"You can only fight terror through democracy and only a democracy built on respect for human rights can guarantee a strong and vibrant economy that eliminates corruption," said Past President – International Federation of Journalists Christopher Warren delivering the Lasantha Wickrematunga memorial lecture recently in Colombo. He quoted the risings in Tunisia and Egypt as examples.

"Rising prices, unemployment and underemployment, corruption – only a democracy built on human rights can confront these challenges," he

"There's a further development that makes the examples of Tunisia and Egypt so exciting. They've been driven by the same groups that have been working for democracy throughout the world - human rights and press freedom NGOs, independent trade unions and working journalists. They have not been driven by the traditional political or oppositional groups but from broad based networks reflecting the frustrations of the people," he added.

The lecture on the theme "Role of Media in Post ~ War Democratization" marked Lasantha's second death anniversary. The Sunday Leader editor was gunned down on 8 January 2009.

Saying that the last few weeks have been "exhilarating for those of us who believe in democracy, human rights and freedom of speech and the press", he pointed out that Tunisia and Egypt embarked on the exciting, tumultuous journey to free and democratic societies. "There can be no doubt that the most difficult part of that journey is still to come and those countries – and the dominos that will inevitably follow them – will require all the support possible from the international community of friends and supporters of democracy."

"There can be no doubt that there will be stumbles and disappointments along the way. But there can be no doubt that the end result will be a freer, more open – more normal – society," he

He said that these struggles are significant because they mark the renewal of the global march to democracy and human rights. "Over the past decade, this march has stumbled due to two influences. First, the ill-named Global War on Terror came to justify restrictions on human rights in the name of security, to encourage the democratic world to compromise with authoritarian regimes in the name of fighting terror and conflated the spread of democracy with the use of armed force in Iraq and Afghanistan."

Reminding that the great journalist Benjamin Franklin warned over two centuries ago that "They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety," Mr Warren added: "Yet the sacrifices made in traditional democracies acted not only to set back human rights in those countries. It sent a message to authoritarian regimes around the world that human rights were no longer the central concern that it should be for all democratic nations."

"All authoritarian regimes sooner or later hit a wall of economic growth that only genuine democracies can break through. We saw it in Korea and Taiwan in 1988 and in Indonesia in 1998. In all those cases, the crisis of authoritarianism could only be resolved through democratization," he continued.

Referring to the role of journalists, he emphasised that they need to be honest. "Many journalists do

well out of authoritarian regimes, particularly in cases like Egypt where so much of the media is state-owned. They get the perks of status and public recognition. They get to pontificate on national television about the inevitability of



They get to hobnob with political heavyweights and get invited to drinks with the president. They are relatively well paid. Too many of our colleagues fall into the trap of comfort and

He added that even within the state-owned media, journalists have been fighting for – and winning - a free media, for the right to report in the interests of the people, not of the State and the ruling elite. Some have walked out, rather than compromise their journalist principles." And now we are seeing their battles paying off with the likely break-up and democratization of state-owned media built on the principles of independent public service broadcasting and publishing and the strengthening of independent and private media."

"And, in the short term, they prevailed. But now, the challenge for us as journalists, as believers in democracy and human rights, is to seize the historic turning that North Africa has illuminated.

We have to reassert the fundamental right of all the peoples of the world and of Sri Lanka - the right to have real meaning put into democratic structures and to have them leavened with human rights including the right to safety and the right to freedom of expression."



UVA RADIO 98.4 FN

The radio programmes broadcast over the Uva Community Radio to create public awareness or Right to Information (RTI) on the initiative of have had a positive response from the

According to Uva Radio officials, the public is now conscious that they have a right to obtain information and also realise its value. Some of hem are already trying to use that right in whatever way they can.

A news journal, 'Jana Naada' published by Uva Radio is also been used to propagate the

Following on the responses and information provided by listeners, programmes are being developed thereby educating the public on RTI.

A case in point was the annual reports given to plantation workers every year by the plantation companies. These have been printed only in English and the workers did not understand a word. The reports kept on piling up in their nomes. Unless they were made available in Tamil, they were of no use to them. Althoug they have been repeatedly requesting that they be given Tamil reports, no action had been taken This has been highlighted by Uva Radio. The mere fact that such a programme was on the air has pleased the listeners who have started sending information to the radio station.

The officials pointed out that having gained confidence, the public have begun to talk freely about corruption. A strong voice against corruption is growing up, they said.

At a two-day workshop organised by TISL in Bandarawela recently, the progress made so far was reviewed and future activities were planned

Public participation ignored in

Although there is provision under the Pradesheeya Sabha Act for the public to participate in the decision-making process, in actual effect this does not seem to be

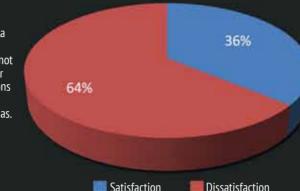
Analysts point out that although such provision is laid down in Act No. 15 of 1987, public participation is rarely seen.

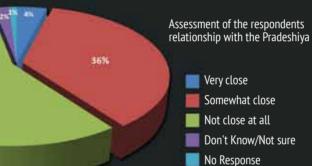
According to attorney-at-law, S G Punchihewa, either the public are unaware of this provision or the elected members are

The Act stipulates that four consultative committees should be appointed to advise on financial matters and policy planning, housing and community development technological services, and environment and common amenities. Constitutional expert Dr Jayatissa Costa says that in most Pradesheeya Sabhas, these committees are not functioning. He adds that such lapses have resulted in the public losing confidence on their local governing bodies.

He suggests that it will be a good idea for the candidates contesting in the forthcoming local elections to pledge that they will not ignore these provisions in the Act once they

A study undertaken by TISL in two Pradesheeya Sabha divisions in the Badulla district have also revealed this lack of participation resulting in the public being not consulted in development activities in their areas. 64% of the people in the two divisions have indicated their dissatisfaction on the services provided by the Pradesheeya Sabhas.





Increasing awareness on need to combat corruption

INTEGRITY

eight and a half years' service. He was the first Executive Director of TISL and skilfully steered the organization on its mission to mainstream corruption and improve transparency, accountability and good governance in Sci Lanka.

Dr Wijaya Jayatilaka is an educationalist,

academic and an activist. He has extensive

experience in capacity development, good

iance in Sri Lanka.

New Executive Director takes over

The New Year saw a change in TISL's hierarchy when a new Executive Director, Dr Wijaya Jayatilaka took over from J C Weliamuna.

As planned over a year earlier, Mr. Weliamuna bowed out after completing

People in rural Sri Lanka are increasingly becoming conscious of the need to curb corruption and promote integrity and good governance. They fearlessly criticise public officials in their presence and appeal to them to be more sympathetic in handling public needs and grievances.

Appreciating the anti-corruption initiatives taken by Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL)in creating awareness among the public, the Public Security Committee (PSC) of Polpithigama police

area in the Kurunegala District recently invited TISL to discuss issues related to corruption and how to combat corruption. Forty two village leaders attended the programme which was presided over by the officer- in- charge of the Polpithigama police station.

It was highlighted in the programme that lack of

space for civil society in Sri Lanka has curtailed the liberties of the civil society to challenge the malpractices in the post-war period. It was a frank discussion with the participants playing an active role in relating their experiences.

Earlier, TISL conducted a series of workshops in Polpithigama and Mawathagama Divisional Secretary Divisions to combat corruption and promote good governance. Public officials at all levels including grama niladharis, Samurdhi officers and others involved in field operations attended these workshops. Representatives of community based organisations have also been trained to guide the public and to attend to their needs.

'Purawesi Athwela' – the Citizen's Handbook published by TISL provides instructions in Sinhala for thegeneral public on how they could conveniently obtain services from the Divisional Secretariats.

governance and human rights-related work and has a passion to work for socially and economically disadvantaged groups. Dr Jayatilaka's selection was made after a

transparent process where a number of short-listed candidates out of 67 were

interviewed by a panel comprising selected members of the TISL Board of Directors at



INTEGRITY

Misuse of state property

The misuse of state property during elections in Sri Lanka has been highlighted over and over again by civil society organisations monitoring elections.

On the eve of the local government elections scheduled for mid-March, the **Elections Commissioner has stated that if** state properties are provided for election propaganda work without charging the relevant fees, it would be considered as a misuse of public property.

He has called on all heads of government institutions to charge the applicable fees when providing state properties to political parties for election propaganda work during the upcoming local government elections.

The Commissioner has issued a circular to all government institutions that while state properties have to be issued to political parties according to the order of the requests, the relevant fees needed to be levied when providing such state proper-

The misuse of state property was highlighted in the TISL publication 'Electoral Integrity' - a review of the abuse of state resources and other integrity issues during the 2010 elections in Sri Lanka. Among the recommendations made in the Report was that the Commissioner should be empowered to recover the cost from abusers of state resources. It is encouraging to note that the Commissioner has drawn the attention on the misuse of public

Let's fight together to stop corruption

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Citizen's Handbook well accepted

TISL recently released a Citizen's Handbook detailing the services provided by Divisional Secretariats with the objective of assisting the public to obtain these services with ease. It has been well accepted by the recipients who find it most useful. Vital information have been provided to the public in Sinhala and Tamil on matters relating to their needs like settlement of land disputes, applying for identity cards, birth and death certificates, and obtaining numerous permits. Sample forms have been incorporated in the handbook titled 'Puravesi Athwela' and clear instructions have been given how these can be filled.

The decision to release a handbook was the result of findings during anti-corruption programmes conducted by TISL at several divisional secretariat divisions in the Kurunegala district when it became evident that the public are victims of corruption due to lack of awareness.

It was revealed that if the public was educated on how services could be obtained, the middlemen would be eliminated thereby leaving no room for corruption.

6000 copies of the Handbook were distributed among the households in the Polpithigama and Mawathagama divisions free of charge. After the launch TISL conducted a training programme for community leaders and public officials in on how to use the Citizen's Handbook.



TISL took the initiative in providing relief to the flood victims in the Anuradhapura, Ampara and Polonnaruwa districts who were affected by the recent floods. TISL directorate and the staff contributed by way of providing the victims with essential items like school books, dry

In mid-February these items were distributed in Thamankaduwa and Hingurakgoda in the

Polonnaruwa district as well as Horowpatana and Nuwaragampalata in the Anuradhapura district. In early March relief items were distributed among victims in Kalmunai and Addalachennai in the Ampara district.

TISL had been actively engaged in these areas during the past few months promoting good



'In search of integrity' is the title of a publication released to mark TISL's operations in the

The book traces the progress made since TI International showed interest in forming a Sri Lanka Chapter and outlines the activities undertaken by TISL in promoting integrity and good governance in the country.

Another moving scene was when the parents of investigative journalist Poddala Jayantha received The text is available on our website the Global Integrity Award which had been presented at the International Anti-Corruption

Colleague calls Suith "arguably the best investigating officer"

"Sujith probably was the best investigating officer that our Customs Department has ever produced. He was one of those rare officers who did not bow down to internal, external or political pressure," Deputy Collector of Customs, Gamini Warshapperuma recalled at the NIA presentation.

He added that Sujith focused and committed himself to his job, to the extent of disregarding even death threats against him. He fearlessly fought against the offenders of the Customs law and corruption within the department. Irrespective of the parties involved, whether it is a politician, a top businessman or a senior customs officer, he carried out his investigations and never reserved himself, from enforcing the law against the persons concerned. In addition, I found Sujith to be a fair and just officer and was humane in handling cases," he added.

Tracing Sujith's early days at Customs, he said that his investigating skills and ability to handle cases secured him a place at the Preventive Division as a Preventive Officer at a very young age. Sujith became an intelligent and an experienced investigating officer by handling many large fraudulent cases. His unimaginable understanding of how to handle cases, untiring hard work, made him an outstanding and memorable investigating officer of Sri Lanka



"Sujith had to pay with his life for all good things he had done to the society and to the Customs Department in particular. I feel that this country has lost a good 25 years of Sujith's

very young age of 35," he mourned.

"They don't plan to win awards"

"The awardees do things not for recognition but because of their underlying belief that it is only through clear ideals, high values and courage that one can proceed. He or she simply does his or her duty as a public official or as an activist but not with the hope of securing a reward. They do things or act as a matter of course not expecting an award," said Nepalese social activist Kanak Mani Dixit delivering the keynote address at the NIA 2010 presentation.

Stressing that it was only through plural democracy that the fight for transparency and for social and economic advancement can be advanced, he paid tribute to the civil society, activists, stalwarts and common citizens in Sri Lanka "who relentlessly struggled to keep pluralism, freedom, open society and rule of law - values that we hold so dear - alive".

He emphasized the need for civil society to support the public servants, politicians and public individuals who are in the forefront, by ensuring that pluralism remains. "Often the case with the politicians is that they tend to look towards populism and some politicians convert very rapidly to demagogues regardless of what their own past performances might have indicated. There are

Welcoming the guests at the NIA ceremony, TISL

Executive Director J C Weliamuna referring to the many challenges faced by the country today said: "We are a democracy - a well-tested democracy for many decades. Let us take a serious look at ourselves. We need to guarantee basic democratic rights without further delay. In my view, the best way to practice it is to guarantee freedom of expression in our own country. Unfortunately we spend time and our resources to guarantee freedom of expression in UK and in other countries!"

Stressing that all of us are aware of the challenges that could undermine integrity but few have courage to stand up against it, he paid tribute to bureaucrats and among public professionals in government operations from public hospitals to schools. They are the individuals who serve the larger masses rather than many NGOs who do

those who do good among politicians, among

It is important to energize the whole government and the whole governance. Civil society should insist on pluralism not because of an idealized or romanticized goal but because of the direct impact on freedom challenging demagogues and challenging populism."

He also emphasized that pluralism and non-violence are sacrosanct values which no one can accuse anyone of being a biased journalist or a civil society person.

excite us momentarily."

Chief guest Kanak Mani Dixit is greeted by TISL Executive Director J C Weliamuna

Referring to numerous suggestions that the

Singapore model or the Chinese model should be

followed, he said that the way South Asian society

has evolved, it is certain that "no kind of autocracy

will lead us ahead in the long run although it may

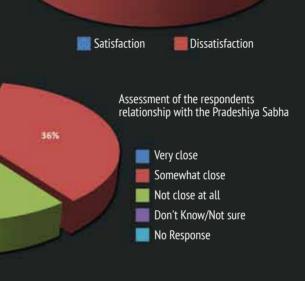


the unsung heroes in Sri Lanka, who had courage to fight corruption amidst risks - and beyond the call of duty. "It is these people who made our lives comfortable and who made sacrifices to protect a system for generations to come," he pointed out.

Reminding that Sri Lanka was the second country to ratifythe UN Convention against Corruption when it was opened for signatures on 9th December 2003, he said the Convention, which is perhaps the largest convention in terms of legal provisions, has several principles. Quoting a few he said it recognizes that international collaboration is necessary to wipe out corruption from a country. "It recognizes that no government can fight corruption on its own without the participation of the civil society. It emphasizes the need to be transparent and the importance of right to information. We need to reflect frankly whether we, as a state party, have complied with our international obligations to fight corruption. As an institution in anti-corruption discourse in Sri Lanka, we do not see any serious commitment to comply with international obligations," he added.

Announcing that it would be his last address as TISL's Executive Director, he said that from January 2011 Dr. Wijaya Jayatilake would lead the TI family for the next phase of TI Sri Lanka.







Solemn ceremony sees Customs officer posthumously recognized

Maulavi wins Special Mention
Global Award for Poddala Jayantha

A fearless, committed, dedicated and a passionate officer was awarded the National Integrity Award 2010 posthumously at a simple but impressive ceremony held at the BMICH on 9 December 2010. The late Sujith Prasanna Perera, former Assistant Superintendent of Customs paid the price with his



A Maulavi (Muslim priest) from Kinniya in the Eastern Province, M Y Hathiyathullah won recognition with a Special Mention for his active involvement in anti-corruption activities.

This was the seventh successive year that the National Integrity Award (NIA) was presented. A cross section of civil society, public officials, media personnel and representatives from Community Based Organizations (CBO) from different parts of the country filled the 'Mihilak Medura' where the ceremony was held.

Two minutes silence was observed as a mark of respect for the slain Sujith Perera after which his wife Angela Perera walked up and received the award from chief guest Kanak Mani Dixit, writer and activist from Nepal.

The presentation of the National Integrity Award is the key event at the ceremony organized by Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL) annually to mark UN Anti-Corruption Day. An independent panel of judges makes the selections from nomina-The panel of judges comprised Founding chair and

CEO of LIRNE asia Dr. Rohan Samarajiva, Editor and

Conference in Bangkok in November 2010. Poddala

Jayantha who is now abroad following a brutal

attack in June 2009 which permanently incapaci-

tated him, could not attend the award ceremony.

The award was received by TISL Executive Director J.

C.Weliamuna on behalf of Poddala, who requested

Delivering the keynote address, chief guest Mr Dixit

thanked TISL for maintaining a fine tradition

recognizing people with integrity. He was happy

that journalists, civil servants and trade unionists

Special guest Mrs Jayantha Bulumulla, senior

adviser SLIDA paid a glowing tribute to TISL for the

work done particularly in Sri Lanka's rural areas. She

recalled with gratitude TISL's contribution towards

improving governance among public officials in the

Kurunegala district when she was Government

had won the Award during the past few years.

that the award be handed over to his parents.

author Ms Selvy Thiruchandran, Science writer and Journalist Nalaka Gunawardane.

Stressing that there will be many officers of Sujith's calibre in the government service who could demonstrate and uphold high level of integrity, and who could fight and stand up against corruption, he pointed out that such officers who could make a difference in serving our motherland should be protected.