

# Sri Lanka Youth Statement for Rio+20



## **About YGSL**

Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka [YGSL] brings together over 30 youth-led and youth-focused organisations in the country engaged in environmental conservation, management, climate change, sustainable development and advocacy for environmental issues. Our aim is to inspire, engage and support young people to take collective action towards achieving a sustainable and greener Sri Lanka.

YGSL was established in March 2012 in the lead up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), to be held in Brazil from June 20-22, 2012, with support and endorsement from several UN agencies operating in the country.

## **Our Objectives:**

Promote collective action on sustainable development especially among youth in Sri Lanka

Support initiatives of partner organizations

Build awareness and convey key messages on sustainable development

**The following statement<sup>1</sup> is submitted by ‘Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka’ (YGSL) as per the request made by Focal Point, Rio+20 Conference, Secretary, Ministry of Environment<sup>2</sup> Sri Lanka to be included in the Sri Lanka Country Report to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development June 2012.**

We the youth representatives of Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka, currently constituting over one fourth of the population in Sri Lanka<sup>3</sup> gathered together on a common platform called *Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka* with representation from government, business, civil society, young professionals, academics, social entrepreneurs and others from across institutional and geographical backgrounds after a transparent, participatory consultative process state as follows:

#### **PREAMBLE**

“The current global development context characterized by uncertainty, unpredictability and volatility arising out of inter-related food, fuel, energy, financial, environmental and climatic crises have adversely affected youth in rural areas, urban informal settlements, nomadic pastoralists, displaced and refugee youth, forest and fisher folk, youth living with disabilities, youth living with and affected by HIV/AIDS and other vulnerable categories of youth.... Substantial increase in *youth unemployment* and *under-employment* across all regions of the world suggests that *youth are more vulnerable to economic shocks*... there is a *need to see youth as part of the solution and not the problem*. *Young men and women across the globe are willing to play a more determinative role in democratic governance and sustainable development processes and calls for the removal of all social, economic and political barriers to youth participation, youth leadership and inclusion within and outside the UN System.*<sup>4</sup>

Recognizing that the main challenges for a world beset with wars, famine, disasters and inequalities are the achievement of peace and sustainable development, which are both interwoven and intrinsically linked. It is to be emphasized that all efforts towards achieving peace and sustainable development can be negated if the powers that influence the environmental and the socio-economic issues act contrary to the policies and approaches required to build peace at global levels, by basing their actions and policies purely on geopolitical considerations to ensure balance of power and economic advantage, and in the process creating wars, harming people and destroying the environment. Therefore, issues of

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<sup>1</sup> This statement has been drafted by a Committee of the YGSL after a series of consultative meetings held between April – May 2012 and convened jointly by various stakeholders that have an interest in youth affairs including those from Government and National institutions, business and civil society members who have been involved with youth-led, youth related initiatives from various parts of Sri Lanka

<sup>2</sup> YGSL wishes to extend our appreciation to the Secretary of Ministry of Environment for inviting us to submit this statement to be included in the Country Report to Rio+20 Conference 2012. The annexure 1 constitutes the responsible persons who have directed and assisted in drafting this document.

<sup>3</sup> UN population division, 2010, data indicates that 23% of the population in Sri Lanka constitute youth between 10-24 years

<sup>4</sup> Preamble Youth 21: The Nairobi Declaration, March 2012, UNDP and UN-Habitat - Youth Conference, Kenya

global warming and climate change must be viewed in a holistic manner, involving peace, and also, sustainable development as intrinsically linked in the process.<sup>5</sup>

In order 'to realize these aspirations, we must decide to live with a sense of *universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community* as well as our local communities. ..Everyone shares responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world."<sup>6</sup> Recognizing that the creativity, ideal and courage of the youth of the world should be mobilized to forge a global partnership in order to achieve sustainable development and ensure a better future for all', <sup>7</sup> (Principle 21, Rio Declaration 1992)

Considering the importance of the passage of time in Sri Lanka, which has seen an end to almost three decades of war and especially, we as the youth, who have only known war during all or most our lives, recognize that all efforts should be aimed at progressing toward achieving a sustainable peace through reconciliation (both human-human and human-environment aspects)

In this light, appreciating the significant emphasis given to both *Youth and the Environment* in the '*Mahinda Chinthana – A Brighter Future*' in which the H.E. The President of Sri Lanka has envisioned for the achieving sustainable development in Sri Lanka and the numerous national level policies including but are not limited to *Haritha (Green) Lanka 2009, National Action Plan on Education for Peace and Sustainable Development 2012*<sup>8</sup>, and if implemented in its true spirit would pave the way for achieving a sustainably just future for all in Sri Lanka.

Given that, Sri Lanka has a long history and rich culture of volunteerism moulded by religion and permeating practically all aspects of human activity. Volunteerism in Sri Lanka is commonly known as "shramadana" and is embedded in the common cultural heritage for many generations. Noting that youth constitute a large percentage of those volunteers that contribute toward a more sustainable society,<sup>9</sup>

Aware however, that in order to meet these unprecedented challenges faced by the younger generations a *paradigm shift* is necessary and that there needs to be a reconnection with the values and wisdom contained within the traditional and indigenous systems of the past that constitute our culture and that considered every decision within the long term sustainability perspective as opposed to a short term gain or profit as it is viewed today, in order to build a sustainable world for future generations.

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<sup>5</sup> Excerpt from the Input by the Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO for UNESCO's Medium Term Strategy, 2014-2015.

<sup>6</sup> Extracts from the Preamble, The Earth Charter - <http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/>

<sup>7</sup> Principle 21, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development 1992

<sup>8</sup> As launched by H.E. The President on January 30, 2012 at the Presidential Secretariat <http://www.govlk.com/content/education-peace-and-sustainable-development-national-action-plan-website-launched>

<sup>9</sup> Courtesy UNV/UNDP Country Strategic Partnership Profile, Drafted by Prof. Siri Hettige

In light of the above and the objectives of the Rio+20 Conference 2012, the Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka, YGSL set out the following ‘Youth Policy Positions’<sup>10</sup> taken by youth under three categories; social, economic and political.

## **I. YOUTH POLICY POSITIONS**

**“If we are to do the right thing, if we are to avert the destruction that will be brought on by unsustainable practices and behaviours, we need to change our current attitudes and lifestyles: which will help us to be more conscious of how we live and behave on our planet.”<sup>11</sup>**

### **A) SOCIAL**

#### **1) PRINCIPLE OF EQUITY**

We the youth representatives of Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka state that a sustainable world has to be founded upon the Principle of Equity, and that these principles create both duties and rights upon every individual in accessing ones share of resources and to lead a life that enable him or her to reach full potential as a responsible individual in society. We believe in an equitable world, where women, children and youth will not live a life of vulnerability. Our aspiration is equality for all, and not the luxury of the twenty percent of the world’s people who enjoy the exploitation of eighty percent of its resources<sup>12</sup>.

#### **2) WELL-BEING & HAPPINESS**

We the youth representatives of Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka, believe that economic development does not by itself lead to happiness, when excessive resource consumption and environmental damage is likely to result in a future in which our children’s children do not even get a chance to be happy. We state that happiness is about self-realization, contentment and sharing: and these are the results of simplicity. We are of the view that wellbeing is the quality of life that we live, blended with satisfaction of doing what’s right, living according to our needs, sharing and being generous with our resources with others so that they too have a chance at achieving happiness. Thus, we believe that happiness is related

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<sup>10</sup> These Youth Policy Positions as referred to in this document are taken from the submission made by the National Road to Rio+20 Campaign Sri Lanka to the Zero Draft outcome document early May 2012. The NRR+20 Document was drafted subsequent to a number of workshops on the Rio+20 Process conducted in various parts of Sri Lanka and as amended subsequent to the series of consultative multi-stakeholder meetings which were conducted by Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka during April – May 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Supra note 8, above

<sup>12</sup> Pareto Principle; United Nations Development Program (1992), 1992 Human Development Report, New York: Oxford University Press

and tied to sustainability and cannot simply be measured with economic indicators. We, therefore, propose the development of new indicators of real development.

Examples are The Happy Planet Index<sup>13</sup> (HPI) and the Gross National Happiness<sup>14</sup> (GNH) Indicators. Our policy position is one of achieving happiness through simplicity and sustainability, where true development in today's world is measured by more by quality and less by quantity.

### **3) RIGHT MINDFULNESS/CONSCIOUSNESS**

We the youth representatives of Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka believe that right mindfulness/consciousness comprises certain elements, which are ultimately a combination of other policy positions mentioned above and below. It involves ensuring the wellbeing of everyone on this planet; sufficiency – echoing elements of self-reliance and contentment; sustainable lifestyles to combat climate change; equity and justice – with regard to the opportunities available for everyone; and happiness.

Right Mindfulness/Consciousness relates to being aware of the consequences of your actions and being considerate of others in one's day-to-day lifestyle.

### **B) ECONOMIC**

#### **1. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND POVERTY REDUCTION**

We the youth representatives of Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka understand that these two issues are interlinked. Environmental Sustainability addresses multiple challenges faced by humans: degradation of natural resource base, increase vulnerability due to climate change and poverty. We believe that it is possible to successfully ensure the sustainability of the ecosystem, adapt to climate change and alleviate poverty through the use of holistic approaches that are based on the concept of environmental sustainability as a single phenomenon, and not by compartmentalizing these interlinked issues. In an effort to reach a level of adequate sustainability, we humans have to behave in ways that take the ecological system of the planet earth into full consideration, and we need to plan for the wellbeing of our future generations.

#### **2. TOWARD A GREEN ECONOMY**

We the youth representatives of Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka believe in a Green Economy which will develop the quality of life and improve social equity through horizontal growth – whereby growth is distributed amongst many. This would be real sustainability at work. It will also ensure the right-to-development to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.

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<sup>13</sup> HPI : <http://www.happyplanetindex.org>

<sup>14</sup> GNH : <http://grossnationalhappiness.com/>

A Green Economy should replace the current economic order of inequity, destruction and greed. A Green Economy should be an economic system that ensures social equity, protects the ecological balance and creates economic sufficiency. The core idea of a Green Economy should be to enforce Sustainability, specifically the wellbeing of all people and respecting and preserving the biodiversity of Earth's ecosystems.

### **3. CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION**

We the youth representatives of Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka believe that we have to adopt sustainable lifestyles and livelihoods if we are to mitigate, adapt and resolve the multiple crises faced by humanity today.

Agenda 21 (Chapter 4.3) which is an outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED 1992) states that; "the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries, which is a matter of grave concern, aggravating poverty and imbalances". As one of the main obstacles towards achieving sustainable development, enabling SCP should become a key focus of any newly emerging international outcome. SCP is a systemic process of lifestyle and livelihood behaviours that ensures the wellbeing of all people in an equitable manner while conserving the ecology for current and future generations.

## **C) POLITICAL**

### **1) SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOVERNANCE**

We the youth representatives of Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka believe that Sustainable Development Governance should necessarily include participatory decision making at every level of society. The challenges set out above cannot be overcome only by governments of the world, but requires a multi-stakeholder approach representing government, business and civil society.

We understand Sustainable Development Governance should necessarily create platforms at every level for the voice of youth to be heard and to be considered within the decision making processes, for it is on the shoulders of youth the responsibility rests

### **2) CREATING AN OFFICE FOR THE OMBUDSPERSON / HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

We the youth representatives of Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka understand that there is a lacuna in current decision making processes and institutions of the world, especially as all of them fail to consider the long term effects of decisions made today. The proposal stated at paragraph 57 of the Zero

Outcome document calling for the establishment of an *Ombudsperson/High Commissioner for Future Generations* is thus an opportunity to meet this short coming and by establishing such an office, we believe that both the aspirations of youth and future generations will be protected.

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Hence, for the aforesaid reasons the youth of Sri Lanka through the *Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka (YGSL)* make the following recommendations and call on both the world's political leadership that will gather at this historic Rio+20 Conference and that of the Government of Sri Lanka to work in collaboration with youth at all levels of society to implement the following commitments:

### 1) **PARTICIPATION FOR YOUTH AT ALL LEVELS OF DECISION MAKING TO SECURE THE FUTURE WE WANT**

There is an increasing significance of youth participation within all levels of decision making processes in society. Hence, the right spaces, platforms, access to information and avenues should be created for their consultation and input, especially with regard to drawing up policies, environment related and otherwise, which would affect them both now and in the years ahead. As stated above, youth should not be looked as the problem but part of the solution to some of the pressing concerns highlighted above.

However, we recognize that there have been a number of encouraging steps being taken at various levels to include youth, notably in recent times, the creation of a Youth Parliament at the national level in Sri Lanka, the proposed UN Special Advisor on Youth and the UN Permanent Forum for Youth at the international level, it is yet to be seen whether these have been successful. Further, we wish to emphasise that all such efforts should be made *bona fide* in order to not merely consult with them, but also to proactively consider their input by integrating them into national, regional, international policy documents.

We recognize that participation at all levels is both a right of youth and duty on all stakeholders to ensure that rights is protected in a true spirit. Further, we wish to state by participation, youth are empowered and are given the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential hence enabling them to harness their skills required to move the world toward the *paradigm shift* which is necessary to achieve economic growth, social equity and environmental sustainability.

### 2) **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

We the youth representatives of Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka recognise the need for more and better quality employment opportunities including green jobs for the youth. At present there is a lack of green job initiatives and access to green skills training programs for young people.

We believe bridging the skills gap among young people through improved education and training will be a key to achieving environmental objectives and a transition to a green economy.



We call upon political leaders and business leaders to collectively commit to implementing effective corporate social and environmental responsibility which can generate demand for more green jobs and provide young people with 'green skills', to ensure youth are equal partners in sustainable development<sup>15</sup>.

In order to achieve this we believe that the correct skills need to be harnessed and the avenues should be made available through relevant Public – Private Partnerships involving all stakeholders concerned. Further, we recognize the attempts made by the United Nations through its Global Compact Initiative to bring on par all the business enterprises in the world in line with the sustainable development agenda.

Further by bridging job opportunities with right livelihood and for considering the Happiness Index<sup>16</sup> as an indicator in order to move beyond GDP, which we as youth consider being a restrictive indicator and negating the attempts to shift toward a green economy.

In its demographic development, Sri Lanka right now has a relatively small number of dependents to people of working age. This gives Sri Lanka the opportunity to reap the demographic bonus where the high proportion of productive population can drive economic development for the demographic bonus to happen. Sri Lanka needs to make the right investments in education, health care and job creation of young people. As population experts predict, this window of opportunity will remain open only up to 2025, when the number of older persons will begin to outnumber the young with the rapid ageing of the population. One of the strategies available to the government to reap the demographic bonus is by promoting entrepreneurship among young people.<sup>17</sup>

Further, we wish to highlight the significant opportunity which is available following the dawn of peace and hence creating an ideal setting for the inclusion of green concepts and ideas in a practical way at all levels of governance in the anticipated fast tracked economic development, reconstruction and reintegration.

Identifying that the younger generation of Sri Lankans are faced with a unique set of nuance challenges owing to remnants of the almost three decades of internal conflict, which has resulted in an out flow of talent and isolating the younger generation from accessing the wisdom and experience of their elders, steps are required to be immediately taken at all levels in society to bridge this gap by accelerated capacity building of youth through education, exposure and practical training programmes.

#### *SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP*

“See young people as a resource, not a problem...” In advocating the Youth Statement to the World Summit for Sustainable Development 2012, we the youth representatives of Youth for a Greener Sri

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<sup>15</sup> This section is based on the Bandung Declaration announced at the Tunza International Children and Youth Conference in Indonesia 2011, convened in preparation of Rio +20, this contribution was made by ILO office in Colombo

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com/>

<sup>17</sup> UNFPA Sri Lanka comments to the youth position paper May 2012.

Lanka believe that the importance of this approach is in contributing towards the development of critical skills and competencies of young people to positively engage in society, exercise leadership and become involved in social change. This positive youth development approach advocates for young people to achieve their full potential as the best way to prevent them from engaging in risky behaviour.

In light of this we submit that several public, non-profit, and private entrepreneurship training programs are available to youth in Sri Lanka. But relatively few young people use these services, and even fewer start or expand a business after receiving the training. In terms of entrepreneurship training, changing sociocultural attitudes about the value of business ownership is as important as improving the training and adopting regulatory and economic incentives to spur entrepreneurship.

A policy promoting youth entrepreneurship needs to be formulated and implemented based on experience and evidence from existing entrepreneurship programs and with a good understanding of the sociocultural, political, and historical context of Sri Lanka, in addition to its economic conditions.

Four types of entrepreneurship training programs accessed by youth can be identified, based on the institutional sector of their origin. State programs include the Small Enterprise Development Division (SEDD) of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, the Industrial Development Board (IDB), provincial Industrial Development Authorities (IDA), the Vocational Training Authority (VTA), and the National Apprentice Training and Industrial Authority (NAITA). However, these need to be further supplemented to meet the requirements of the 'paradigm shift' required in order to develop green skills required for a green job market in the future.

### **3) EDUCATION & TRAINING/SKILLS DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

We the youth representatives of Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka request all concerned parties to come together, in order to integrate the most outstanding practical educational methods within all our educational institutions, at all levels. We recognize that to achieve this both structural amendments through policy documents, and teacher training programmes at every level needs to be taken.

In this light, we recognize and welcome the *National Action Plan for Education for Peace and Sustainable Development* which was launched by H.E. the President in January 2012. However, there is much to be done in order to implement fully the provisions of this action plan taken together with the national educational policies and the Haritha Lanka Action Plan of 2009.

Thus, providing greater access to skills (both soft and hard) training, education and funding support for children and youth and communities can contribute to greater green growth and decent work.

We are of the view that the practices of the ancient or traditional ways which has encapsulated principles of sustainable development should be included in the curricula at all levels.

Further, all stakeholders should take cognizance of and support young entrepreneurs and innovators – from various backgrounds including social, economic, environment, that create green businesses and products which are environmentally responsible and that work towards sustainable development.

#### **4) OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH TO VOLUNTEER TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

We the youth representatives of Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka, recognize that volunteerism has been a key element of community development/advancement and also has been vital to ensure community cohesion. In the last few decades, a difficult time for many of the citizens of Sri Lanka, volunteerisms contribution to the development of society in diverse ways have been highly noted.

This together with the ever increasing interest towards volunteerism especially by the young population, a need was seen to establish forums like 'Youth for Greener Sri Lanka' [YGSL]. It is volunteerism that is at the heart of YGSL, where most of the organisations that are part of the forum are volunteer led or volunteer involving organisations.

Volunteers individually and through organisations [formal and informal] contribute immensely to the society at large. At this juncture in our country, we see a significant role that young people can play to support development process in sharing their skills, expertise and human resources. Volunteers from all ethnic and religious backgrounds from the communities, in the communities and for the communities can be the agents for reconciliation as well.

Noting the important contribution volunteers make for the betterment of society, especially those who are youth, highlight the importance creating enabling avenues and provision of resources and facilities for the volunteers and volunteer involving organisations to contribute to society and sustainable development. To promote and support diversity of volunteerism and disseminate best practices.

Hence, we call upon all stakeholders, to provide adequate opportunities and spaces for youth to volunteer, given they are both respected and recognized as individuals and as volunteers.

#### **5) CREATING AN OFFICE FOR AN OMBUDSPERSON/ HIGH COMMISSION FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS WITHIN THE PARLIAMENT OF SRI LANKA (PARA. 57 UN OUTCOME DOCUMENT)**

We the youth representatives of Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka call upon the world's political leadership to adopt the necessary means to create an office for an Ombudsperson/High Commissioner for Future Generations as it is not possible to continue taking decisions which affect current and especially future generations in the long term. This office would add much value to the institutional framework for sustainable development governance, which is one of the two main objectives of the Rio+20 Conference 2012.

Hence, we call upon the political leadership of Sri Lanka, to adopt and or create such an Ombudsperson for Future Generations within the Parliament, the highest national legislative body in Sri Lanka, who will be tasked with providing necessary input into national level policies and its effects on the long term future. This would ensure that Sri Lanka, and its political leadership will be ahead of its time in ensuring a transition to a greener economy and of reaching a sustainable peace in the long term. Also, given the leadership of H.E. the President of Sri Lanka, both through the Mahinda Chinthana: Vision for the Future,

the Haritha (Green) Lanka Programme and the National Action Plan for Education for Peace and Sustainable Development, we feel that such an office to be constituted will add much value in addressing most of long term policy considerations that are needed to be made in this post-war period in Sri Lanka and a stepping stone in moving toward achieving a sustainable peace.

Further, we the youth representatives of Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka, will by its own mandate adopt within its own constituencies such office/designation for an Ombudsperson for Future Generations.

### **III. COMMITMENTS**

Understanding that achieving sustainable development includes addressing a complex mosaic of issues, and appreciating that all elements of nature are necessarily interlinked and interconnected and human beings are interdependent on these elements for its own wellbeing including health, education etc., We the youth representatives of Youth for a Greener Sri Lanka call upon the political leadership to recognize and commit to the following;

- 1) To ensure a growth in the natural forest cover of Sri Lanka this is less than 18 percent currently. Hence, immediate initiatives need to be taken to curb deforestation and forest degradation, through for example implementing schemes such as REDD+ and community engaged reforestation projects in order to reach satisfactory levels of natural forest cover, at least 30% by 2022.
- 2) Given the rich heritage of water resource management of Sri Lanka, there is heavy responsibility on both the political leadership and all citizens of Sri Lanka to ensure that the quality of water is maintained, extraction and use of water is done sustainably and for these purposes all necessary constructive steps at all levels of governance in order to reconnect with the deeper appreciation and the consciousness of water as an indispensable natural resource.
- 3) Sri Lanka is blessed with a rich and potentially large marine resource base including territorial waters in an area of 21,700 square kilometres up to 12 nautical miles comprising of an Exclusive Economic Zone of up to 200 nautical miles with an area of 465,800 square kilometres. This resource is yet to be given adequate attention and protection. Proper, sustainable use of this resource has the ability to change the socio-economic future of Sri Lanka and the process towards "Miracle of Asia." We need urgently to assess the biological wealth and long-term economic potential of our marine resources (actually spread over an area 7.8 times of that of land area). There is an opportunity to create a large number of green jobs through strategic support to build the youth capacity in marine resource management, protection and associated activities. We propose that by 2022 we request 20% youth to be employed productively in the marine sector.

In addition we request effective implementation of the major laws that address marine issues in Sri Lanka are - Maritime Zone Act, Fisheries Act, Coast Conservation Act, Marine pollution Act, Fauna and Flora protection Act etc. The activities carried out through these sectors laws should

be mainstreamed with the other Acts, Laws, Regulations dealing with biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources.

Personnel in key Government and financial institutions should be trained and improved to support green investments for sustainable marine resource use.

- 4) To ensure environment governance in land use planning, selection of industries for investments, marine protection measures, comprehensive hazardous, electronic waste disposal management systems and creating the necessary infrastructural and or institutional structures for decision making that impacts natural resources considering the long term human future.
- 5) To commit towards maintaining and improving the air quality by reduction of emissions which would be of benefit for both global and national levels, through for example the promotion of certified emission credit certification systems.
- 6) We as youth recognize that Sri Lanka is best suited to take leadership in harnessing renewable sources as an alternative for fossil fuel power generation. In order to this, we call upon our leaders to take all necessary measures in order to achieve leadership in this sector and recognize the commitments made so far in order to increase the use of Renewable Energy for energy consumption in the country.
- 7) As more young people utilize public transportation, we call upon our political leaders to invest further in up grading the current status of public transportation – especially trains and buses in Sri Lanka. We also recognize that through this effort, a number of issues could be addressed including but not limited to, reduction in traffic congestion, Carbon Monoxide/Dioxide/Ozone emission reduction through exhaust fumes thus reducing pollution which gives rise to a number of health concerns.<sup>18</sup>
- 8) To ensure that all development plans and investments (including Foreign Direct Investment) at all levels take into consideration procedures such as green accounting is used in furthering the respect for the rich biodiversity and ecosystem services of Sri Lanka.

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<sup>18</sup> The enhancement of Rail Transport for outstations to address the needs of rural populations and Rapid Rail Transport for the big cities, particularly Colombo and Suburbs and Kandy where much emissions and wastage of fuel and foreign exchange outlays are taking place due to heavy vehicular traffic congestions."

## **Acknowledgments**

### **YGSL Drafting Sub-Committee for Youth Position Paper from Sri Lanka for UN Rio+20 Conference 2012**

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**&**

**The Youth of Sri Lanka**

**Awaits the outcome documents of**

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