

Integrity



TISL facilitates Coalition against Corruption

For the first time in Sri Lanka, a 'Coalition against Corruption' was formed recently initiated and facilitated by Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL).

The Coalition comprising over 50 organizations comprises of representatives of Trade Unions, Civil Society Organizations, Professional associations Academics, Media personnel and Artistes.

At the formal launch of the Coalition held on 31 October 2012 at the New Town hall, Colombo the participants vowed not to be a party to any form of bribery or corruption, and to act against all forms of corruption with determination.

Stating that "the country is plagued with corruption due to falsehoods, fraud, injustice, and despotism, where the common man is oppressed due to rampant corruption and fraud, and where the public is barred from participating in development activities, and a situation created where the public is losing their ownership to the country's resources and public property", they pledged that fighting against corruption is a fair means of protecting the day to day life, society and the security of the country. It was also stated that they have "realized that this is the only non-violent method of protecting our respect, pride and safety".

Prior to the launch, several discussions were held among Sri Lanka's leading trade unions and civil society organizations to identify the aims and objectives of the Coalition. An Action Committee was formed and it was decided that the secretarial functions of the Coalition should be handled by TISL.

Among the aims of the Coalition are:

- Fight against all forms of corruption, bribery and fraud.
- Prevention of the misuse of public property.
- Agitate for legislation on Right to Information
- Work towards legalizing transparency in State finances
- Work towards strengthening Parliamentary oversight committees on financial matters
- Enactment of legislation on whistle blower protection

The Coalition will investigate and reveal instances of corruption and request relevant authorities to take necessary action.

A 'People's Tribunal' will be formed for public hearings on corruption.

New Executive Director

Senior management professional with over 30 years experience in public sector management, S. Ranugge, is the new Executive Director of TISL.

He has served as Secretary to several Ministries and as head of departments. He is also a Management Consultant at the Sri Lanka Institute of Administration and a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Colombo and the Open University of Sri Lanka.

He has graduated from Peradeniya University with a second class honours degree in Sociology and has a post-graduate degree in Development Studies from the Institute of Social Studies, the Hague – Netherlands, specializing in public policy and administration.

He has also obtained a Professional Certificate in Urban Planning from Hunter College – City University of New York (USA) and an Advanced Certificate in Health Management from University of Boston (USA).

He is the winner of a Huber H Humphrey Fellowship (1987-88).



Z-score fiasco discussed

The recent *Sambhashana*-TISL's outreach programme on 'Z-score & Crisis in Education' attracted a lot of attention when affected students and parents, educationalists and members of the public raised issues stressing that the Z-score fiasco was leading to a drastic human and social problem.

The eminent panel stated that students with positions guaranteed of places in the original list and later were not in the list, should be admitted to the universities. If, for some reason, these students cannot be accommodated, then they must be compensated financially to engage in the selected studies privately, the speakers insisted.

Former Examinations Commissioner A M R B Amarakoon, Colombo University's Professor Sarath Wijesuriya, and Teachers Union General Secretary Joseph Stalin were the panelists. Professor Asanga Tilakaratne was the moderator.



UNCAC: Where are we?

TISL will hold a National Consultation Workshop on the Review process of the United Nations Convention on Anti-Corruption (UNCAC) to mark UN Anti-Corruption Day 2012.

The workshop to be held on Sunday, 9 December is part of the commemorative programme organized by TISL. The venue will be the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA).

The panelists will be Bribery Commission (CIABOC) Director-General - Luxmi Jayawickrema, former Chairman, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce - Chandra Jayaratne, Anti-Corruption activist Nihal Sri Amarasekera and Attorney-at-Law J C Weliamuna. The moderator will be TISL Executive Director - S Ranugge.

Sri Lanka became a party to the Convention following its ratification on 31 March 2004. For the past eight years, the Government was obliged to implement anti-corruption measures affecting their laws, institutions and practices. According to the review cycle of the mechanism for the review of implementation, Sri Lanka was required to submit its self-assessment reports prepared with wider consultation of stake holders, civil societies and the general public by end September 2012. The Government still has not published any information on the review.

National Integrity Award presentation

TISL will hold the presentation of the annual National Integrity Award on Thursday, 6 December at the BMICH.

Former senior administrator Deshamanya Bradman Weerakoon will be the chief guest and founder of TISL, attorney-at-law Ariththa Wickremayake will be guest of honour.

Having scrutinized the nominations received from different parts of the country, six were selected for deeper investigations. The final selection of the award winners will be made public at the presentation ceremony.

Serving on the panel of judges were former Secretary – Ministry of Public Administration, D Dissanayake, former Managing Director of Aviva NDB Insurance Company/ Management Consultant Deepal Sooriyaarachchi, former District Secretary Ms Jayantha Bulumulla, retired District Judge S H N Jameel and Senior Journalist V Balasingham.

It is the ninth successive year that the NIA presentation is being held. TISL has so far celebrated the courage of 10 winners and 5 Special Mention candidates. Among them were courageous and fearless public officials, brave investigative journalists and forthright trade unionists.

Youth Survey data collection completed

Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL) has completed data collection of the Youth Survey, which is the first stage of the Youth Integrity Program (YIP) initiated by Transparency International (TI). The Survey measures the attitudes and experiences of young people towards integrity and corruption.

University academics are now in the process of analyzing the data collected. TISL intends to publicize the findings of the survey early next year. Findings will pave the way to move forward the TI's Youth Integrity Project.

The Project aims to promote integrity in young people, and enable and inspire them to fight corruption. In addition, as the general public awareness of corruption issues increases, so do expectations for accountability.

Earlier, representatives from five Chapters of Transparency International met in Sri Lanka for the regional launch of TI's Youth Integrity Project (YIP) at a simple ceremony followed by a two-day workshop.



'Shelter for Integrity' forms a network

The 'Shelter for Integrity' set up by TISL is building a network with community based organizations (CBO) to create awareness on the need to curb corruption and promote integrity.

Leaders of CBOs in the Polonnaruwa and Kurunegala districts participated at meetings held recently to launch this programme. While the meeting in Kuruengala was organized by the Devasarana Development Centre, the other was arranged by Citizen's Movement of Polonnaruwa.

The network will help the 'Shelter for Integrity' to build relationships with regional CBOs thereby increasing its target audience. At the same time it will assist in identifying areas and issues which require the attention and intervention of the Shelter for Integrity.

Meanwhile, a branch of the 'Shelter for Integrity' has been opened in Battcaloa town.

The Center housed at no 435/65A, Poompugar Lane, Trincomalee Road, Battcaloa is operating a hotline – (065) 2055055 – to enable the public to easily communicate with the office.

Additional Government Agent, K Vimalanadan, who opened the branch office assured the fullest cooperation of the Government Agent's office to make the Center a success. Also present were Divisional Secretary, S Kiridaranam and Ms G Sathiyannade, Assistant Commissioner of Local Government.

Representing TISL were Executive Director, S Ranugge, 'Shelter for Integrity' Coordinator, D M Dissanayaka, Legal Officer Jagath Liyanarachchi and Regional Coordinator, A Kaisihan.





TISL stresses on need for a flawless mechanism in handling the impeachment issue

In a letter to HE President Mahinda Rajapaksa, the Speaker and party leaders, Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL) states that it is the duty and national responsibility of all concerned to evolve a flawless mechanism with which justice is meted out in investigating into the current impeachment motion against the Chief Justice.

Stating that in this case we could learn from other countries which follow more acceptable and judicious mechanism in impeaching judges of higher Courts, TISL quotes Singapore as an example that can be followed. TISL points out that the Constitution of Singapore provides for a tribunal of retired and sitting judges to hear impeachment cases against the judges of higher Courts.

The letter states:

"Transparency International Sri Lanka, the national chapter of the global movement against corruption, has drawn its attention to the current impasse between the executive and the judiciary of Sri Lanka. We feel that this is a very unhealthy development and poses a serious threat to democracy and good governance of the country. Moreover, Since Sri Lanka has become a party to several UN Conventions which warrant the signatories to such conventions respect human rights and principles of good governance, this internal issue would attract the attention of the international community if the government would not handle it judiciously.

We are aware that the Constitution has provided for impeachment of judges of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal and the current impeachment motion has been submitted following those constitutional provisions. We are also aware that the procedures to be followed to proceed with the motion are laid down in the parliamentary standing orders and the Hon. Speaker has, up to now, acted according to such standing orders.

According to the said standing orders, the impeachment is to be investigated/heard by a Select Committee appointed by the Hon. Speaker. As we all are aware, the Select Committee comprises

Members of Parliament and the majority of the committee comes from the ruling party members who are complainants of the impeachment. In other words, the complainants or the petitioners are the judges as per existing standing orders in this regard. This is a serious flaw in the process which could be construed as bias, injudicious and stands against the natural justice although the Select Committee's findings would be just and impartial. Nonetheless, the apparent weaknesses of the existing process and the outcome of the impeachment of that process will definitely be interpreted from different perspectives and such interpretations would add and aggravate the issues that Sri Lanka is facing in the international arena at the moment. Therefore, we consider, it is the duty and national responsibility of all concerned to evolve a flawless mechanism with which justice is meted out and justice appears to be meted out in the case of impeachment.

In this case we could learn from other countries which follow more acceptable and judicious mechanism in impeaching judges of higher Courts. For example, the Constitution of Singapore provides for a tribunal of retired and sitting judges to hear impeachment cases against the judges of higher Courts (Article 98 of the Singapore Constitution). We firmly believe that our Parliament could evolve such a mechanism within the existing constitutional provisions acting under Article 107 of our Constitution by enacting new laws or amending standing orders for that purpose.

Transparency International Sri Lanka strongly urges your Excellency, Hon. Speaker and all party leaders to act with conscience with a view to meeting justice to the Chief Justice, Ms Shirani Bandaranayake and prove to the entire world who are watching us that 'justice is done' in this impeachment case."

Recognition for TISL website

TISL website www.transparency.lk has won the Silver Award in the non-profit & Educational Category at the Bestweb.lk 2012 Awards .

This is the second occasion when TISL website won recognition at these awards. In 2010 TISL won the silver award.

These awards are presented by Sri Lanka Domain Registry of which Dr R B Ekanayake is the chairman. The Domain Registrar is Professor Gihan Dias.

