



PARTIES HAVE DECIDED TO EXPLORE A POLITICAL SOLUTION FOUNDED ON INTERNAL SELF-DETERMINATION BASED ON A FEDERAL STRUCTURE WITHIN A UNITED SRI LANKA



Statement of the Royal Norwegian Government

Oslo, 5 December 2002

The third session of peace talks between the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was held in Oslo, Norway on 2 to 5 December 2002. In a frank, open and constructive manner, the parties focused on three major areas:

- Consolidation of the ceasefire
- Humanitarian and rehabilitation action
- Political matters

The parties agreed on a working outline defining the objective as well as a number of substantive political issues for negotiation.

Responding to a proposal by the leadership of the LTTE, the parties agreed to explore a solution founded on the principle of internal self-determination in areas of historical habitation of the Tamil-speaking peoples, based on a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka. The parties acknowledged that the solution has to be acceptable to all communities.

Guided by this objective, the parties agreed to initiate discussions on substantive political issues such as, but not limited to:

- Power-sharing between the centre and the region, as well as within the centre
- Geographical region
- Human Rights protection
- Political and administrative mechanism
- Public finance
- Law and order

The parties recognised that progress on political issues must be supported by the continued consolidation of the Ceasefire Agreement. New concrete measures will be taken to facilitate further de-escalation and to improve normalcy:

- The GOSL will shortly return one of the hotels in Jaffna to its original use
- The LTTE will ensure that all future transportation of area commanders will take place under the supervision of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM)
- The LTTE will accept the right of political groups to carry out political work, including in the Jaffna peninsula and the islands, provided that they are unarmed, as stipulated by the Ceasefire Agreement
- The GOSL will, in consultation with all relevant parties and groups, evolve a solution to the problems arising from recent developments in the Delft island
- The parties will facilitate restoration and rehabilitation of places of worship in the north and the east belonging to all religious communities.

On the basis of their firm conviction that the maintenance of law and order in the north and east is of paramount importance, the parties agreed to request the Sub-Committee on De-escalation and Normalization to propose a common approach to settling cases involving the disputed use of private property, where such use has been impeded by the conflict. Furthermore, the LTTE will ensure that the activities of their law and order mechanisms will not be extended beyond the areas dominated by the LTTE.

The parties strongly underlined the need to move rapidly on humanitarian and rehabilitation efforts in the north and east. For this purpose, the early establishment of the North-East Reconstruction Fund will be critical. The parties agreed that the custodian of the fund should be selected and modalities for its operation agreed at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee on Immediate Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Needs. The parties expressed their appreciation of the strong support extended by

several governments to the peace process at the Sri Lanka Support Meeting held in Oslo on 25 November, and urged these governments to rapidly release funds needed for humanitarian and rehabilitation efforts.

The parties acknowledged the need to ensure that the priorities and needs of women are taken into account in all aspects of the peace process. To this effect, they agreed to establish a permanent advisory committee which will, on a regular basis, submit proposals relating to women's interests to the sessions of negotiations and to the sub-committees of the peace process. The committee will consist of four representatives of each party.

As a priority area identified by the parties for humanitarian action, the parties stressed the need to improve the situation for children affected by armed conflict. Inspired by the international norms protecting the rights of the child, the parties underlined that children belong with their families or other custodians and not in the workplace, whether civilian or military. The LTTE will engage in a partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to draw up an action plan for restoring normalcy to the lives of children, and the parties called on the international community to provide financial support for such an action plan.

The GOSL will, in order to arrive at the broadest possible consensus, establish an appropriate mechanism for consultation with all segments of opinion as part of the ongoing peace process.

