



Statement of the Royal Norwegian Government

1 November 2002

AGREED MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE SECURITY SITUATION IN THE EAST

The Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) initiated the second session of the peace talks in Thailand with an evaluation of the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement over the past eight months. In their determination to consolidate the ceasefire and advance the peace process, the parties agreed to a set of measures to improve the security situation, inter-ethnic cooperation and respect for human rights in the North and Eastern Provinces.

In this context, the parties emphasized in particular their commitment to accommodate the needs and aspirations of all three communities in the east - Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese. The parties set out specific measures to improve relations between the Muslim and Tamil communities.

The parties agreed to continuously monitor the implementation of each of the agreed measures and to report on progress at future sessions of the peace talks.

- In light of the principal challenges in implementing the Ceasefire Agreement at this stage, the parties agreed to reconstitute the SLMM Local Monitoring Committees, established in accordance with paragraph 3.7 of the Ceasefire Agreement. To this end, the parties agreed to replace a number of their appointees to the Committees with senior representatives from both sides.
- The parties are pleased to note that the SLMM has established Points of Contact (POCs) in the north and east as sub-offices of the SLMM district offices, in order to improve access to SLMM for local communities. The parties agreed to request the SLMM to consider establishing additional sub-offices, particularly in Batticaloa and Ampara districts.
- The parties agreed to establish direct communications between the commanders of the LTTE and the GOSL Special Task Force in the east, in order to improve the security situation.
- The parties agreed to establish a process of regular consultations between LTTE leaders and Muslim political leaders.
- Mr. Hakeem and Mr. Karuna agreed to work together in the east to meet with local communities and address their specific concerns and aspirations, including matters relating to the occupation and cultivation of land. They will work in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding reached between the leader of the LTTE, Mr. Velupillai Pirapaharan, and the leader of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, Mr. Rauf Hakeem, on 13 April 2002. The parties further agreed to remove any impediments to the pursuit of traditional economic activities of the Tamil and Muslim communities, such as fishing, farming and trading.
- The parties took special note of the need to address fully and cater for the interests and concerns of the Sinhala community in the Eastern Province, in the context of the ongoing peace negotiations.
- The parties agreed to establish peace committees at the community level in order to facilitate the resolution of local problems, contribute to inter-ethnic communication and reconciliation, and promote respect for human rights. The committees may include local community leaders, such as religious, political, business and civil society leaders. The committees will include local LTTE and GOSL leaders.

