherman in our territorial waters.

I will also take measures to curb the use of destructive fishing methods.

I will also make arrangements to replace nets and other fishing gear at subsidized rates if these are lost or destroyed through natural disasters. Lost fisheries crafts, nets, fishing gear and fishery houses will be replaced within a period of 3 months.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Industrial Development

Countries such as China, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand which were on par with us or were lagging behind us in terms of economic development at the time of our independence have overtaken us significantly in industry and trade. The basic reason for such occurrence is probably due to the absence of a vision, specific programmes, and the will to implement

such programmes. Having clearly understood this situation, I propose to implement the following courses of action to meet these challenges:

- Set up 12 new investment zones and transform 12 small townships in close proximity to such zones into large scale cities.
- Establish large scale industries in each divisional secretariat division so that at least 300 new industries will be set up throughout the country.
- Grant a 5 year tax holiday to investments exceeding Rs. 50 million made in these regions.

Local industries which manufacture products for overseas markets by using more than 75% of local raw material will be granted 5 year tax holiday.

Industries that add value to our minerals such as gems, clay, dolomite, graphite and ilmenite will be developed.

I will implement a comprehensive plan to develop the gem industry.

An investment promotion zone dedicated for the gem industry will be set up in the Ratnapura district.

Facilities will be made available for polishing and designing and training will be provided for each area of the gem industry through a centre to be set up for this purpose.

All study courses on engineering and management offered by the universities at present will be modernized and promoted for rapid industrial development.

I also intend developing local industries by using the export opportunities afforded under the Free Trade Agreements entered into with India and Pakistan.

Small and Medium scales Enterprises (SME's)

My aim is to establish the Small and Medium scale Entrepreneurs (SME's) as the back bone of our national economy. I will therefore take measures to bring them to a national level and to compete in international markets.

For this purpose, an Authority for Small and Medium scale Enterprises will be established.

To achieve this objective, a technical development fund under the SME Bank "Lanka Puthra" scheme will be set up to develop and assist small and medium scale industries.

New inventions patented by local universities and other institutions will be introduced to local entrepreneurs.

Rs.500 million will be allocated annually to provide state support to selected small and medium scale enterprises so that these can be developed to an

international level. Special loan schemes to such entrepreneurs will be provided through the "Lanka Putra" window of the SME Bank.

Duty free importation of raw materials will be allowed for small and medium industries in selected fields.

I will also offer a five year tax holiday to small and medium industries which use new technology.

State patronage and financial assistance will be granted in respect of training courses conducted on human resources and vocational training in small and medium scale industries.

Apparel industry

We protected the apparel industry which was facing an intense threat due to the abolition of the quota system. We also safeguarded the European quotas. My intention is to expand this industry by sourcing new overseas markets, expanding domestic markets, improving productivity and adding our identity to this industry. I will offer the required guidance and strength to this endeavour. I will also make every effort to regain the lost US quotas.

I will establish 3 textile processing zones in order to enhance the value addition in our apparel exports.

I will set up health and residential facilities in export processing zones and major apparel manufacturing areas with the assistance of the private sector.

Assistance in the form of finance, technology and markets will be offered to the handloom industry and other handicraft industries.

Construction Industry

The major problems faced by the construction sector at present are deficiencies in long term capital, slow progress in public investment and competition from the overseas construction companies. Special programmes will be launched to meet these challenges effectively. Priority will be given to local construction companies in granting government construction contracts.

Under the "Lanka Putra" bank scheme, the construction guarantee fund will be strengthened. A special loan scheme will also be introduced to provide finance and construction equipment to the construction industry.

ICTAD will be converted into an Authority. Environmental friendly material and technology will be introduced as a response to deal with the shortage of sand, metal and timber. Among such responses would be the cleaning of sea sand, commercial cultivation of trees for timber and developing alternate construction material. Import duty concessions will also be given on the importation of timber.

I will actively support the construction industry by promoting new technology such as pre-fabricated housing, high quality construction material and high tech and popular construction methods. State patronage will be provided to the upliftment of research and development activities in order to develop new technology and increase productivity.

I will encourage the use of local raw material as far as possible and promote new inventions in the construction industry.

Further, other problems faced by local construction companies due to the deficiencies in tender procedures will be resolved.

Tourism

Tourism can provide a substantial contribution to the economic development of our country. However, our natural and human resources have not been utilized scientifically to develop this industry. My intention is to generate environment friendly sustainable tourism instead of relying only on leisure seeking popular tourism.

I have planned the development of the tourism industry to its maximum potential within the next 5 years by making use of our environmental and cultural attractions and upgrading and implementing the plans already prepared for this purpose.

I would prepare a business plan to meet the targeted number of tourist arrivals of 1,500,000 by the year 2010.

In addition to traditional countries, I plan to focus on Indian, Chinese, Middle Eastern and Russian tourists as well.

I will offer the necessary financial assistance and incentives to develop the hotel industry and other infrastructure required by the tourist industry in order to accommodate the additional arrivals.

Arrangements will also be made to train tourist guides professionally and to register them under the Sri Lanka Tourist Board.

In my tourism development plan, I will focus on new areas such as Hambantota, Kalpitiya and Arugambay as tourist zones.

The areas surrounding the Beira Lake and the Dutch Canal will be re-developed so that these areas can also be converted to tourist attraction zones.

A LAND IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

A Sustainable Policy for Environmental Conservation

"O' King, you are not the ruler of this land, but the custodian", preached Arahat Mahinda, upon arrival in this country, to King Devanampiyatissa. Had we acted according to that advice in the past, the world would not have probably faced the scarcity of resources, environmental pollution, and the resultant droughts, floods and natural disasters.

My aim is to promote sustainable development in close liaison with the land, fauna and flora, and to bestow our natural heritage to our future generations.

Our bio diversity is among the world's heritages. I will not let it be alienated. The State ownership of our oceanic resources, water, aquatic life, forests and natural resources will be ensured.

The "Haritha Piyasa" programme will be implemented to reforest the hill-country, slopes and protected watershed areas with species endemic to Sri Lanka.

I consider cruelty to animals a disgrace on humanity. I therefore propose to amend, without delay, the outdated laws on prevention of cruelty to animals.

Steps will be taken to promote commercial forestry in view of meeting the timber requirements of the nation.

I will implement an accelerated programme to solve the urban solid waste problem. Waste management systems will be established regionally within the next six years which will produce compost out of urban solid waste.

Processes will be initiated to gradually eliminate the usage of polythene, and to introduce substitutes. All State institutions concerning environmental protection will be brought under the Ministry of Environment.

ENERGY POLICY

Political and other interferences have created immense problems in our energy sector. I aim at relieving our poor and the country's economy of the impact of increasing energy prices in the world market, and at improving the energy supply to match the demand within the country.

The energy security of the country and energy conservation will be treated as high priority objectives.

The thermal power plants including coal-fired ones, and the hydro power plants will be constructed expeditiously according to the generation plans of the Ceylon Electricity Board, while taking into consideration the social problems and environmental implications.

I will take steps to complete the construction of the four hydro electricity projects at Moragolla, Uma Oya, Gin Ganga and Broadlands within the next six years.

Dendro energy projects will be developed in the dry zone as a rural industry. Under the project titled "Electricity for all", successfully tested technologies such as wind power and solar power will be used to provide electricity to the remote rural villages where grid network expansion is not feasible.

I will not privatise the Ceylon Electricity Board. New management approaches will be introduced, with the consensus of all stake-holders including trade unions, to improve work efficiency.

The Petroleum Corporation will not be privatised. New management approaches will be introduced, with the consensus of all stake-holders including trade unions, to improve work efficiency. A new refinery and a tank complex will be installed at Hambantota.

The newly discovered oil deposits will be further explored during my tenure of office and the benefits will be channelled to the public as soon as possible.

SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

My intention is to provide a satisfactory transport service to the people of our country within the next six years. Towards this end, a sustainable national policy on transport will be developed with the participation of transport sector employees, travelling public, transport professionals, and suppliers of transport services including bus owners.

In such a policy, provisions will be made to assign priority to public transport, and to attract passengers and goods towards larger capacity vehicles away from smaller ones, and towards rail transport away from road based transport.

I will take steps to reduce long-distance train fares by 15%.

A decade of railway development will be proclaimed, within which period a minimum of 1/2% of GDP will be allocated as capital for railway development. The Kelani Valley railway line will be developed and extended to Hambantota via Ratnapura and Embilipitiya, and the coast line to Kataragama. A new railway line will be constructed linking Kurunegala and Habarana via Dambulla. The up-country line, including the Kandy-Gampola-Kadugannawa railway triangle, will also be developed.

The railway lines from Colombo to Galle, Chilaw and Anuradhapura will be double tracked permitting a speed of 100 kmph. An airport railway service will be introduced between Colombo and Katunayake and the railway service to Mihintale will be developed.

I also intend to reconstruct the Northern railway to Jaffna, and the railway line to Mannar. The feasibility of developing a railway link between Batticaloa and Kataragama also will be examined.

We managed to re-establish the Sri Lanka Transport Board. I will take steps to develop it further by injecting 5,000 new buses within three years.

I am of the view that the problems faced by the private bus industry need to be expeditiously solved. As the first step towards this outcome, immediate discussions will be initiated with the bus owners and the employees.

Coordinated train-bus services will be reintroduced. Bus time tables, passenger safety, rural services, school services and night services will be regularised through the reorganisation of the National Transport Commission.

Colombo - Katunayake, and Colombo - Matara expressway projects which are already in progress and the Outer-circular road will be expeditiously completed. The expressway projects that have already been planned, including the road from Colombo to Jaffna, will be commenced as early as possible. Further, new expressway projects will be considered upon assessment of relative benefits compared to the railway option.

I will construct 20 fly-overs within three years in order to minimise traffic congestion in the Colombo city roads and to minimise accidents at road-rail crossings.

Steps will be initiated to reuse all existing canals, including those constructed during Dutch period, for

transport purposes and to construct bicycle lanes within town areas.

I will prepare a plan, with stake-holder consensus, to provide fuel at concessionary rates to public transport services such as trains, buses and three-wheelers. The services rendered by the three-wheelers in the national transport system will be appraised, and an action plan will be developed to alleviate the problems faced by them.

HARNESSING THE BLUE SKIES AND SEAS

Naval and Aviation services

I am determined to make our country the centre of the Asian silk route once again taking advantage of its unique geographical location. I intend to develop it into a navigation, aviation, trading and commercial centre linking the East and the West.

Action will be taken to construct the Colombo, South Colombo and Oluvil harbours. The Galle and Trincomalee harbours will also be expanded. Tourism and industrial zones will be established and centered around the Trincomalee harbour. The KKS and Point Pedro harbours will also be developed.

Hambantota will be developed as an intermediate (stopover) harbour. An economic zone comprising the areas between Hambantota and Embilipitiya will be

established for the supply of fuel, cooked food, drugs and medicine and other services to foreign ships.

Action will be taken for the registration of ships under the Sri Lankan Flag.

A Naval training school will be established for naval professionals.

A programme of action to provide foreign employment in the commercial - naval fields will also be established

Action will be taken for the establishment of a second international airport, while also pursuing action to develop the Koggala, Hinguragoda, Sigiriya, Anuradhapura airports.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Under-development in the fields of science and technology has been one of the reasons for our country being economically backward. Over a long period of time in the past, we have also been accustomed to the importation of developed technological products. In general, we cannot be too pleased about the priority accorded to technological progress in our country. I hope to achieve a marked development in the field of science and technology within the next 6 years.

I am committed to ensuring that science education is made available to all alike with no discrimination as between the town and village, the rich and the poor.

At least 1% of the Gross National Product will be set aside by me for innovations in the field of science and technology. A system will be set in place to ensure that these innovations are at the disposal of the consumers as well as the business community. The "Vidyatha" and "Nana Sala" programmes will be carried forward with vigor in order to take "science and technology" to the village.

Information Technology

Sri Lanka has an ancient heritage as a centre for the dissemination of knowledge in Asia. Its present day achievement as a country with a very high literacy rate and an able human resource base which is endowed with all the important factors necessary to achieve a high level of technological development is generally considered commendable. Therefore it would be logical to take steps to create the legal, policy, institutional and strategic background that is necessary for a rapid development in the information technology area in this country, and I intend to do so.

Action will be taken under the "Nana Sala" programme to provide computers and internet facilities to all villages. Facilities for e-commerce transactions will be improved.

Facilities will also be provided to streamline the services offered by the Public Administration structure of the country, utilizing telecommunication and information technology.

A network of infrastructure facilities will be put in place to facilitate the utilization of telecommunication services and IT services.

Action will be taken early to overcome deficiencies regarding the lack of information systems related to statistical data, emergency services and physical features.

Public Telecommunication facilities will be provided to all villages while internet facilities and other communication facilities would be provided through the centres established in villages for this purpose.

A programme for the extension of medium and small industries to turn out software and hardware would be undertaken at regional level in collaboration with developed Asian countries.

The Information Technology literacy rate will be increased from 20% to 60% over a period of 3 years.

Centers will be opened for training youth in IT and Telecommunication in order to equip them for employment abroad in the relevant fields, as there is a significant demand for these categories of trained personnel.

Sri Lanka will be developed as a regional centre of the Asian IT dissemination networks.

ENSURING GOOD HEALTH

"Suva Sevana" Programme

I consider it my responsibility to preserve the free health service and safeguard the right of every citizen for the benefits thereunder. In this regard, immediate action will be taken to enhance these services both qualitatively and quantitatively through increased budgetary provisions.

This programme will consist of two aspects namely, curative and preventive. Both aspects would be accorded equal priority. As regards the preventive aspect it is intended to bring all the institutions involved in preventive care under one roof, with the necessary expenditure under the Ministry of Health being allocated therefor.

Programmes will also be implemented for the total eradication of polio, malaria, dengue and rabies.

Public sector programmes for the prevention of cancer will be strengthened.

HIV/Aids will be identified as a serious threat and immediate steps will be taken to save our youth and the country from this threat.

It is my view that in Sri Lanka, the doctors to patients ratio is not at all satisfactory. Action will therefore be taken to recruit more doctors, particularly in view of

their acute shortage in the rural areas and provide the required facilities.

The "Seneka Bibile Drugs Policy" which has been acclaimed internationally will be re-activated. The State Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Corporation will be strengthened with a view to locally manufacture the drugs with a relatively high demand in the country.

More scholarships will be arranged to doctors with a view to increase the number of specialists.

Residential facilities to doctors will be increased and the intake of medical students will also be increased.

Indigenous Healthcare

We possess a system of indigenous medicine which we can be proud of and which we can offer to the world at large. I consider it my responsibility to preserve this knowledge base and offer it to the world.

Due recognition and acceptance will also be given to traditional Sinhala medicine, ayurveda, unani, homeopathy and acupuncture.

The recommendations of the Presidential Task Force in regard to the role of Ayurveda under the national health policy will be implemented. Action will also be pursued to present the proposed new Bill on ayurveda and the draft Bill on Ayurvedic drugs, cosmetics, tools and equipment in the Parliament.

Facilities will be provided to Ayurvedic doctors to obtain rare items of medicine/drugs. Legal provision will be made to register all private Ayurvedic Hospitals and Institutions supplying Ayurvedic services, with the Department of Ayurveda.

ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE AND VIRTUES

National Education Programme

I will not deprive our children of their right to free education. I will take early steps to teach Tamil language to Sinhala children and Sinhala language to all students whose mother tongue is Tamil. For this purpose, comprehensive syllabi will be developed while a team of versatile teachers equipped with necessary linguistic skills will be trained.

No child will be allowed to study in hunger. I will therefore offer a rice meal at mid day to every school going child.

All Maha Vidyalays and Central Colleges will be fully developed with all modern facilities. Science laboratories for advanced level students, language centres with facilities to teach Sinhala, Tamil and English, Computer Laboratories, library and Sport Centres will be among such facilities. Further, a selected school in each Divisional Secretariat division will be developed as a superior school, thereby making the total number of superior schools in the island to 325.

Our children who have been hitherto severely handicapped in the context of a global village have to be urgently equipped with the knowledge of the English knowledge.

Top priority will therefore be given to enhance the proficiency of the English language among all children, within the next 10 years.

Two fully fledged Tamil schools in Colombo and one Muslim boys school in Kandy will be established.

I have witnessed the hardships experienced by year five scholarship holders who come to the schools in the city from remote villages. I will therefore make arrangements under the "Sisu Sevana" (shelter for students) programme to provide hostel facilities free of charge to children who are from Samurdhi families.

Essential infrastructure facilities such as water, electricity and telecommunication will be provided to every rural school.

I will take action to streamline the school bus services, establish a railway service focusing on school children and also establish joint school transport services involving bus and railway services.

Children are more vulnerable at time of natural disasters. Therefore, I will implement a programme to provide an understanding about situations such as vehicle accidents, fire, floods, land slides and Tsunamis

as well as provide the practical knowledge to respond to such situations. This will be done with the assistance of National Disaster Management Council.

As a consequence of the Advanced level examination being held in the months during which national festivals are celebrated, the parents and teachers are greatly inconvenienced. Hence, I will arrange to conduct such examinations in other months in order to avoid the inconvenience caused to students, parents and teachers.

In order to settle the crisis in educational administration, which has arisen over several decades due to politicization, priority will be given to suitably qualified teachers in the recruitment into the Education Administrative Services.

I will also take the necessary action to safeguard the social and professional dignity of teachers and principals.

Scholarship programmes will be launched to provide opportunities for teachers to be trained locally and abroad.

Young principals will be sent for training to local and overseas institutions.

Safeguards stipulated in the Law under which private schools were taken over by the government in 1961 will be preserved and strictly adhered to.

"University to All" programme

The number of students who enter university out of those who are successful at the Advanced Level examine is very low. However, the right to pursue higher studies by all students who pass the advanced level has to be protected, I am prepared to accept that challenge.

As a first step of this programme I intend increasing the number of students to be enrolled into the Universities by commencing new courses and expanding the present facilities. Facilities and financial provisions will be provided to streamline and expand the open university education.

I will also make arrangements to introduce distance education programmes by using modern communication technology.

Areas in the vicinity of universities will be developed as "University villages". Such areas will be developed so that needs of the university community will be served by the village.

The monthly allowance paid to university students under the Mahapola Scholarship scheme and university bursary scheme will be increased by Rs.500. Arrangements will be made for university students to undergo practical training in public and private sector institutions during the period of their university education.

I will launch a new programme to provide hostel facilities for each university student.

The number of scholarships granted through the President's Fund to university students whose performance is outstanding will be doubled.

The right of university students to choose the medium of instruction will be protected while all facilities are made to learn Sinhala, Tamil, English and major foreign languages. Modern language laboratories with all facilities will also be set up in each university.

Action will be taken to fill all academic vacancies in the Universities. In addition, opportunities will be given to members of the academic staff to undergo post-graduate training in overseas universities under a specific programme.

Special awards and grants which will be based on the contribution made to the national economy through research and inventions by universities and other academic institutions will be granted. Priority will also be given for university staff and students when research and development projects are implemented in government Ministries and affiliated institutions. I will create a Research Development Fund to expand research activities of the universities.

Livelihood skills programme

The tertiary and vocational training has to be geared to meet the requirements of emerging needs of domestic and overseas labour markets. Therefore I will take action to expand tertiary education to provide international level knowledge and training and to protect the dignity of the profession.

I will introduce diploma courses on tourism, electronics, marketing and building construction for the benefit of students who have studied only up to the ordinary level examination.

Formal training opportunities presently available in the public sector for the benefit of young school leavers will be increased from 60,000 to 100,000 annually. For this purpose, facilities available with existing technical colleges will be expanded and new technical colleges will be established in areas where there are no Technical colleges.

The number of vocational training centres will be increased from 200 to 300 by opening 100 new institutions.

100,000 opportunities will be created annually in livelihood skills development in the informal sector through setting up of 500 community schools under the Sri Lanka Vocational Training Authority.

A National Technical Education Institution will be set up, in order to target the employment opportunities overseas.

DEFEATING THE TSUNAMI

"Jaya Lanka" programme

Having understood fully the reasons for lack of progress in rehabilitation and reconstruction of houses and infrastructure destroyed due to the Tsunami disaster I am now introducing the "Jaya Lanka" programme to overcome these limitations and accelerate the reconstruction programme.

I will implement a temporary social security scheme to provide relief to the Tsunami affected people. This will be implemented until normalcy is restored through the assistance that is being given by the government.

I will facilitate the construction of houses, business premises and tourist hotels within the 100 metre buffer zone on the basis of the recommendations of Parliamentary Select Committee comprising of members of all parties.

I will establish a special fund of Rs.500 million to meet the expenses of children throughout Sri Lanka who lost their parents or guardians due to the Tsunami disaster.

All archeological and religious places that were destroyed by the Tsunami will be reconstructed within

a year. I will seek advise and financial assistance from religious leaders and NGOs in fulfilling this task.

I will expedite the reconstruction of fishery harbours and anchorages destroyed by Tsunami.

A special administrative unit with full powers will be set up in each Tsunami affected District Secretariat to make available copies of lost documents such as birth certificates, identity cards, land deeds and other certified documents and to settle the title disputes pertaining to lands.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In addition to common development programmes at national level, specific development programmes have been formulated targeting specific regions.

Beyond the Palmyrah Grove

I am well aware that the people in the North and the East were severely affected by the ethnic violence over two decades and due to the Tsunami tidal waves that devastated our coastal areas.

I extend my hand of cooperation to you and your children with sincere love and affection, without being confined to the narrow boundaries of ethnic and religious differences. Having understood fully your struggle for survival against various odds, I will take action to expeditiously solve your problems.

The great leader of India, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru stated: I will wipe the tears in your eyes". With this intention I place before you the following proposals.

I will establish a Fund to reconstruct the houses damaged by the war and also to rehabilitate lives affected by the war.

I hope to construct 80,000 houses damaged and provide livelihoods within the first year itself. A part of this cost will be paid as a subsidy and the balance will be provided as an interest free loan.

I will make arrangements to pay a temporary allowance to people who had to leave their homes as those were located in high security zones.

All those who are displaced will be resettled in their villages expeditiously.

The Jaffna - Mannar railway line will be reconstructed for the benefit of the people in the North. Construction of all highways and rural roads in that area will be completed through a special project implemented under "Maga Neguma" - Road construction programme.

All damaged and destroyed infrastructure relating to health services will be reconstructed to cater to future needs.

An expeditious programme will be implemented to fill vacancies in medical and other health employees cadres.

All damaged or destroyed schools will be rehabilitated according to high standards.

All vacancies in the government services including those of teaching cadres will be filled within one year in the Northern Province.

I will take action to rebuild the faculties damaged or destroyed and provide all physical facilities to the Jaffna University. Curricula will be modernized and expanded. I invite intellectuals in the North and East to develop a human development project at the Jaffna University. I will provide all resources and financial assistance required for this project.

I will take action to expand the programmes already started to revitalize the fisheries industry in the North. A factory for processing and canning of fish will be established in the Northern Province.

Under the domestic economic policy that will be introduced by me, farmers in the North who are the back-bone of that society will be assisted by providing finances and agricultural implements and also by making arrangements to purchase their produce at a competitive price.

Priority will be given to restore the destroyed plantations of palmyrah, coconut and cashew.

A special project will be launched with international aid to reduce the salinity in soil in the areas to be used for agriculture.

Environmental development programmes will be implemented to protect the soil and the bio-diversity in the region.

Priority will be given to water supply schemes at district level in the North and East to provide drinking water as well as water for cultivation purposes.

I will take action to fulfill power and energy needs and communication needs through an expeditious programme. Machinery and equipment that are needed by the institutions in that region will be provided to deliver their services more efficiently.

I will take action to strengthen the Cooperative movement in the North and East in terms of the national programme for empowerment of the cooperative movement.

Tertiary training programmes will be commenced for the benefit of youth in the area.

All mosques, churches and temples that were destroyed either by the communal disturbances or by the Tsunami will be restored expeditiously. Funds will be allocated to construct cultural centres and other constructions for religious purposes.

All displaced Muslim persons in the Northern Province will be resettled immediately.

Eastern revival

It is clear that the people of the Eastern Province have problems which are peculiar to them due to the ethnic diversity, geographical and cultural reasons. Hence a special programme will be launched under my government for the resolution of these issues.

I consider the need to dispel the fears of the people of the Eastern Province is of utmost importance. I am firmly of the view that no ethnic group should be reduced to being hostages of another group. I will therefore ensure that the security of the people of the Eastern Province is not threatened.

In this background, I will create a new security net comprising personnel from the armed forces, police, special task force, political leaders of the area, and peoples' organizations. I will pay special attention to the security of the Muslim community. The Muslim community would be considered a distinct group and their representation at every fora would be assured. The various problems of the Sinhala and Tamil people in the Eastern Province would also be resolved through extensive programmes.

The people of Ampara and Batticaloa districts are subject to great hardships due to long distances that they have to travel to the Trincomalee Provincial Centre for various administrative matters. In order to

ease this situation, an additional office will be established at Kalmunai.

A programme will also be implemented to resolve the issues related to land in the Eastern Province.

An agricultural export zone will be established in Ampara district. Action will also be taken to renovate all irrigation schemes in the area.

The Trincomalee-Batticaloa highway will be fully developed. A new road will be constructed between Panama and Monaragala. A programme will also be implemented for the development of other major roads in the area.

The Trincomalee Batticaloa railway-line will be developed.

Action will be taken to develop the Oluvil Harbour.

Kalmunai and Valachchenai towns too will be developed.

All places of archeological interest in the area will be preserved while places of religious worship will be developed under a separate programme.

A special programme will be launched to develop animal husbandry.

A number of fisheries projects will also be implemented.

This region will be developed as a separate tourist zone.

Several new garment factories will be opened.

Action will be taken to end the shortage of teachers in Muslim schools and to develop the physical resources of the schools.

The people who were worst affected by the Tsunami disaster were the Muslims of the Eastern Province. I am aware of the need for a special rehabilitation programme for them. A rehabilitation programme with the participation of all political leaders of the area, Eastern University, Government institutions and community organisations will be implemented for their benefit.

Senkadagala Revival

Financial facilities to develop industries using specific resources in the Senkadagala region will be provided under the "Lanka Puthra" Bank scheme.

State land will be alienated to landless on a priority basis in order to resolve the landlessness of the Kandyan peasantry.

Traditional Kandyan industries will be taken up separately for development under the Lanka Puthra Bank scheme.

Model periphery village schemes with new technology will be introduced in the economic zones established in Kotmale - Digana - Ukuwele regions.

Special environmental conservation projects will be commenced in the Nuwara Eliya district.

Ruhuna Re-awakening

Galle, Matara and Hambantota districts will be developed as tourist centres specially as eco-tourism and adventure centres.

The construction of the Southern Highway will be expedited. I will accelerate the construction of the new main road connecting Marata/Hambantota, Weerawila/Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee and also the construction of connecting roads.

Galle and Hambantota Ports will be developed and converted to commercial towns. I will take action to develop fishery harbours, anchorages market places and fish canning factories in the coastal area.

Rajarata Reawakening

An accelerated programme known as "Rajarata Navodaya" which has already commenced to develop villages in Anuradapura and Polonnaruwa districts will be further strengthened through the "Gama Neguma" (village up-liftment) and Maga Neguma road construction programmes.

I will take action to conserve religious places in Anuradapura and Polonnaruwa and to develop transport, lodging and other infrastructure facilities required by pilgrims.

North-West Revival

I will initiate action to rehabilitate and conserve the cultural square consisting Paduwasnuwara, Dambadeniya, Yapahuwa and Ethugalpura (Kurunegala).

I will expeditiously implement the Deduru Oya irrigation scheme.

Awakening of Wellassa

The Uva Wellassa region is one of the most undeveloped and poverty stricken areas in Sri Lanka. I will take action to accelerate the development programmes already commenced under "Pubudamu Wellassa" Development Programme so that development targets will be met within the next 6 years.

Action will be taken to uplift the education facilities in the region. Vacancies in the teaching cadres will be filled to remedy the shortage of teachers in the area. Construction of the Uva Wellassa University will be expedited. I will also take action to revive the proud heritage of Wellassa.

I will take action to improve the health facilities in the area with the assistance of Uva Provincial Council.

In the past, Uva Wellassa was one of the most prosperous regions of the country. A programme to rehabilitate the irrigation system in the area will be commenced to revive the past glory.

The Uma Oya Development Project will be implemented on a priority basis.

A special project will be commenced to develop the cultivation of lime and oranges. A factory will be set up to process these fruits so as to remedy the problem of marketing.

A separate programme will be commenced to solve the problems faced by pepper farmers.

New Life for the Plantation Area

I will provide a plot of land to each plantation worker. Through such empowerment I will support the plantation community to stand on their own like any other citizen who owns property.

A high powered Authority for Infrastructure Development and Human Resources Development in the Plantation area will be established in order to implement the three year plan for the estate community as put forward by the government which assumed office in 2004.

All roads in the plantation areas will be developed and will be declared as thorough-fares for the benefit of the plantation community.

A policy decision has been taken to grant free-hold rights to the lands where the plantation workers present dwellings are located. The transaction will be carried out free of charges and stamp duties.

The plantation workers who live in temporary houses outside the plantation dwellings will be provided with separate houses under a special housing project termed the "Jana Sevana" programme. Construction of 50,000 houses will be carried out as per this programme.

According to the existing programme, plantation workers will be eligible to receive free-hold title for 7 perches of land after 20 years. I will however grant the free-hold right to such lands.

I will arrange a special flour subsidy to provide wheat flour monthly to plantation families.

I will immediately improve 400 schools which are under-developed in every Divisional Secretariat division in the plantation sector. Steps will also be taken to establish a National School in each Divisional Secretariat division.

In order to eliminate the shortage of teachers in the plantation area, 3,000 teaching appointments will be given to the educated youth from the plantation community. Sri Pada College of Education will be

converted to a fully fledged College of Education with all modern facilities so that youth in the plantation districts will be trained as teachers.

In order to remedy the difficulties of the plantation community in communicating with govenemnt agencies in their own language, 2,500 youths who have passed the GCE Ordinary Level will be recruited as community development communication assistants.

An Animal Husbandry Agricultural Faculty of the Uva Wellasa University will be established in Hatton.

My intention is to improve the health service delivery systems in the plantation district to a level that is on par with that of other urban areas. In order to achieve this objective, hospital clinics and other health facilities will be manned by the staff of the government health service.

Vocational training facilities will be provided to youth in this region under my "Nana Sala" programme.

I will launch "Thuru Piyasa" (Tree Shelter) programme for conservation of water and prevention of soil erosion in the region.

Shortcomings in the cultural centres and community development centres will be removed for the benefit of plantation community.

Norwood grounds and pavilion will be developed so that international competitions and events such as

football, volleyball, badminton, and wrestling can be organized. The guidance of the Ministry of Sports will also be obtained for this purpose.

Action will be taken to train youth in small scale enterprises under the "Praja Shakthi" (community strength) programme that will be launched together with the "Jana Pubudu" (people's awakening) programme which will be launched in other areas.

ENRICHMENT OF ARTS AND CULTURE

I will introduce a National Cultural Policy which will assist the people to enjoy a high cultural life. The objectives of this policy will be to preserve our ancient art and cultural heritage, to introduce to the local people the salient features of the universal art and cultural heritage, to enrich the lives of the citizens with high mental and spiritual qualities and to create a society of people who are intelligent, discerning and progressive looking.

The Intellectual Property Law will be reviewed in order to prevent the violation of copyright laws of all art and cultural creative works including music. These laws will ensure the ownership of all creative works in their rightful owners.

The artists will be provided with time and opportunities in the state media, without any consideration of their political affiliations.

Steps will be taken to establish an International Level Training Institute for Cinema and Drama.

A Health Insurance Scheme will be introduced for the benefit of artists who in their old ages are not in a position to continue with their literary and art activities. Steps will be taken to establish a National Fund for the artists.

A special programme will be formulated to safeguard and enrich the traditional arts and artists.

Action will be taken to prepare a Register of National Artists.

Facilities will be provided to the artists to build houses for them.

Steps will be taken to organize an International Film Festival under the name "Colombo International Film Festival".

A programme will be commenced with the intention of providing incentives to the local cinema industry and to provide facilities and scholarships to film producers and artists to study international cinema techniques.

The cinema halls, including Tower Hall will be modernized to suit the modern day requirements.

Language and Literature

Language is the highest communication tool created by man. It is a resource. Its communication capacity could be further widened by developing it according to a proper management system. The Sinhala and Tamil languages used in Sri Lanka have a proud history of over thousand years and a noble literature. At the same time the Sinhala and Tamil languages have also acquired an excellent position in the modern literary and communication fields. Taking all these into consideration a programme to develop our national languages will be commenced.

The official language policy will be implemented vigorously. The dictionaries and encyclopedias which are necessary for the development of the Sinhala and Tamil languages will be built up.

The use of English language will not be restricted to one group. In order to make it popular among all the people, facilities and modernization programmes will be introduced in education and mass communication fields.

Special steps will be taken to encourage the publication of books and magazines of high quality, to translate publications containing foreign literature and miscellaneous subject matter, and programmes containing information on computer and web sites.

Competent language standards will be introduced to all state and private media on the recommendation of

the language experts and experts on linguistics. This will raise the qualitative standard of the language used in the mass media.

Information and Mass Media

Recognizing the right of the people to have access to correct information, the foundation of our media policy is to get the broad participation of the media towards achieving country's social, cultural and economic development objectives.

State media will be made to be the highest example in the use of an independent and responsible media and towards this, the state media will be de-politicized.

After a comprehensive consultative process and with the participation of the private and state media, steps will be taken to develop a Code of Ethics for media to ensure that media will not be used in an irresponsible manner, which will adversely impact the pride, identity and culture of Sri Lanka, the growing minds of children and the ethical behaviour of the society.

The freedom of the media could be truly established only if the living conditions of the media personnel are raised.

In order to ensure the independence of the media personnel:

- Computers will be provided to every media personnel duty free.

- All accepted news reporters will be given a duty free motor cycle.
- The Chief Editors of recognized print and electronic media institutions will be provided vehicles duty free.
- An Ombudsman will be appointed with full authority to solve their problems, and
- Steps will be taken to provide scholarships to the more creative journalists serving the state and private media.

A system to evaluate the capacities of the media personnel annually will be introduced. A special state award ceremony will be organised for the media. Facilities will be provided to media personnel to build their own homes and a retirement gratuity scheme will be provided for the benefit of the retired media personnel.

FITNESS THROUGH SPORTS

Sports

A sustainable Sports and Physical Education National Policy will be introduced to create healthy citizens and also to take the Sri Lankan sports men and women to the international sports arena.

All Sports Societies will be granted a justifiable allowance, annually.

Steps will be taken to establish a National Sports Academy with the aim of improving existing sports academies and also to develop sportsmen and women, trainers and referees of international repute.

A Sports Academy in which national and international players could be trained will be established in Nuwara Eliya.

The initiatives taken in the year 2005 at the Kelaniya University to recognize sports as a degree subject will be broadened by initially setting up a research division on sports activities and subsequently commencing a University Faculty on Sports and Physical Education.

A scheme will be introduced through which all sports men and women who have reached international repute will be paid a minimum monthly allowance of Rs 25,000 and provided with reading material and other requirements.

A scheme by the name "Kreedha Shakthi" will be introduced through which sportsmen and women with notable talents in the rural areas will be identified and trained to be brought to international standards.

An allowance will be provided to all Sports Officers attached to Divisional Secretariats to purchase a Motor Bicycle for themselves so as to minimize transportation difficulties encountered by them, with the aim of

obtaining their services in an efficient manner to assist in improving sports activities at divisional levels.

All districts will be provided with Sports Complexes with every facility, including an indoor stadium and a swimming pool.

An assessment mechanism will be introduced through which commencing from Grade 1, all children could be assessed on Physical Education.

I will aim at Sri Lanka being able to have at least 5 international achievements in the sphere of sports, including victories at Olympics, within the next five years.

STRENGTHENING THE PEOPLES' WILL

Constitutional Reforms

I propose to change the Parliamentary Election System to ensure that public opinion will be represented and stable Governments will be elected.

With the consensus of all, I expect to present a Constitution that will propose the abolition of the Executive Presidency and to provide solutions to other issues confronting the country. In the interim, I propose to present a Constitutional amendment through which the Executive President will be made answerable to the Parliament by virtue of holding such office.

To endorse the responsibility that the President has to the Parliament, I will attend Parliament once a month.

In order to ensure that the both ruling party and Opposition Members of Parliament will be effectively engaged in the process of state administration, I propose to strengthen the mandate of Ministerial Working Committee with Parliamentary approval.

Steps will be taken to include "The Charter of Rights" into the Constitution based on the Declaration of the United Nations and other international treaties to uphold and protect social, cultural, political, economic and civil rights of all Sri Lankans.

Non-Aligned, Free Foreign Policy

I will follow a non-aligned, free and progressive foreign policy.

Priority will be given in the political, defense economic, trade and cultural spheres to the cordial and friendly relationships that we already have with countries in the Asian region including India, Japan, China and Pakistan.

It is my belief that the United Nations Organization and International Financial Institutions should be more democratic in their approach. We will actively intervene in this regard.

It is my intention to strongly implement international treaties, declarations on anti-corruption. This will

enable us to act under international law against those found guilty of corruption, when engaging in trade with foreign countries or foreign institutions.

I will create a foreign service which has a correct awareness of our history, economic needs and the cultural heritage.

A new International Research Institute will be established, sponsored by the Ministry of Technology to access and share global data on new innovations and new concepts and inventions.

I believe that the world must come to an agreement to convert global warming and prevent weather and climatic changes. I will give my support to world environmentalists to implement the Kyoto Declaration, in this regard.

Monitoring Commission

At all elections, politicians place promises similar to fairytales, before the people.

Although the voters bring the politicians into power, very often the promises are forgotten. I will take the following measures to end politics dominated by broken promises.

- A Monitoring Commission will be established under my direct supervision, which will be empowered to implement all policies. Intellectuals from diverse fields will be appointed as members of this Commission.

- The contents of this Manifesto will be translated into Action Plans to be implemented over a 6-year period and such implementation will be entrusted to the relevant line ministries.
- This Commission will be responsible to ensure that annual targets of these Action Plans are met, annual progress reviews are done and any remedial measures taken pertaining to any setbacks.
- All Ministries will be required to submit an annual progress report to this Commission setting out their targets, annual progress and reasons in the event there are differences between targets and the progress. The Commission will also release a Progress Report pertaining to Election Promises.

To develop man to safeguard his family,
To develop the family to safeguard the village,
To develop the village to safeguard the country, and
To develop the country to win the world,
I have collected your thoughts...

So that I could present to you
This programme of work titled
"Mahinda Vision"...

My dream is that of a free nation,
A land in harmony with nature,
A prosperous tomorrow,
And a virtuous man.

I know....
The children of Mother Lanka,
Sihalese, Tamils, Muslims and Burgers
With gleaming eyes filled with expectation,
Are gazing at us....

That expectation
has to be made a reality.
I possess the strong belief that
I will undoubtedly fulfill that expectation.

Let's be inspired by the challenges before us..
Let's march forward
To present Mother Lanka
With a prosperous future....