# A packed house cheered lustily as three Sri Lankan heroes fighting corruption went up to collect

their trophies from Transparency International Founder, Dr Peter Eigen, this year's chief guest at the presentation of the National Integrity Award by TISL. Special Invitee, UNDP Resident Represen-The presentation was held for the sixth Introducing Dr Peter Eigen as "a visionary tative Neil Buhne said that although

successive year at the at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH) Committee Room B, on UN Anti-Corruption Day, 9 December. Welcoming the gathering, TISL Executive

said.

Director J C Weliamuna said that the ceremony was being held at a very crucial period in the history of the country when highly powerful networks are engaging in all strategies to silence the anti-corruption movement in the country. He reminded that the time has come to outsmart corruption and be more strategic. "Sri Lanka has a lot of potential to move forward as a nation, mainly due to the resources and human capacity we have. However, an unfortunate trend has now set in to silence the dissenting opinions. Intolerance of free opinion is felt all over. We have to do everything possible as a nation to arrest this trend," he

par excellence and a global icon on anti-corruption", Mr Weliamuna described him as the number one person in moving the global anti-corruption agenda forward. Delivering the keynote address, Dr Eigen said that awareness is probably the basis of

the struggle against corruption. He stressed on the need to build coalitions between civil society, the private sector and governments, between rich and poor, between the people in the rural areas and the people in the cities, between intellectuals and decision makers, the media and normal workers. "These coalitions can give us an answer. That's why I'm hopeful because it is more and more recognized that in global governance the reassertion of politics over the unfettered marketplace which seems to run the world right now is winning. So it is in this context that we have to focus very much on awareness building." (More inside)

fighting corruption is something that seems very obvious, it is also something that's very difficult because there are so many vested interests that benefit from it. For corruption to be rooted out of society, he pointed out the need for a very broad coalition. (More

Speaking on behalf of the panel of judges, renowned educationist Ms Jezima Ismail said that theirs was a very responsible task. "We were extremely conscious about whom we were selecting. We were alert at every After describing the selection process, she

said that looking at the foundational values

of society and at the Sri Lankan and the

world context today, it is a wonderful

gesture that these awards are taking place.

UNDP Resident Rep Neil Buhne, Inspector Deshaban<mark>du Senaratne, TI Founder Dr Pieter Eigen,</mark> NIA winners Thusitha Pitigala & Priyantha Fernando, and TISL Executive Director J C Weliamuna



an example for how manifold the battle against corruption has to be to the many other national chapters and civil society groups all over the world."

leadership of this wonderful group of people for the fantastic work they have done not only here in Sri Lanka but also as a model and

inside NIA Winners' Round Table TISL Responses NIA Keynote "Something can be done", assures TI Founder

"This room full of people from many different parts of your society, different religions, different groups, different professions. Their cooperation makes it possible to do

would like to stress today, that something

can be done by this powerful coalition of

quite necessary if you wanted to do business in the globalised economy.

impact of this."

"And at that time we started to work on

Referring to the large scale corruption witnessed today, he had this to say: "World

Bank estimates \$ 1000 billion is stolen

every year through corruption. This is a lot

## something against corruption. Mr. Obama building awareness firstly on the all pervaof money. This is only the tip of the iceberg. would have said "Yes we can." Not only do siveness of corruption, grand corruption in The real damage done is through perverwe build up awareness of the all pervasivethe international arena all the way down to sion of economic decision making, the petty corruption of a school teacher who is ness of corruption everywhere in the world perversion of selection of large projects. So but also to the devastating damage it does, demanding money from the parent to allow wrong decisions are taken by corrupt but most importantly, and this is what I the child to participate in education or a leaders in the south driven by unholy

nurse asking for money or a doctor or an

immigration officer. We wanted to build awareness of the devastating and deadly

friends of honesty, of better governance, of justice and of protecting the world against destruction and climate change." So said Dr Peter Eigen, Founder of Transparency International (TI) in his keynote address at the NIA 2008 presentation ceremony. Looking back at the days TI was formed he said: "I had to leave the World Bank because I wanted to fight corruption. At that time the World Bank did not allow me to do anything against bribery and corruption. Why? Because the World Bank, like many other international organizations. is a captive of governments and governments very often are the captives of their various constituencies. So in Germany, for instance, as in most other OECD countries foreign

bribery was considered to be something "Fighting corruption is not easy. It takes courage and strength to stand up against those more powerful than yourself and for this you need to have the strong partnership and support from other committed and likeminded people at all levels," said UNDP Resident Representative Neil Buhne at the NIA presentation ceremony.

Referring to the United Nations Convention

against Corruption which came into force in

2005, Mr Buhne said that the Convention

institutions within countries and also crosses national borders. "It's very much to

the credit of Sri Lanka that it was the

second country in the world to sign this

Dailylllirror Dailyllirror

TI Founder Dr Pieter Eigen Need for strong partnership and support them. It is compulsory now for all UN staff to complete an online ethics course. So the UN is not immune, but we're also taking

action. I think that's something all organiza-

"As well as being advocates for reforms the

dations of the UN Anti-Corruption Conven-

will operate in a transparent and honest

from a global financial crisis caused by

greed and corruption. Every year across the

developing world, billions of dollars that are

badly needed for healthcare, schools, clean

water and infrastructure are stolen and lost through bribes and other misdeeds. And it's

Issue 04

UN is also involved in partnering directly the national governments, the private sector and civil society outfits to support their efforts to implement the recommen-

tions need to do.

the decision-makers in the south that has led, in my opinion, to the poverty in many parts of the world, to the underdevelopment, to the misery, to the death and destruction. 11 million children die before the age of five every year not because of difficult diseases but because of simple profane diseases based on poverty, on poor sanitation and unavailability of water. More than 2 billion people live without sanitation. A billion people live without drinking water. So how can we accept this? How can we accept a world which breeds so much despair and so much hopelessness and so much anger and so much violence. I believe our fight against corruption is the answer." not only governments and financial institutions that need to do more to prevent corruption and strengthen integrity. Corruption affects us all.

# embodies a comprehensive approach to tion and a number of other reforms. One corruption recognizing the importance of partnership with the private sector is an initiative called Global Combat, which has both preventive and punitive measures and provides a unique opportunity for a global 10 principles, one of which is a principle to response to a global problem that pervades fight against corruption, i.e that businesses

Convention. So that's a good start to build "No organization is immune from corruption including the United Nations. A number of measures have been instituted within the UN to fight corruption. Not so long ago, I did not have to disclose my own income and assets to anybody. Now I need to disclose **INTEGRITY** TISL Newsletter

NIA Winners' thoughts Ample corruption for media to cover' Investigative journalist Thusitha Pitigala,

way. " He ended his address with a quote from the current Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon in the statement which he issued to mark UN anti-corruption day. "The world is reeling

media, we can only uncover corruption after it has already happened. Those who can expose it before it happens keep silent", he said. TISL should encourage the policy makers, Just as much as TISL encourages civil society that tunities for corruption to occur reduced, policy-makers should also be encouraged, he added.

"Fighting corruption is difficult because you

can't even protect the people who come forward to report it. In the Blood Bank scandal that I uncovered, the Bribery Commis-

sion had an investigation and the first three

people to give statements were employees of

the institution. Three days after giving their statements they were transferred. What did

the Bribery Commission do about this? Even

they kept quiet. But they go all over and tell

corruption. "I was actually embarrassed because many of the cartoons drawn by the

corrupt is because it is controlled by very

corrupt officials. I believe that 198 of the

200 officials are unsuitable, so naturally

they can't run a proper education system,

part to strengthen integrity, play by the rules and turn the tide against this global menace."

democratic

compromises the rule of law and enables

terrorists to finance their nefarious work.

On this international day. Let us all do our

institutions,

UNDP Resident Rep Neil Buhne

breaches

**DECEMBER 2008** 

people.'

task.

He hoped that the day would dawn when there this nature. "I hope we can create a country of who work according to conscience" he concluded.

a social organization to fight corruption.

"More than winning awards, my aim is to

cleanse the mechanism that steals from our

He was confident that the award will

strengthen him and help him continue his

"Sri Lanka is a wonderful country, but it is

sad to see where we are in the world today.

May TISL have the strength to bring back

that glory", he added.

people to report corruption. If they can't

protect the people who report, then how can

we eradicate corruption?", he said.

daily exposing large scale corruption, miscarriage of justice, misdeeds of high officials, political interference and misuse

Education setup is corrupt' NIA 2008 winner S. Priyantha Fernando is

a government teacher and trade union

personal leadership qualities, he has been

responsible for many anti-corruption

initiatives which have had a significant

Winner of NIA 2008 is the producer of

'Vimarshana', broadcast over Sirasa TV

of public property. His contribution as a

journalist has been considerable. His

revealations through the medium of televi-

sion have created a wide interest and have

Speaking after accepting the award, Thusitha

Ptigala said that with him winning the NIA,

there would be stiff competition among the

journalists to get it next year. "Unfortunately there is enough corruption in this country for

all the media people to cover. However, as the

had a large impact on the community.

activist. He has played a significant role in children (in the TISL sponsored competiinitiating change in the educational tion) portrayed teachers. We live in a administrative setup in the Raja Rata. society where billions are stolen. One of the Recognised as a person with strong reasons why the education sector is so

impact. Addressing the audience, he lamented that though Sri Lanka is well respected as a Buddhist country, it has a very high level of 'Need to bring back Sri Lanka's glory' Inspector Deshabandu Senaratne who won recognition with a Special Mention, is the OIC, Potuhera police station. His mission is

to adopt a completely new framework to

minimise corruption. With a vision to make the police a truly public institution, he has

created a visitor-friendly environment in

the workplace. His openness and leader-

ship qualities as a junior officer have been

highly appreciated.

**INTEGRITY** 

TISL Newsletter

Expressing his appreciation that TISL is doing something about corruption in an organized manner, he stressed the need for In an emotional speech after receiving the

award, Inspector Senaratne thanked his

parents, family and colleagues for support-

He said that TISL's commitment to

eradicate corruption in the country is

greatly appreciated. "Even children who

are yet to be born should be thankful to

ing him in his activities.

TISL for their efforts."

**DECEMBER 2008** 

Issue 04



All the winners -20 in all - turned up to

collect the prizes. Two of them - one from

Kalmunai and the other from Badulla - came

book of selected cartoons has been

# independent views. It's good to have published and mobile exhibitions will be held such competitions - then we get an The quality of most entries was quite high. The in the future. message behind them was how people were opportunity to contribute by way of our vigilant on good governance and corruption symbol of recognition.

to Colombo for the first time.

Dr Peter Eigen, Founder of Transparency

International, addressing the Round Table discussion on 'Governance Dimensions of

the Global Financial Crisis' facilitated by Transparency International Sri Lanka

(TISL) recently, emphasized the urgent

need for collective action to prevent further

escalation of the crisis and the consequen-

tial impact on the global economy,

especially the under-developed economies.

He added that poor governance was the

underlying cause leading to the crisis and

stressed that business and civil society had a

critical collective role to play in monitoring

the implementation strategies, the govern-

ments come up with in response to the

Stressing the need for a new paradigm of

Collective Action Coalitions in Sri Lanka to effectively address the potential fall out

from the global economic/financial crisis, he

stated that only a coalition comprising of Government, Multilateral Partners, Private

Sector, Trade Unions, Academia, Media and

Civil Society committed to a new paradigm

of good governance can make a difference in the face of the emerging challenges.

US Ambassador in Sri Lanka, Robert Blake

said that the global response to the financial

crisis has been widespread given the

constraints on credit and slumping asset

values. He added that interconnectivity of

the global economies is a significant problem in that, one economy can have a snowball effect on others. He said government intervention is essential although a

middle ground will have to be found in terms

of regulation.

(More on www.tisrilanka.org)

crisis.

TISL Newsletter

INTEGRITY

organise ours. We publicized it through

newspaper advertisements and handbills which

response was rather slow at the beginning,

there was a flood of entries in the last month,

for example, sent bundles of cartoons.

Hasini recollects. St. Mary's College, Chilaw,

Although the

were widely distributed.

Collective Action Coalitions the Way Forward

Minister of Enterprise Development and

Dr

the

Promotion,

described

situation as "a crisis of confidence" due to

the lack of regulations and supervisory

framework. He pointed out that the

Investment

get credit."

and also the local agents.

Amunugama

independent thinking. The award is a

**DECEMBER 2008** 

of

Finlay

Jayasuriya suggested that the private

sector should reinvent themselves and

strongly advocated productivity as a main

driver of resurgence in situations like the

present one. Looking at banks, he said that

Chairman

PLC,

Issue 04

present

Describing the award as a source of

encouragement, Preethi admits that

there are certain limitations in drawing

cartoons for a newspaper."When we

participate in an open competition of

this nature, we are free to express our

of regulation as critical factors. will lead to higher interest rates and then complicating itself into repayment capacity.

A lively discussion followed. The moderator was Past President-Ceylon Chamber of

Commerce, Chandra Jayaratne.

**INTEGRITY** Issue 04 **TISL Newsletter** DECEMBER 2008

Serving as faculty members were investigative journalist Poddala Jayantha and TISL officials Ananda

. **Publications Governance Report 2008** 

Governance Report

**INTEGRITY** 

TISL Executive Director J C Weliamuna

Round Table discussion held at JAIC Hilton

welcomes the quests to the

The Report captures vital areas and key issues relevant for any person or organization attempting to understand the status of governance in Sri Lanka during 2007/08. With the rise in the cost of living and an increased emphasis on national security, the year was fraught with governance-related issues and many allegations of corruption and mismanagement.

Available at TISL office at 28/1 Bullers Lane Colombo 07 - Tel: 011 2501474 **Anti-Corruption Cartoons** 

financial crisis will affect Sri Lankan liquidity has dried up, cash is not available exports like garments, tea, rubber and tourism at a superficial level because of the and as a result, banks jack up interest rates and makes borrowing much more difficult. decline in global demand for these products. "On a not so obvious level but more devas-On privatization, he was of the view that the tatingly, we will find that there will be a government should be bold enough to loosen its control and allow the private sector to foreign exchange crunch simply because banks are not able to lend. They are not in a get involved. "If the private sector is to continue to play the role of the engine of position to stimulate the economies of the growth, it needs the support of the governdeveloping world because there is money flowing from the developed world and ment right now." businesses are finding it more difficult to Dr Richard Vokes, Country Director-Asian Development Bank endorsed the view that fighting corruption is a collective effort which requires the commitment from the government, the private sector, international organizations and civil society. As for the global financial crisis he saw the lack of regulation, deregulation coupled with rapid globalization and innovation, and the failure Dr Amnunugama added that Sri Lanka's aid architecture is fast changing from the World Bank, IMF, ADB, US and Europe being the major ones prior to the tsunami. Today Sri Lanka has doubled its assistance to US\$ 1.6 billion in project aid from countries such as Iran, China, India, Hungary and Austria. On the issue of corruption, he said that the most amount of corruption and competition takes place with bilateral aid since there is a Dr Harsha de Silva, Director-LIRNEAsia great deal of collusion amongst the bidders preferred to treat the present crisis as a global real economic crisis with a financial side to it, which is the liquidity problems in the local financial markets. On the financial side, he saw the reduction in the availability of external funds as the main impact. This

> **Global Financia** 9th December 2008

Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL) commended the govern-Responding to the Interim Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee ment for the Cabinet decision taken on the eve of the UN on Non Governmental Organizations, Transparency International Sri Lanka Anti-Corruption Day (9 December), to take legislative steps to imple-(TISL) highlights the need to have a more transparent and fair parliamenment the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), which was tary committee system. While denying the allegations and insinuations made against the organization in the Report, TISL also states that the Committee ratified by Sri Lanka four years ago. has failed to follow the basic rules of natural justice and to ignore political Reminding that many institutions such as CIOBAC, UNDP, Clean Hands rhetoric before arriving at conclusions. TISL reiterates the need to have a movement and TISL work towards implementing the UN Convention in more objective committee system in which the members of committees may Sri Lanka, TISL Executive Director J C Weliamuna stated, in a media not abuse parliamentary privileges to reach petty political gains. release, that at a time when there are serious allegations of corruption in many quarters, what the people expect is to ensure implementations The references to TISL revolve around a project on the Police where of the laws without fear or favour. governance aspects were studied, and where no sensitive information was required. It is mistakenly suggested by the Committee that institutions such Stressing on the need for the Government to establish transparency in as the Police cannot engage in any collaborative activities with the public. Governance, he suggested that a regime of transparency can be implemented through new regulations such as Right to Information Act and TISL strongly states that all information available to Members of Parlia-National Audit Act. ment (representatives of the people) should be freely available to the people of this country. All institutions, including the Executive, Judiciary and Parlia-"The UN Convention also requires the government to strengthen the ment and its committees must be subject to public scrutiny as these instituexisting anti-corruption agencies and to work closely with civil society tions are run with public finances. to eliminate corruption. Let us hope that the government facilitates Finally, TISL asks the public to be vigilant against unwarranted and stronger civil society participation in eliminating corruption in Sri calculated moves by political forces to curtail the inherent powers of civil society, and to work towards good governance and accountability in the country. For full response of the TISL visit: www.tisrilanka.org Positive response at journalists' workshop At a TISL workshop for journalists in Badulla, a participant admitted that it was the first time he was exposed to a training programme and was now better equipped to serve as a media man with social responsibility. Accepting that Badulla is an area where corruption is prevalent, he would hereafter commit himself to work towards curbing corruption. The participants at the two-day workshop held at Riverside Hotel were all praise for giving them the

Lanka," the release added.

and 'Tinakural' newspapers were among the 27 participants. Jayasekera and Duleeka Vidanapathirana.

Issue 04 **DECEMBER 2008 TISL Newsletter** 

A selection of entries to the anti-corruption cartoon competition organised by TISL are presented in the publication. Over a thousand entries were submitted by males and females between the ages of 7-76. They belonged to different geographical districts, ethnicities and religions. They had a single message — Curb corruption in Sri Lanka.

The Report seeks to highlight the issues that have been raised by the public, record both the successes and the failures of the government and in some instances comment on possible alternative measures that could have been taken.

6

knowledge and tools to function as more responsible journalists. Provincial correspondents representing Lake House, SLBC, Rupavahini, Uva Community Radio, Sirasa TV & Radio, 'Lankadipa', 'Divaina'

alliances with corrupt suppliers and promoters from the north. It's this amazing alliance between promoters from companies in Europe and other rich countries and