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## Celebrating youth:

Youth form a human mosaic in the shape of the world map, 'lighting it up', later in the day, signifying the positive contribution they pledged to make to their communities.

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## Douglas Keh on UNDP's role, new challenges and life in Sri Lanka

Douglas Keh joined UNDP Sri Lanka as the Country Director in November 2007. Working with commitment, perseverance and strength, he guided UNDP through tough times, and helped steer the Country Office's programming to better suit the changing context. Having completed his term in office, Doug left Sri Lanka on July 24.

On his last day at UNDP Sri Lanka, Doug shared his views with us on UNDP's priorities then and now. He also spoke on the organization's changing role in today's context, as it continues to work towards making a difference in the country. Moreover, he spoke on life in Sri Lanka, his favourite place here (which, as he says, is perhaps his favourite place in the whole world) and the best thing about working at UNDP. He also left some words of advice for staff.

Watch the full interview here:



### In pictures...



During a field visit



Speaking during the launch of the 2011 Human Development Report



During a meeting with participants of the Women's Leadership Development Project held in Colombo



Participating at one of the many activities during the bi-annual UNDP retreat

## Stakeholders' workshop on assessment of UNDP's contribution to development results in Sri Lanka

Over 60 representatives from the Government, development partners, UN agencies and civil society participated at the stakeholders' workshop deliberating on the findings of the Assessment of Development Results (ADR), a key report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The event was held on 31st July 2012 at the Galadari Hotel, and was co-chaired by Dr. P. B. Jayasundera, Secretary to the Ministry of Finance and Planning and Mr. Indrakumaran Naidoo, Director of the UNDP Evaluation Office in New York.

Undertaken jointly by the Government of Sri Lanka and the UNDP Evaluation Office, New York, with support from UNDP Sri Lanka, the ADR aims to capture evidence of UNDP's contribution to development results in Sri Lanka over the past ten years, covering the previous (2002-2007) and the current (2008-2012) programme cycles. The ADR report comes at a crucial juncture as UNDP plans its next programme cycle (2013-2017) in a changing environment. Starting from next year, the focus of UNDP's work will gradually shift from a strong focus on providing direct socio-economic assistance to technical and policy-oriented support that will strengthen systems and institutions. As such, the findings and recommendations of the report will be significant in improving the programmes, future strategies and direction of UNDP.

*"In the ADR, we see many recommendations on the "how" or the approach that we adopt in our work across sectors. For example, how we link policy interventions to field work, how we forge multi-sectoral partnerships and how we link capacity support with sustainability,"* explained, Mr. Subinay Nandy, UN Resident Coordinator



Head table from left: Dr. B. M. S. Batagoda, Deputy Secretary to the Treasury, Mr. Rathin Roy, Regional Manager, UNDP's Asia Pacific Regional Centre, Mr. Subinay Nandy, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Dr. P. B. Jayasundera, Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Planning, Mr. Indrakumaran Naidoo, Director, UNDP Evaluation Office, New York and Mr. Masahiro Igarashi, Evaluation Advisor, UNDP Evaluation Office, New York. Also in the picture is Fredrick Abeyratne, Team Leader, Poverty/MDG Cluster, UNDP Sri Lanka

and UNDP Resident Representative, sharing his thoughts on the significance of the report. Mr. Nandy also expressed his gratitude to the Government of Sri Lanka, especially the Ministry of Finance and Planning for their commitment to the "joint" nature of the evaluation.

Dr. P. B. Jayasundera emphasized the need for UN agencies to partner with the Government in addressing the country's development challenges and delivering the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Referring to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), upon which the new UNDP Country Programme Document is based, he explained that it is relevant for the country and is in line with the development priorities of the Government. He added, *"The United Nations can make an enormous contribution, by partnering with us, because in my opinion, UNDAF 2013-2017 is fully in line with the Mahinda Chinthana Vision for the Future. I think it is one of the best inclusive strategies"*.

[Read more](#)



Members of the Evaluation Committee





GIS training for Jaffna Government officers

## UNDP transfers Early Recovery Coordination GIS capacity to Jaffna planning units

Following the end of the 30 year conflict, Jaffna's District Planning Unit was faced with the tremendous task of leading the process of recovery and development.

Having seen the types of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and databases used in other districts to facilitate planning, the Jaffna District Officers felt that their work would greatly benefit from adoption of similar systems.

As a first step, UNDP's Early Recovery Coordination colleagues stepped in to support the District and Divisional planning units by providing information management tools such as maps, databases, information matrices, etc. While this assistance continued for several years, both parties realized the need to build a more sustainable solution, whereby the District offices would independently manage the information system, thus gradually enabling the UNDP support to phase out.

In June 2012, UNDP, in collaboration with UNOCHA, supported the District Planning Director to conduct a two day training programme for 28 staff members from the District Secretariat and 15 Divisions. The participants learned to prepare basic geographic maps including administrative, demographic and land use maps, as well as how

to map out the economic development, industrial and tourism activities.

Expressing his views on the training, one participant stated, *"All this time we were completely dependent on others to produce the maps needed for our office use. But hereafter we can do the maps on our own."* In fact, the two days intensive learning process motivated participants to challenge themselves, and for those who had successfully completed the basic course, UNDP provided advanced GIS training such as GPS handling and geo-databases. The Director of Planning also commended on the outcomes, saying that *"The course provided by UNDP and UNOCHA was highly useful for our unit staff and they got motivated to learn further and use the system more effectively."*

Plans for further advanced training are underway by UNDP, along with an impact assessment of the basic training. The successive training programmes will aim to equip planning unit staff with the skills to sustainably manage their information systems and improve efficiency of future planning at the District and Divisional levels. The progress of this initiative can be tracked in the statistical handbook, resource profile and developmental plan released by the Jaffna planning unit.

## N-PEACE consultation looks at how to promote the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Sri Lanka



Participants during the consultation

The objective of the day was to look at how the partners could collaborate to promote 1325 in Sri Lanka. After learning about experiences from other N-PEACE countries, participants had the chance to discuss the opportunities and challenges linked to promotion of 1325 in Sri Lanka. The discussion was framed around the four pillars of the resolution – Participation, Prevention, Protection and Relief & Recovery – and noted that while challenges exist at all levels, there is also a lot of work already taking place led by Government, NGOs/CBOs and the UN. Indeed, a key challenge is ensuring effective coordination among the many actors.

On 5th July 2012, a diverse group of stakeholders working on women's empowerment issues came together to explore ways of promoting Security Council Resolution 1325 that looks at Women, Peace and Security. Participants included representatives from the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs officials, UN agencies, and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and members of the Network to engage for Peace, Equality, Access, Community and Empowerment (N-Peace).

The one day consultation was facilitated by UNDP and its partner organisation Search for Common Ground as part of the regional N-PEACE initiative. A multi-country network established in 2010 by UNDP's Asia Pacific Regional Centre, the aim of N-PEACE is to support the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 by providing a platform for engagement between different actors working on issues of women, peace and security. Sri Lanka is one of the six countries in the network, alongside Indonesia, Nepal, East Timor, Philippines and Afghanistan.

While a number of countries have decided to develop specific 1325 action plans, the participants felt that such a plan was not necessary in Sri Lanka, given that many of the relevant elements are included within the National Human Rights Action Plan, draft National Action Plan for Women, recommendations of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) and other policy and planning documents.

Instead, the group recommended several key interventions as priorities to support moving forward: The first was to jointly promote the finalisation and approval of the National Action Plan for Women, a key instrument for carrying forward much of the work on Women, Peace and Security. In partnership with the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs, it was suggested that a series of District consultations could take place to raise awareness about the plan and solicit feedback. An advocacy campaign could also be launched, mobilising support from the grassroots to the national level, including with key opinion and policy leaders in the Parliament and specifically the Women's Caucus.

[Read more](#)



## National consultation process on Elder's Rights

Sri Lanka like many countries in the region is facing a significant increase in the proportion of elderly within the population. While the proportion of elderly (above 60) was only 9.1% in 2001, this figure is expected to reach 25% by 2041.

Ensuring that the country is well equipped to support the elderly, and that they are properly protected is therefore a top priority. A demographic shift of this nature will have implications on health care, housing, labour markets, consumption patterns, and almost all aspects of everyday life. As such, the Human Rights Commission (HRC), with the support of UNDP, undertook to hold a series of regional consultations to explore what measures could be taken to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights for the elderly.

During August, each of the ten regional offices of the HRC undertook consultations with religious leaders, local government officers, judges and lawyers, academics, media personnel, private sector professionals, civil society representatives and elders' committees to understand the issues and identify proposed remedies. In the regional consultations in Vavuniya and Jaffna, for example, it was highlighted that due to a large number of younger people migrating to other countries, the older generation was left in a very vulnerable situation. Meanwhile, during the consultations in Matara, the participants stressed the importance of increasing public spending on welfare and protection of the elderly population, creating positive attitudes of respect & responsibility within the younger generation on the elderly and the states' responsibility in generating awareness through mass media on the productivity and contribution by the elders to family, community and country.

On Thursday 16th August, with the support of UNDP, the HRC held a National Consultation to identify specific proposals from the regional inputs. Over 150 people participated, including high level Government Officers from Ministries and Departments, Members of Parliament, and representatives from the HRC, UN agencies, NGOs, academia, civil society and segments of elderly population.



From left: Mr. Subinay Nandy, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Dr. Pratiba Mahanamahewa, Commissioner, HRCSL, Deshabandu Jezima Ismail, Commissioner, HRCSL, Justice Priyantha Perera, Chairman, HRCSL, Prof. Savitri Goonesekere, Prof. Indralal De Silva and Mr. T.E. Anandarajah, Commissioner, HRCSL

Among the proposals were support for the introduction of a universal compulsory pension scheme for older persons, strengthening of existing counseling training programmes and service delivery for the elders, advocacy to instill responsibility in the younger generations about the senior citizens to promote social harmony, and a recommendation that national plans and global targets such as the MDGs give special attention to the needs of elders. It was also highlighted that if a UN Convention for Elders is to one day be developed, consideration must be given to the beliefs and practices of different societies and cultures.

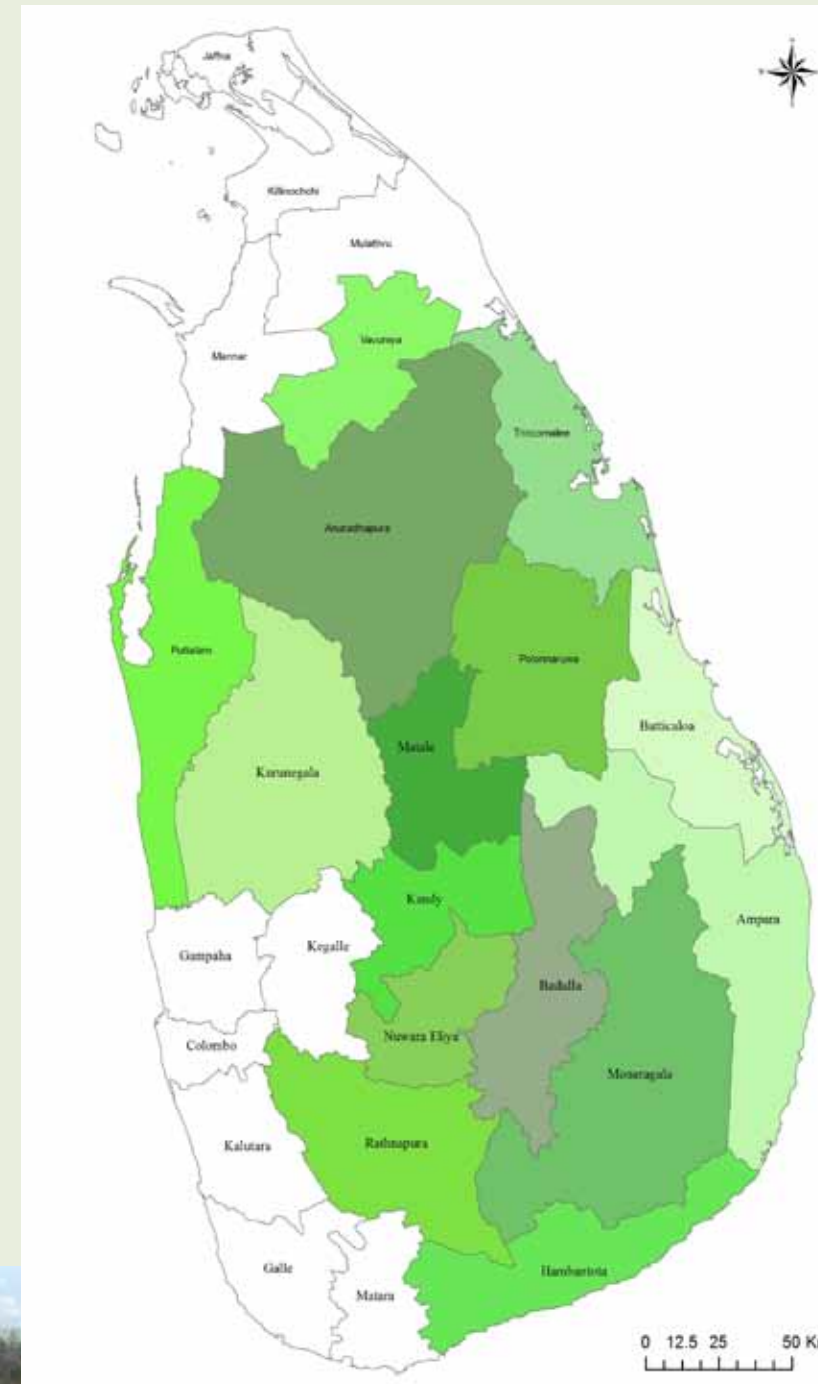
The outcome of the national discussions, while informing Sri Lankan policy decisions, was also shared with the 'Open Ended Working Group' on Ageing which was established in December 2010 by a GA resolution. Tasked with strengthening the human rights protection of older persons through the review and assessment of the existing international framework and identifying its gaps and how it can most effectively address them, the Group had invited member states to submit recommendations. The proposals were also submitted to the Asia Pacific Forum on National Human Rights Institutions for representation at the UN Open Ended Working Group sessions. This was the first time that the HRC had facilitated country wide input into such an exercise and also this is the first time that Sri Lanka has submitted input to the formulation of any UN convention through multi-stakeholder nationwide consultations.

## Community Forestry Programme: Supporting livelihoods, strengthening capacity

The Sri Lanka Community Forestry Programme will work towards strengthening the capacity of communities living near forests to plan income-generating activities, such as home gardening, sustainable forest product development and marketing. The aim is to facilitate interlinkages between forest resources and communities living near forests and encourage them to conserve the forests and associated biodiversity.

This USD 4.75 million initiative, funded by the Australian Government, will also support the government in reducing deforestation and forest degradation in the dry and intermediate zones. Capacity of Forest Department officials will also be enhanced under the project training them in new areas such as public-private partnerships and supporting communities with innovative forest product development. The project will also help to establish and strengthen Forest Department offices in the Northern and Eastern provinces. Establishing market linkages for community forest products by promoting partnerships with leading private sector companies and technological providers will be a key focus of the project.

The project will be implemented over a period of four years in 15 districts in Sri Lanka. Overall, the project is expected to benefit approximately 15,000 households directly and many more indirectly.



The districts the Community Forestry Programme will cover



During a community replanting programme

## International Youth Day: “Building a better world, partnering with youth”

With the goal of “building a better world, partnering with youth”, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme and the National Youth Services Council [NYSC], with guidance and support from the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development and the United Nations in Sri Lanka, celebrated International Youth Day on 12th August 2012.

The event was attended by Hon. Dullas Alahapperuma, Minister of Youth Affairs, Mr. Subinay Nandy, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Ms. Razina Bilgrami, Country Director, UNDP, Mr. Natal Donnalioia, Programme Officer, UNV, Mr. Lalith Piyum Perera, Chairman of the National Youth Services Council (NYSC), Mr. K.A Tilakaratne, Secretary to Ministry of Youth Affairs, Mr. Madura Vithanage, Deputy Mayor and Parliamentarian Ms Upeksha Swarnamali.

With over 2500 youth participants gathering at the Independence Square, the day was seen as an opportunity to empower and support youth in enhancing their abilities to make a better world. As part of the day’s events, to promote community service, and to create a chance to contribute to society in a positive manner, youth participants pledged their support to volunteer at a community project of their choice.

The highlight of the evening was the human mosaic that was formed in the shape of the world map. It was the largest human mosaic formed in Sri Lanka. In addition the lighting of the human mosaic signified the positive contribution that these youth had pledged to make to their community. Furthermore it reflected the global theme of “Light up the World”.



*During the event*