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CHOGM 2013

FACETS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR SRI LANKA



CHOGM 2013
Sri Lanka

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CHOGM

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H.E. President Mahinda Rajapaksa

Message

As a founder member of the Commonwealth of Nations and the oldest democracy in Asia, Sri Lanka is truly honoured to host this 23rd Summit of the Commonwealth Heads of Government.

It is my pleasure to welcome to Sri Lanka all delegates and other participants at this event, which marks the continued success of the Commonwealth in bringing together such a large number of democracies that has now exceeded its post-colonial beginnings.

Sri Lanka remains firmly committed to upholding the principles of the Commonwealth and seeing to the widening of its scope and relevance in contributing to international cooperation, and the building of a world order that supports sustainable development and the fair distribution of economic resources and capabilities of nations.

The programme of this Summit will provide opportunities to portray the successes Sri Lanka has achieved in many areas of importance in public life. We have fully restored democracy in our country overcoming many challenges to good governance and economic growth, by ending 30 years of an unparalleled battle against the forces of separatist terror.

The political leaders, the captains of commerce and industry, and leaders of civil society gathered here will see for themselves the progress we have made and the promise that Sri Lanka holds for the future. This extends from the further strengthening of democracy, the stabilizing of peace, to progress through reconciliation. You will observe our focus on economic development through investment in infrastructure and improving the livelihoods of people, especially in the rural sector. The importance we give to the progress of youth, the inheritors of today's strategies of growth, will be of special significance.

I trust the many events associated with this summit will bring the necessary focus on its theme "Growth with Equity: and Inclusive Development", and the important objective of having a Commonwealth of Nations that contributes in large measure to progress in our diverse society in the years ahead.

I wish this historic Colombo Summit of Commonwealth Heads of Government success, and trust all visitors to our beautiful country will take back the best memories of Sri Lanka.

Mahinda Rajapaksa

President of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

30th October 2013



RE-Strengthening CHOGM and its Future

Dr. Shanthikumar Hettiarachchi

CHOGM and Democracy

It is a historic occasion both for the CHOGM and the host nation Sri Lanka to hold this unique gathering of the current leadership of Commonwealth Heads of Governments. It is historic because Sri Lanka attended it ever since 1971 when meetings commenced in Singapore under Lee Yuan-Yew as its chair. From Singapore to Perth in 2011, for forty years the Commonwealth family has had its own geopolitical upsurges and high moments, considering its own diverse pan-regional, interstate and internal disputes and issues of instability and economic down-turns. They meet for the 23rd time in 2013 in Colombo as if for a new start in a new decade of CHOGM's inter-governmental relations in a post war situation on this island nation. Interestingly, it is only a very few heads of states that continue to attend these meetings as such is decided by the people who elect them to govern their

countries. A classic example is that the CHOGM Perth 2011 was chaired by Julia Gillard, however it will be Tony Abbot the current premier who will hand over the chairmanship to Sri Lanka. People made their choice in Australia who should lead them and leave them. It indicates that the "nation, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth". Rule of the people, and the rule of law, transparency and accountability are of paramount value which underpin the perennial sentiments of democracy uttered by Abraham Lincoln in his historic speech in 1863 at the Soldiers' National Cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Democracy, however cannot be aping another model democracy out there, even though one could learn from one another because all functional democracies have shown

their own deficits and gaps within. There is no blue print of democracy but no doubt that it is a proven and an effective route to governance and responsible citizenry.

Commonwealth family Heads of Governments are elected, and their mandate to govern, as the Genevan philosopher Jean-Jacques Resow admonishes, is a 'social contract' which is a corner stone of modern political and social thought. People in their freedom and choice indulge in this social contract with the elected members and they are in return bound by an obligation to deliver, sustain and enhance the trust placed in them. They are bound by this public declaration which Lincoln took seriously for his broken nation after the civil war. Many are the lessons as the Heads of the Commonwealth family meet in Colombo to deliberate and make decisions based not on 'hear say' news, nor even the credible media (if there are any), but their discerning

quest for facts, critical thinking, rational decisions and broad understanding of governance will indicate to the world statesmanship that leads to reliable leadership. These, their own common sense, and cross-cultural competence become a beacon at this Colombo symposium.

Colombo 2013

Colombo's meeting is crucial for the heads of governments to see for themselves, like the illustrious son of Asia, the Buddha, reiterates to his ardent critics of his time, ehipassiko – 'come and see', an empirical proposition without being influenced by pre dispositions, prejudice and judgments based on conditioned mind frame with undigested information. CHOGM meets in a country that was engulfed in years of terror and political violence much more organized than in any given member states participating in this 23rd session here in Colombo. For obvious reasons the CHOGM

too was paralyzed in the manner and style of violence and wanton destruction that dominated this island nation. That terror had to come to a halt for the Commonwealth family to make this historical gathering which they are attending. Meeting people and visiting places they will hear and see the immensity of loss and pain its citizens have undergone with ravages of violence. It is a fact that all nations have friends and foes, and this tiny nation is the same, but this gathering might be a moment to contact that which was missing over thirty years for the Commonwealth member states. This nation was unsafe for the family to gather, 2013 then must be an auspicious year for them to visit its people. Hence it creates an opportunity for the country heads to assess for themselves without isolating a growing economy, and helping to stabilize the apparatus of governance especially in the North and East of this island with the provincial government's elections which were held recently. Secondly CHOGM has a

paramount duty to the people of their own states, and their mandate to help and support a nation that has passed through this specific social trauma and political instability. There is an invitation for them to study, reflect and draw their own conclusions during this visit. This high diplomatic meeting of heads of state of the Commonwealth should be preserved during a climate of potential disintegration and dissension which could lead to isolation and self ostracism.

Misunderstanding CHOGM

There is a political misapprehension that remaining within the CHOGM is a residual psychological inclination to the imperial legacy and that as free nations should now shed all affiliations that was colonial. This in fact is a flawed diplomatic somersault because modern international relations and diplomatic strategies are not only determined by history but also by the new statecraft of governance and imaginative

statesmanship. Reactionary diplomacy will not take any state to advancement and progress: being proactive and engagement could bring sufficient direction and sense into political behaviour and international relations. A nation or a state cannot afford to function like 'a bull in a china shop,' as they say. A statesman or an elected head of a government is bound by the will of the people, his or her views may be important however. A leader should not tear asunder the relations built over the years of friendship and good will. There are many examples of such erratic and impulsive political behaviours. They only bring destabilizing effects, especially to countries struggling to usurp their potential towards development and national prosperity. It is imperative that the current CHOGM adheres to its forte of integrity despite its own internal dissipating

relationships with member states. No nation is shock proof in the face of economic uncertainties hence solidarity among the CHOGM states is not an option but a de facto imperative. Such solidarity is a call for right governance with innovative programmes of economic and social development sandwiched by political stability.

Hybridisation

The mixture, diversity and plurality of the CHOGM population is unprecedentedly stunning. United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, which are no longer mono-cultural, indicate a sociological phenomenon of a hybridization of unimaginable proportions. Even if the Commonwealth one day ceases to be an institution which we hope will not happen, its population has crossed its borders permanently and there is no turning away from it. Hence the three States, the

UK, Canada and Australia, as developed nations need to reassess their role not just in the Commonwealth but more crucially in Global politics and international relations. In the intense and uncritical lobbying deployed in the Washington politics recently we have seen a serious derailment of public debate removed from among people into the corridors of the Capitol Hill and tea chats with influential political bickering and even backstabbing politics. Commonwealth population is throbbing from Scarborough, Toronto, to London boroughs and to the suburbs of Melbourne and Sydney. Cameron, Abbot and Harper (present or boycotting) governments must face the fact that 53 states are sovereign as much as they are the Commonwealth, which covers nearly a 11.5 million sq miles, almost a quarter of the world's landmass, spreading into all the continents. It contains an estimated population of nearly 2.24 billion, nearly a third of the world population – 53

members (with the withdrawal of the Gambia). The Commonwealth claims a gross domestic product (GDP) of \$9.7 trillion, which represents 15% of the world GDP when measured in purchasing power parity (PPP).

India and Non Alignment

For this reason the world's biggest democracy, a single nation of the largest trade and commercial hub, India, too must play its decisive role with its population of 1.2 billion. Its role and the current premier's effort over two terms has evoked a moderation of political engagement with its neighbours though it has been difficult for Delhi for more than one reason. Heading for national elections 2014 is decisive for the current Delhi government with an unsettling political rivalry from South India to Gujarat to Andhra with its recent Telangana separation. This biggest member state of the CHOGM has a unique diplomatic role particularly in the region as the region is evolving to be a new hub of maritime importance and a link to the East and the Far

Eastern nations creating the most populous part – over half of the world’s population. It’s a region of opportunity but not without both internal and regional concerns. However, the knowledge explosion, rapid social mobility, expanding trade and finance movements with the Information Technology industry have already connected the far distant lands in close proximity now. The Commonwealth is no longer a just a matter of a ‘good old club’ of the bygone empire wishing good paying puja to the masters of old. Neither is it merely a group of geographical or geopolitical sovereign states trying to function sometimes within the dysfunctional territoriality which we would like to identify as a political unit. It requires accompaniment and not policing, it’s not NATO either. It can adopt a certain pragmatism of the European Union and the core sentiments of the now somewhat defunct Non-Aligned movement (NAM). It can develop strategy like the economic summit and the

G20 models of structures. It should not attempt to solve problems, because it cannot, but what it can do is to support in deep solidarity the national plans for economic and social development and regional cooperation which are key to international relations.


CHOGM’s Vision

The core beliefs that form the CHOGM’s charter, are not necessarily newly invented: namely, democracy, human rights, international peace and security, tolerance, respect and understanding, freedom of expression, separation of powers, rule of law, good governance, sustainable development, protecting the environment, access to health, education, food and shelter, gender equality, importance of young people in the Commonwealth, recognition of the needs of the small states, recognition of the needs of the vulnerable states, and lastly, the role of civil society. These cover a baseline formula of any

national strategy and states are bound by these to deliver as per their mandate.

In conclusion, the chairmanship of Sri Lanka 2013-2015, until CHOGM meets in yet another island nation of Mauritius, should be able to recover from years of human loss, destruction of resources, suspicion and dearth of community relations, brain drain, disruption of education, neglected irrigation infrastructure and, most importantly, the re-establishment of democratic institutions that can help people to stand on their own feet with dignity and to value human life. This Colombo gathering should be a notable learning time for all the Commonwealth visitors, and for the host nation to realize afresh that people are willing to subscribe and even prescribe development paradigms of various states and governance, but would certainly and definitively reject long term violence because they witness the futility and waste of human life and resources that could be otherwise used in

development and human progress. Sri Lanka was one such place that was to be driven through a malicious single narrative and endemic political violence with no alternative political views in the horizon. People rejected it and did not wish their island nation to be another hot spot of perennial conflict in South Asia. A lesson that Sri Lanka would want the Heads of Governments to carry with them is that this country may not have reached the high moral grounds of Peace and Reconciliation, but they can be assured that these last four years have been the only years in a three and half decade period that this nation has on a daily basis been void of suicide strikes, killings on the streets and villages of Sri Lanka. It may not be peace fully dawned, but then it must be peacebuilding in progress. Most people have moved from desolation to hope: Be hopeful with them!



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Sri Lanka Should Forge A Closer Alliance Between Commonwealth “Developing” Nations

Dr Kalinga Seneviratne

The Commonwealth’s charter describes itself as “a voluntary association of independent and equal sovereign states” and it further defines the organization as “an effective network for co-operation and for promoting development”.

Today we live in an era where the global order – which has very much been shaped in the 19th and 20th centuries by British colonialism – is today changing dramatically with economic power – and ultimately political power as well – shifting from the West to the East. Thus, CHOGM 2013 comes at an opportune time where the Commonwealth’s role in this evolving world order needs to be reviewed.

Yes, the charter defines the relationship between its member nations as one of equality and recognition of sovereignty, yet, there have been many instances in recent years where this has not been practiced in reality. Thus, I believe, we need to ask the question whether the Commonwealth’s developing

nations are less equal to its Anglo-Saxon member states UK, Canada and Australia?

The lead up to CHOGM 2013 where there have been calls for a boycott of the Colombo summit has laid bare this fact, and it also raises question marks about the relevance of the Commonwealth in the emerging new global order.

Sri Lanka is well placed as the leader of the Commonwealth for the next two years to steer the organization towards a path of equality among all member states. This could be done by focusing and fine-tuning the Commonwealth agenda towards forging a strong alliance of developing nations focused on development issues rather than the divisive – and often riddled with double standards – issue of human rights and democracy.

We need to recognize that human rights is not merely freedom of speech and the freedom for civil society groups to say whatever they like, even at the cost of creating chaos and political

instability in the country, while enriching themselves with foreign “donor” funds. Multi-party democracy is also not the medicine to treat all the social and economic ills of a country. The utter chaos created by force-feeding such remedies in Iraq and Libya are two good examples, where some Commonwealth member states were involved alongside the NATO forces.

We need to look at different remedies for the development dilemma faced by most of the member states of the Commonwealth from Asia, Africa, Caribbean and the South Pacific. Sometimes, and I would even argue often, democracy could come after the country has reached a certain level socio-economic development that has raised the living and educational standards of the population as a whole. A democratic system that takes into account indigenous cultural norms and forms of communication could evolve as a result.

Among the Commonwealth membership from Asia are two

nations that are shining examples of successfully steering this course – Singapore and Malaysia. And if we go outside the Commonwealth, China is another example.

Singapore has transformed from a Third World to a First World nation within a generation, and its per capita income is higher than any of the Western countries. Having spent a lot of the past decade in this country, I can say that its infrastructure and level of services to the population are far more superior to anything in the West. By 2020, neighbouring Malaysia also hopes to reach this stage of development.

Rather than looking towards the UK or Canada for inspiration, fellow Commonwealth countries could look more towards the East for lessons in development and there is much Asia and Africa in particular could share.

Let me give you one good example of a different path towards developing

a participatory democratic framework for a developing country. Many in the Commonwealth may have an image of Singapore as an authoritative one-party state. Its true the ruling Peoples' Action Party hold over 90 percent of the seats in parliament, but, they have also built a system of grassroots consultative meetings with the community to formulate government development policies.

Recently, on a Sunday morning I saw one such meeting at the local community centre, where the minister for community development met the local community. He personally took questions and wrote it down on a flip-board, while the local MP seated on the stage took down notes. He then explained to the people what could be done and what could not be done. In the later case he explained why, and if it could be done, he delegated one of his officials present there to carry out the task.

I'm sure there are many such examples of grassroots consultative democratic processes in other

Commonwealth developing countries we could learn from each other. Many Commonwealth member nations in African are today poised to emulate Asia's experience in the past two decades in its development path. As a middle income developing country with a high human development index, Sri Lanka is well placed to bridge the communication gap between Asia and Africa in particular.

I feel Sri Lanka itself has neglected forming stronger alliances with its Asian neighbours to the East such as joining the East Asia Summit or the Asia Europe Meeting. Leadership of CHOGM would be a great opportunity for Sri Lanka to refocus its priorities away from excessive focus on relations with the West, towards developing a strong alliance of developing countries within the Commonwealth, that could focused on formulating pro-development platforms to present to the international community. UK, Canada and Australia, who are influential and effective communicators

in such forums, could help their fellow Commonwealth members (without trying to dominate the discussions within the Commonwealth) to bring these issues to the international forums, especially at the World Bank, IMF and WTO meetings.

Commonwealth has been doing some work in this direction with some of the recent examples such as forming a Commonwealth Regulatory Network, assist Pacific countries to settle maritime boundaries and working on developing policy guidelines for social protection. However, I have noted, that, these initiatives are often driven by the larger developed countries in the Commonwealth.

If the smaller countries are to form their own consultative groups the priorities could be different. Rather than looking at how to fit into a global system that has been designed and implemented mainly by the wealthy countries of the West to serve their own economic interests, the smaller countries

by coming together could be able to raise a stronger voice, at least within the Commonwealth, for reforms to these systems.

For example, how can the global community cooperate to promote economic models that recognize the important role the informal sector – such as market and street vendors and small farmers – play in the economy? Economic policies that help this informal sector will benefit million of people across the Commonwealth rather than reforms to stock markets or foreign investment promotion strategies that usually benefit a privileged minority. Entry of foreign investors such as fast food chains and departmental stores should also come into the reform agenda, because these would have a huge impact on the incomes of the informal sector, if the investment policies are not carefully managed. This should be a Commonwealth priority in the formulation of social protection strategies.

It is much better to provide economic incentives to the

informal sector to grow, than giving them welfare handouts to cushion them from the impact of short-sighted market opening to foreign investors. The social business investment models developed by Grameen Bank's founder Professor Mohammad Yunus from fellow Commonwealth country Bangladesh should play a leading role in formulating such policies.

Recently, some European countries, including the UK, have raised concerns about how big multinational corporations (MNCs) have been avoiding paying tax in their countries. I'm sure they do the same in most Commonwealth developing countries, whose voices should also come into any international campaign to get MNCs to pay their fair share of taxes in host countries.

We also need to take a fresher look at the role of public service broadcasting (PSB) in developing Commonwealth countries, and in this respect I would argue that the BBC model is outdated. A

government funded broadcaster that can provide news and analysis to the community without government interference does not work anymore – in recent years, even the BBC has become the mouthpiece to promote UK government policies through their world service broadcasts – Sri Lanka, Fiji, Pakistan and Zimbabwe can give many examples.

In the multi-channel digital age, we need to look at how best to utilize government investments in a national broadcaster to assist its economic, social and cultural development agenda. Especially to get a captive young audience for such educational and socio-economic nation building needs, PSBs will have to work more in collaboration with the formal educational sector. Rather than a Ministry of Information, we may have to look at setting up a Ministry of Public Broadcasting and Education in future.

This is an area Commonwealth developing countries could work together to develop

policy guidelines. When talking about media development, social media and new digital communication technology tools should not be neglected. Rather than promoting social media as the voice of dissent, we could develop social media practitioners to work as communicators for socio-economic and cultural development. Important area of this new media policy should be the protection and nurturing of local cultural expressions from the onslaught from the Anglo-American global cultural industry.

For too long, Commonwealth developing countries have seen their relationship with the organization in terms of “donor recipients”. This mentality needs to change and this is the best time for it to happen because the “donors” themselves have been cutting their foreign aid budgets due to economic woes at home, while some of the Commonwealth developing countries have amassed the technology, economic means and education institutions to help the poorer members.

Thus this is the time for a new ‘Colombo Plan’ where Asian and African member countries of the Commonwealth in particular, could share their resources to help each other and develop closer development collaborations as equal partners.

If Sri Lanka is unable to forge such an alliance – using its enormous experience spanning over 30 years in fighting diplomatic battles – I believe, it will be much better to deploy its precious economic and diplomatic resources away from the Commonwealth and towards getting a seat in the East Asia Summit, the Asia Europe Meeting and APEC, rather than hanging on with an organization which would become irrelevant to the aspirations of a developing country like Sri Lanka.



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Terrorism: Tier One Threat to the Commonwealth of Nations

Dr Rohan Gunaratna

Introduction:

In the spectrum of national security threats, terrorism presents a tier one national security challenge to member states of the Commonwealth. One-third of Commonwealth nations face grave threats from terrorism, and another third from ethnic and religious extremism. After the British defeat of the Malayan insurgency in the last century, Sri Lanka became the first country in the 21st century to defeat terrorism.

After three decades of brutal conflict, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Colombo is an opportunity to showcase Sri Lanka's return to normalcy. After a hiatus of 25 years, elections were held in Sri Lanka's North in September 2013. Sri Lanka applied a comprehensive and an integrated strategy of hard and soft power to contain, isolate and dismantle an internationally proscribed terrorist group - the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Due to its smart power

strategy, Sri Lanka has not suffered from a single act of terrorism since May 2009. Today, Sri Lanka is one of the safest countries in the world.

The Context:

About 70-80 percent of the world's conflicts stem from violence driven by politicized ethnic and religious ideologies. Although terrorism and extremism by left and right wing groups threaten the world, they are not as fanatic as sectarian and communal threat groups. In India, a country with grave law and order problems, terrorist and extremist groups are active in 29 of the 35 states and union territories. Unethical politicians create and exploit ethnic and religious differences to advance their narrow political and personal goals. They ethnicize society and divide communities to capture and retain power.

Waves of ethnic and religious tension and violence have gripped parts of lawless Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Even

the world's best military, law enforcement and intelligence services are challenged by the threat of communal and sectarian terrorism. The governments and societies of the global south are under constant threat from groups which seek to inflict harm on innocent civilians. The recent attacks in Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India, and throughout the Middle East, demonstrate the continuity of threat.

The ferocity of fighting in conflict zones in Asia, the Middle East and Africa reinforce virulent ideologies, and have resulted in internal displacement, refugee flows and domestic and international terrorism. While in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States-led Western forces failed to restore stability, the Sri Lankan forces were able, not only to accomplish a stunning defeat of a ruthless enemy, but even more significantly, prevent its revival. The Sri Lankan model for countering terrorism may provide instructive lessons, both in its successes and failures,

for member states of the Commonwealth.

Background:

The Sri Lankan state was confronted by one of the world's most notorious terrorist groups. The LTTE was a vicious by-product of a separatist ethno-political ideology developed by the Tamil United Front/Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) in the 1970s. However, TULF lost control of the LTTE over geopolitical differences when India covertly provided arms, training and finance to the LTTE.

Determined to create a mono-ethnic state in the Northern and Eastern regions of Sri Lanka, the LTTE exploited neighbouring Tamil Nadu in India to destabilize Sri Lanka. The LTTE built a state-of-the-art international network for disseminating propaganda, raising funds, procuring supplies and shipping. Prior to its proscription as a terrorist

group by the British government, the LTTE's International Secretariat was located in London. The LTTE politicized, radicalized and mobilized a segment of its migrant Tamil diaspora in the United Kingdom to support their campaign of lobbying and violence. While the British government shared intelligence on activities of the LTTE, British politicians with Tamil constituencies were vulnerable to the LTTE's electoral pressures.

Classified as a Grade A threat group along with al Qaeda and the Lebanese Hezbollah, the LTTE invented and improvised many of the lethal technologies used by terrorist groups worldwide. They included the development of the suicide body suit, surface and underwater suicide attacks and suicide wave attacks.

No country has lost so many high quality leaders as Sri Lanka. In addition to two-dozen general officers, the LTTE assassinated a dozen ministers including two foreign ministers, a former minister of national security, a

presidential candidate and more than 200 Sri Lankan Tamil mainstream leaders. The LTTE assassinated two-time Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, who was a Tamil and a prospective presidential candidate. An LTTE female suicide bomber assassinated Rajiv Gandhi, the former Indian Prime Minister, and a male suicide bomber assassinated former Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa. No other terrorist group has killed two world leaders. Another female suicide bomber maimed former Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaranatunge, in an attempt to take her life.

The LTTE committed unspeakable atrocities against Sinhalese, Muslim and Tamil civilians, which included the ethnic-cleansing of the North of Sinhalese and Muslims. The LTTE attacked not only population centres but military, political, diplomatic, economic and cultural targets. To provoke conflict between

the Sinhala and Tamil communities, the LTTE attacked Sri Lanka's two most revered Buddhist sites: Kandy's Temple of the Tooth relic, killing 17 individuals, and Anuradhapura's Sri Maha Bodhi, killing 146 individuals. The LTTE carried out a coordinated attack on four mosques simultaneously, Meer Juma and Husseinia, Majid-Jul-Noor and Fowzie Mosques, killing 147 persons. The LTTE also attacked Muslim pilgrims returning from the Hajj. At the height of the LTTE's bombing campaign, fearing the possibility of both parents being killed, Sri Lankan parents travelled separately to drop and pick-up their children from school. The LTTE's tactic of hit-talk-hit, created for the LTTE the space to rearm, retain, and collect intelligence. Thus, when the LTTE was ready, it attacked, reneging several agreements, including the one with New Delhi which resulted in the death of 1,155 Indian peacekeepers.

An extremely deceptive group, the LTTE influenced multiple groups, both in Sri Lanka and overseas. The LTTE penetrated the NGOs,

the media and political parties, making it difficult for the Sri Lankan government to deliver a decisive response for over two decades.

The Sri Lankan Model:

Unequivocal political direction and support
Determined military leadership and supervision
National will, including the support of the mass media which facilitated the sustained recruitment to the fighting forces
International security and intelligence collaboration to disrupt the LTTE's procurement and shipping
Resettlement of displaced civilians after rapid demining and rehabilitation of LTTE cadres to deradicalize and reintegrate them back to society
Integrated development platform and security platform to prevent regrouping of terrorists and extremists

The Changing Tide:

Following 11 September, 2001, LTTE's operations overseas faced major constraints. Nonetheless, the LTTE created multiple front, cover and sympathetic organizations in order to survive. The terrorists started to operate through political, religious, community, media, humanitarian and human rights organizations. Misguided by his constituents, the former Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin visited a Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) terrorist fundraising event in January 2005. Although he was explicitly advised by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) and the then Canadian High Commissioner in Colombo that it was an LTTE event, he chose to attend it. To date, Canadian politicians remain vulnerable to the bloc ethnic vote controlled by and campaign contributions made by the LTTE-infiltrated organizations. Canada remains the single largest support base of the LTTE.

In contrast, the US was decisive in disrupting Canadian-funded

attempts by the LTTE to procure weapons. Furthermore, the US Pacific Command shared intelligence that disrupted the LTTE's logistics network, especially the flow of weapons from North Korea, the LTTE's main supplier of weapons. With the sinking of the LTTE's ships, the LTTE could not sustain the fight.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan military doubled its strength and launched operations. Determined not to allow constituency-related pressure from overseas to halt operations, the Rajapaksa government ensured the continuity of operations. During the final phase of the conflict, two European foreign ministers arrived in Colombo calling for a cessation of hostilities. The LTTE engineered a humanitarian crisis by holding about 283,000 Tamils as a human shield. When the LTTE refused to surrender, the Sri Lankan government forces infiltrated the area, rescued the civilians and decapitated the LTTE leadership.

Post-conflict Development:

The Sri Lankan strategy is three-phased: humanitarian assistance, socioeconomic development and political engagement. After extensive demining to remove land mines, the government rapidly resettled 265,000 displaced, and rehabilitated without prosecuting 11,500 terrorists. In the post-conflict years, the Sri Lankan government's investment in the north and east, and the resultant economic growth of the north and east, has been huge compared to the rest of the country. The government, mainly by way of the security forces, has built many roads, schools and hospitals. All other urgently required economic and social infrastructure has been built through government-industry partnerships. Indeed, the transport infrastructure in the north now parallels that of the south.

Sri Lanka's greatest weakness is strategic communication. Throughout the war, the Sri Lankan government failed to counter the disinformation campaign launched by the LTTE-affiliated organizations

operating in the West. In turn, the terrorists' propaganda influenced human rights organizations, which together with lobbying by the LTTE, led Western governments to mount pressure on Sri Lanka. As media shapes public opinion, it is paramount to build a strategic communications capability within the Sri Lankan government, which can engage with the mass media (print, TV and radio) and social media, NGOs including Human Rights NGOs, IOs such as the UNHRC and the Tamil diaspora. A whole-of-government approach should be developed to project the reality on the ground, and counter the false narrative that is sustained from overseas. Although the Sri Lankan war against terrorism was fought and won in the battlefield, unless the international media is engaged, the triumph will not reverberate in the international sphere. Rather, the international media in general has been projecting an inaccurate portrayal of the Sri Lankan conflict. Thus, to fully expose the brilliant victory of the Sri Lankan military against the LTTE, the Sri Lankan government

must effectively engage with and manage the spectrum of international media, which includes diaspora propaganda and releases by human rights NGOs.


Challenges:

The Sri Lankan government should have built a psychosocial system to engage the people in parallel with building physical infrastructure. With the recent Northern elections, the government is beginning to move in that direction. In Kilinochchi, for instance, a Sri Lankan soldier was seen building a toilet for the use of a former LTTE cadre and his family. Having directly benefitted from the unconditional compassion of that soldier, that former cadre and his family will live in his debt. In that sense, the government may have held the elections in the North prematurely. The timing of the northern elections was not calibrated for maximum electoral gain for the ruling coalition. Pertinently, rather than implementing a foreign model

of dividing the small country of Sri Lanka into ethno-linguistic regions using a federal system, Colombo should develop its own indigenous model for creating a sustainable peace.

To change public attitudes and opinions after the end of the conflict in 2009, the government should have built a system to engage every single conflict-affected Tamil family. In addition to focusing on the most affected - the IDPs and former LTTE cadres - the government should have created sufficient livelihood opportunities for the people so that their lives are appreciably improved socially and economically. Especially for the youth of working age from each family, the government should have either provided jobs in the government sector or the government should have facilitated employment opportunities by approaching businesses and NGOs.

To win the heart of the conflict-affected people in future, the Sri Lankan government should invest in both economic infrastructure and psychosocial development



projects. To support the harmonious climate maintained by the robust law enforcement and intelligence presence, the government should engage the youth through educational, cultural, religious and economic initiatives. Loans for the creation of employment and grants for development are imperative in this regard. Investing in the youth in conflict-affected areas should be made a priority, as they are the future of Sri Lanka.

To provide national direction and to mainstream the thinking of all Sri Lankans, “harmony centres” in cities, towns and villages, and “harmony clubs” in every school, are essential. Existing community centres can be converted like in the case of the Harmony Centre in Kilinochchi, and both universities and schools should be co-opted to correct deviant thinking and reinforce the traditional Sri Lankan values of tolerance, democracy and compassion.

In order to allay the fear and mistrust amongst the

conflict-affected Tamil population of Sri Lanka, an environment of “belonging” and “nationhood” must be developed. The aim is to develop the national identity of being Sri Lankan among the Northern population, and to strengthen this identity in the South, while protecting and maintaining the different ethnic and religious heritages of Sri Lanka. Bringing together all that is good between our cultures and remembering our shared history on the island to promote unity and harmony, is the need of the hour.

Conclusion:

The prejudice, suspicion, resentment, hatred and anger created by 30 years of conflict cannot disappear overnight. However, what Sri Lanka has achieved in four years post-conflict, other conflict-affected nations/ regions (such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Northern Ireland, the Philippines and Aceh in Indonesia) have taken decades to achieve.

Sri Lanka entered the crucial phase of political engagement on 21 September, 2013 with the Northern Provincial Council elections. The same way the government integrated the development platform with a security platform, the government should integrate the political platform with a security platform. With the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) winning the elections, the Sri Lankan government should continue to maintain a strong security presence. As the members of the TNA includes racist politicians with links to the defunct LTTE, the Sri Lankan government must not hesitate to arrest, charge and prosecute TNA leaders, should they seek to militarise the youth, as their predecessors in the TULF did previously two decades ago.

The government should, however, engage everyone and create a new vision where the communities of Sri Lanka are inclined to coexist and support each other as equal citizens of one country. In

collaboration with those with a common vision in the TNA, the government of Sri Lanka should seek to create a Sri Lankan national ideology which accepts everyone as Sri Lankan, not as Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, Christian, Hindu or Buddhist. This ideology may be promoted in a mission mode as “Sri Lanka First”.

To prevent social polarization, the Sri Lankan government and its partners in the media, educational, social, cultural and political spheres should counter separatist political parties, which promote an exclusive ethnic identity and instil a notion of fear and mistrust of those who are ethnically and religiously different from them. To foster the Sri Lankan spirit, the government should encourage multi-ethnic and multi-religious political parties. Mono-ethnic and mono-religious political parties should be outlawed in Sri Lanka, while Sri Lanka’s cultural and religious diversity is protected. The state should not permit unethical

politicians to exploit ethnicity and religion any longer.

The single-most important lesson the Sri Lankan experience offers the Commonwealth nations is that there can be no enduring prospects for peace, economic growth or social development for a nation without security and stability. Another principal lesson is that with the application of the right degree of military force, any terrorist group can be dismantled, even the world's most lethal. The key to success in defeating terrorism is political will, decisive leadership during conflict, and visionary leadership post-conflict to restore stability.



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Economic Significance of Hosting Commonwealth Heads of Governments (CHOGM) Meeting in Sri Lanka

Dr Ajith Nivard Cabraal

CHOGM 2013 is the most prominent international conference to be held in Sri Lanka after the Non-Aligned Conference held in 1976, and this is the first time that a CHOGM is held in an Asian country after 24 years. In this context, CHOGM 2013 is of enormous importance to Sri Lanka because it will enhance the country's stature and help to build a new "brand", after the debilitating conflict that engulfed the country for 30 years.

The Commonwealth represents a combination of both developed and developing countries as well as some of the world's largest and smallest countries with about 2 billion people spanning across six regions. This rich diversity provides an ideal platform to establish strong partnerships between businesses and governments for sharing knowledge and skills and opportunities for trade and investments. Apart from CHOGM, the Commonwealth Business Forum (CBF), which is a key component of CHOGM would be a unique gathering of business leaders from Commonwealth and Non-Commonwealth states

and would be the biggest business event ever held in Sri Lanka. The CBF is expected to attract about 600-700 foreign participants from growing markets around the world and 500 local participants from key sectors of the economy. The other two key events, the People's Forum and the Youth Forum are also to be attended by approximately 1,000 foreign delegates each. In addition, about 1,000 media personnel will be in Sri Lanka during this period to cover events organized during CHOGM. Thus, CHOGM 2013 will offer a great opportunity to showcase Sri Lanka's potential and entry into strong economic partnerships as well as a forum to exchange experience and knowledge and explore new business opportunities in Commonwealth and several non-commonwealth nations.

Sri Lanka: Growing with stability

In the post conflict era, Sri Lanka has seen a significant boost in business and consumer

confidence, which has resulted in robust economic growth during the last three years despite several setbacks in the global environment. Sound macro-economic fundamentals and improved socio-economic infrastructure have created a conducive environment to unleash its growth potential. Together with the post-war political stability, Sri Lanka now is geared to lead an economic and social transformation in the country, which would give new hope to millions of people, and create tremendous business opportunities for the business community, while providing a safe and attractive investment destination to local and foreign investors. Thus, CHOGM would greatly assist to bring together distinguished groups of businessmen, investors and financiers for the purpose of fostering long lasting economic partnerships to promote sustainable development over the medium to long-term.

CHOGM: Partnering for Wealth Creation and Social Development

The theme for CHOGM 2013 'Growth with Equity – Inclusive Development' seems to be in perfect sync with Sri Lanka's own Development Strategy, Mahinda Chintana which envisages the implementation of strategies and actions to promote high quality growth across sectors, thus, distributing the benefits of growth across all segments of the population so as to prevent inequalities, social exclusion and adverse environmental repercussions. As a part of the development strategy, Mahinda Chintana was committed to infrastructure development throughout the country while establishing industrial centers in selected geographical areas utilizing differentiations in resource bases in such areas. Therefore many initiatives that have been planned under the CHOGM would, complement Sri Lanka's own growth strategy and strengthen the government's commitment to ensure the trickling down of benefits of inclusive growth to every citizen of the country.

In addition, Mahinda Chintana development strategy envisages making Sri Lanka a maritime, aviation, commercial, energy and knowledge hub where the country would be developed as a strategically important economic centre of the world. It is also expected that using the geographical location effectively, Sri Lanka would serve as a central point for production, exchange and distribution. Hence, this gathering of 52 member states would provide an ideal platform for Sri Lanka to integrate more closely with the “globalized economy” to ensure that the growing economic benefits would reach the entire country.

Show-casing Investment Opportunities

CHOGM 2013 would draw participation from Commonwealth countries as well as from countries outside the Commonwealth such as China, Russia, Japan, Korea, Thailand, USA and the Middle-East. In particular, many delegates from Commonwealth and many

non-CHOGM nations would participate at the business forum, which would provide a valuable opportunity for high level discussion on various business opportunities between business and government leaders from the Commonwealth and non-CHOGM nations. Towards this end, the Sri Lankan authorities have already earmarked about 80 projects to be promoted among the CHOGM participants, with such projects being in the sectors including Tourism & Leisure, Port Related Services, Infrastructure Development (Transport, Port, Aviation, New Zones & Petroleum Refinery), Health, Education, Agriculture & Fisheries, IT, BPO & Knowledge Activities, and Manufacturing. In addition, meetings between project promotions and potential investors, showcasing of products and services, presenting sector strategies, and visiting economic sites would serve to create further awareness among potential investors, while enabling them to learn about the new

opportunities and the level of technology and knowledge applied within existing industries in Sri Lanka.

Tourism as a key driver of growth

The Commonwealth is home to two billion citizens of all faiths and ethnicities and includes some of the world's largest, smallest as well as richest and poorest countries. Taken together, the Commonwealth states (with two G8 and five G20 members) offer access to a substantial global market. When Sri Lanka hosts this Conference, these Heads of Nations would represent two billion citizens of the world and it would be a very propitious moment for the country to showcase the post-conflict tourism "brand" of Sri Lanka and its rich diversity. Sri Lanka's sandy beaches, mountainous hill country, bio diversity and a range of other activities would undoubtedly attract many tourists and would therefore easily position the country as a potential travel and investment destination

for the tourism and leisure sector.

As is now known, Heads of Government would participate at the main CHOGM as well as several other conferences and visit various parts of the country. The meetings would be held in Colombo, Kandy and Hambantota. In line with the main event, there would be a sports and cultural festival. Therefore, Sri Lanka's economic revival would be further showcased to the world through these cities, and that too would enable the promotion of Sri Lanka's culture and heritage to the world and promote tourism.

New Opportunities for Trade and finance

With the strong macroeconomic fundamentals that are currently in place, Sri Lanka is steadily progressing towards the mid middle-income-country category through expanded trade and investment, within and outside the Commonwealth zone. As Sri Lanka broadens its horizons

in the world economy, its traded goods sector is expected to increase, while its degree of integration into the world economy would also be enhanced. Further, since the Commonwealth represents 31% of the landmass of the world and about US \$ 3 trillion inter-country trade, this could be a useful market that Sri Lanka would tap, and towards that objective, existing Free Trade Agreements could be further strengthened and new Free Trade Agreements could be initiated.

At the same time, Sri Lanka provides the required atmospheric and ground conditions for several plantations, including tea. In that regard, the CBF would also be an ideal opportunity to partner with potential investors in these sectors, so as to create more value added products that meet global standards.

Improving Labour Productivity and Skill Development

Improved economic conditions would result in improved labour productivity and efficiency, thus, contributing to labour market

developments. In that context, this forum is also expected to offer numerous opportunities to attract potential investors who could commence internationally reputed training and tertiary programmes to cater towards recognized qualifications, so that the Sri Lankan labour force would be equipped to meet the growing demands for a technically qualified workforce, globally.

Supporting SME development

A large number of SMEs have been given an opportunity to participate in the events arranged along with CHOGM which has opened up new avenues for these entities to present their products, capabilities and talents. In view of the important role played by SMEs in generating growth and employment, significant attention has also been given by the Government during the past few years for SME development. However, technology, greater outreach

and markets, and access to financing are some of the key requirements for SMEs to expand their range of products and services. In that background, this Forum would provide a useful opportunity to support SMEs to network with others in the region, and to explore business opportunities and collaborate in a mutually beneficial manner.

Participating in infrastructure development

Currently, several local corporates have marked their presence in the international investment arena to build and operate infrastructure development projects such as power generation and water supply projects. In that background, CHOGM 2013 would provide opportunities for the local corporates to enter into new partnerships and enhance their presence in foreign destinations for the implementation of infrastructure projects. At the same time, local corporates could also partner with leading businesses in other Commonwealth countries to commence large scale


infrastructure projects within the country.

Diversifying Sources of Funding

A robust and resilient financial sector would facilitate international trade and other international financial transactions and support the country to integrate with the rest of the world. With local corporates improving their financial position, the strengthening of Sri Lanka's financial sector would provide opportunities for CHOGM and CBF participants to integrate with broadened opportunities for investing in the financial sector. In that regard, this forum would provide opportunities for potential foreign investors to search for funding, and develop equity or business partnerships, thereby benefitting the financial sector with technology, knowledge, products and practices that would flow along with these investments.

A World of Opportunity

Another important opportunity arising out of hosting the CHOGM 2013 is the expected transmission of benefits into all segments of the society and across all sectors of the economy. The political and economic diplomacy that could be promoted through CHOGM and the Business Forum would undoubtedly lead to higher levels of networking as well as higher confidence levels both among participating nations and the host country. The growing investment sentiments and confidence would also provide a further impetus for the Sri Lankan economy to meet its medium term growth targets, thereby improving the living standards of the society. Accordingly, CHOGM 2013 would be a wonderful opportunity which all in Sri Lanka would do well to make use of.



Dr Ajith Nivard Cabraal,
The Governor Of
Central Bank of Sri Lanka





A Global Club as None Else...

N Sathya Moorthy

Rarely in history has a group of nations spread across much of the world created a formal forum with only their colonial past for their membership pass and also held their erstwhile colonial master as its patron, if not patron-saint, and treated one another with dignity befitting their new-found sovereign status, and stayed the course through decades. Or, most parts. The Commonwealth is one such unique institution, next only to the UN, and has continued to expand in its scope and relevance to the 21st century world's cares and concerns as none other may have in context.

It is not that there are no other club of nations outside of the UN. But each one of them, successful in meeting with their respective mandates or otherwise, has invariably been a regional grouping of nations, bound by concerns over strategic security, economic stability and growth. In doing so, they have often used their regional locale and/or collective cultural heritage as a bench-mark and tool to promote multi-lateralism within the grouping, or in their dealings

with such other groupings elsewhere, or with individual nations within those groupings or outside.

Against this, the Commonwealth of nations is linked mainly by their common history of being ruled by the UK at one time or the other. Though not every former British colony may now be a member – there are only few exceptions – all members however have a British colonial past. The US is a notable miss in the Commonwealth but that cannot change the historic past, however. Many among the member-nations have fought bloody wars to win independence. Others like much of South Asia won freedom through sheer determination and moral authority, without much of blood-letting.

For the UK, the current and continuing membership of the Commonwealth is a quick re-read of the history of a nation over which sun once used to never set. For the rest of the

world, member-nations included, the long list is a quick read of the global history of the relative past. If Guyana, for instance, is the only nation from South American continent to become a member of the Commonwealth, it also reflects on the global history between the 16th and 20th centuries, if not earlier.

In a bygone era, European political power followed the merchant vessels of individual nations. But other European colonial masters from the pre-War past have not been able to create an institution like the Commonwealth, where their erstwhile colonies would like to sit together and with the UK at the head of the high table. It speaks volumes for the bonhomie among the member-nations of the Commonwealth and their peoples, whose institutional memories from a shared past have made it possible first, and sustainable and growing, afterward.

In this context, there is a need to remember constantly the fact that there was no real contact between the Governments and

the peoples of the erstwhile British colonies other than through the common ruler – and the British personnel in the employ of the Monarch, who would be transferred from one country to another and from one continent to another, not very infrequently. Where the local people from one member-nation to another travelled in great numbers, it was as indentured labour.

Yet, there were the likes of India's Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who as a young man advocated, travelled to the British-ruled South Africa, and made a name – more as a political activist than as in his chosen vocation. It was not only colonial rulers in their times, and post-colonial big powers otherwise, had tried to use nations under their subjugation, for experimentation of one kind or the other. Gandhiji used South Africa possibly as his 'laboratory' to formulate and test his famous twins of ahimsa (non-violence) and

satyagraha (unarmed peaceful protest rooted in personal and political morals and none other). Later on, Gandhiji employed his 'twin weapons' tested in the distant land as scaled-up Indian versions, and won for his native India, freedom and Independence. Yet, when the British left the South Asian shores, there was no acrimony or rancour. Like India before it, Sri Lanka, then Ceylon, became an active member of the Commonwealth after Independence, and has remained so, since. If thus the prestigious Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM-2013) has come to be hosted by Sri Lanka, with the national capital of Colombo as the main venue for a major part of the Heads of Government Summit, it is a reflection on the mutual respect that member-nations, starting with the British common-link, have shown for one another.

'Group of Elders'

The comparison between the UN and the Commonwealth, for instance, should stop after

a point. The Commonwealth does not aspire to be a 'global government' in action or inaction. The UN was created, and hence mandated, to serve that very purpose. Unlike other regional or strategic blocs, Commonwealth is not a coming together of nations owing to conditions pre-set for them by geography and/or geo-politics of one kind or the other. If at all, it is a celebration of geo-politics of the past, and hence a reminder, too. There are no pre-determinants or compulsions on members of the Commonwealth other than the common British rule that they had once enjoyed. It is voluntary to the core. Hence, member-nations carry no baggage from the past, no compulsions even of the contemporary kind.

Given its diversity and depth, the Commonwealth has the potential and inherent capacity to act as the global family's group of elders, who feel the impact of what is happening around, be it in terms of geo-politics, geo-strategic and geo-

security initiatives, or global economy, which too has started affecting every nation and every homestead as never before. As it does not have the political compulsions of the UN, barring in cases where one or another member of the Commonwealth itself is in focus, the group can create mechanisms, revive and/or reactivate existing ones, to think ahead for the world, address emerging issues and concerns, and provide options for the comity of nations to consider.

No other global or regional grouping is better-equipped to serve this role, which the UN was originally designed to serve in a way but has not been able to carry forward beyond a point, through the decades of its existence. Advisory role that befits a 'group of elders' to some context may not be as effective but the world has seen, if only over time that it may be a better road for groups of nations to take, other than an eternally adversarial role.

The rich-poor divide, based incidentally and occasionally on regions, skin-colour, faith and beliefs, 'foresighted' economic and business considerations often camouflaged as superior concerns and morals, and other extraneous considerations that continue to divide human kind even in the 21st century, has only deepened in terms of nations and peoples – and regions. The evolving global agenda of the post-War decades have been allowed to expand and pass, but without any mid-term review and re-visit, other than to expand and deepen further without thought.

With the result, Third World nations are often at the receiving end of global mandates, passed without any effective consultations and verification. Perceptions of 'unilateralism' too have come to pass in the post-Cold War era in particular. Earlier, it used to be the North-South divide, at times encouraged to take a South-South angle, as much in adversarial terms as they

were supposed to be cooperative ventures, between the two sets of groupings. Now that global wars are beyond the contemporary realm of thought, and 21st century 'cold wars' too are still in the making for long, it may be time for the world to sit up and take stock before proceeding further. The Commonwealth can consider evolving into an effective tool and mechanism to initiate such a change from the 20th century past to the 21st century present and onto the 22nd century future and beyond – if found desirable and sustainable.

Re-calibration and Re-balancing

It is an irony of the times that the world felt guilty for Europe and its populace after the two World Wars, and went about repairing the damage that they had inflicted upon themselves. The post-War global economic recovery, coupled with the recalibration of moral and political values and systems attuned to the recalibration still left out much of the rest of the world – who had suffered from

the same processes, for no fault of theirs, and without being involved or consulted, either. Decades later, in the post-Cold War era, in relative terms at least, they remain where they had always remained, despite their numbers, hunger and attendant fears, as peoples and nations. The post-War(s) recalibration has continued the same way as it had always in the 'modern era', only the tools have changed. The continued shift of the global fulcrum across the Atlantic, first after the World Wars and more recently after the conclusion of the 'Cold War' has only recalibrated the tools of change, but not the 'change' itself.

The former has acquired new and changing focii, and a consequent change in tools. The latter has remained unchanged. It's still all about methods, not at all about the motives, though it might read strong on paper. Worse still, where certain tools become proven failures, or have failed to deliver the desired goals for the dominant initiators,

the tools are changed, the focii at times are also shifted. The basic value-system, based on which those focii and tools are based, remains unchanged. Nor are they re-calibrated or re-tuned to ground realities, which alone could have provided the targeted results, even if motivated.

There is thus an urgent need to re-visit many of the global pre-conceptions and pre-occupations, going beyond the periodic, provisioned calls for effecting attitudinal change – which are never taken forward, but are often replaced by re-calibrated focii and tool that were already at work. What is required instead is a wholesale re-balancing of global priorities, starting with the economic and fiscal sectors, where the imbalances are more forthright and past re-balancing have been less-than-effective and even less honest.

Political re-balancing should follow, if not accompany. It need not have to be based on the numbers, which may have frightened the developed world for long. Nor

have numbers produced desired results. Instead, the re-balancing has to reflect the ground realities, and the consequent concerns of the affected, rather than those impacted. The Commonwealth, whose Charter may have provided for everything else, does not have the compulsions of the UN, or the limited agenda and focus of many of the regional organisations of the kind.

Sri Lanka, as the incoming Chair of the Commonwealth, can initiate a global process, where just at the moment other member-nations too have claimed to have suffered as a result of internal and external inequities. The times in which we live have done precious little to address such concerns, real or not-so-real, and in terms and language that the affected nations feel that even if justice were to have been denied them, the due processes were followed, after all.

Post-Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union was mistakenly, if not mischievously, interpreted to imply an inevitable collapse of the emerging North-South global

socio-economic order, and the concepts and ideologies that went into the latter. Since then, global 're-balancing' has come to mean something entirely different. It's now centred on individual nation(s) and their geo-strategic priorities.

The 'Cold War' era global 're-balancing' after the power-centred 'balancing' of region-centric global order of an earlier era had focussed as much on peoples and their priorities – or, the lack of them, as on the power-play of nations and regions, military blocs and political-divides. The inability and unwillingness of the world to regain and revive the real mood and needs of larger sections of the global population, incidentally identified as nation-States, have only contributed to the weakening of the prevailing global order and politico-military balance, too – leading to a threat to the continued relevance first, and existence, later, of global institutions, including, if not starting with the UN.

This trend needs to be arrested, and then reversed, if the global community still has to retain first

and then refurbish the image and imagery that it had of and for itself in the years after the World Wars. The UN system has got caught in episodic fits of prioritisation, bureaucratisation and sub-serving national, rather than regional interests. From the selection and election of the Secretary-General to the tabling of motions and resolutions, be it in the all-important Security Council with the P-5 veto-powers or the larger General Assembly, everything has to come to revolve around politics and politicking.

In context, the Commonwealth, unlike other regional or sub-regional organisations, has greater representation and lesser bureaucratisation, for it to be able to think afresh and act afresh. Sri Lanka as the incoming Chair would have served the larger cause, if it could initiate the process of imbuing the institution with early elements of a qualitative change in which the Commonwealth looks at itself and the rest of the world. Whether or issues of politics or economy, morals or values, the Commonwealth need not and

should not have to replicate other representative institutions. If Sri Lanka can put that thinking into the Commonwealth thought process over the coming months and years, its purpose at the incoming Chair would have been served, to a great, if not full extent!

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Commonwealth – Not Yet A Common Market ?

Somi Hazari

Much has been said and discussed on the importance of the Commonwealth Group of Nations which at one time came under direct control of The British Crown.

With growth rates significantly higher in some of the Commonwealth member states it is time to look at the synergies that can be benefitted from member Countries doing increased business with each other.

Rather than reinventing the wheel in this area it is suggested that we look at the following in an objective and workable manner.

Given the fact that that the Commonwealth Games are held at regular intervals and have been an unqualified success, it is time that as we “play” together we can also “do increased business together”.

The British Crown left behind systems that are common, this can be leveraged upon to

understand the intricate political and bureaucratic workings in the member states.

Yes it is true that the some of the commonwealth nations are now separated by continents whilst others share borders with each other.

Statistics are difficult to get but India bought over USD.60 Billion from the Commonwealth and sold over USD. 40 Billion Worth of goods to Commonwealth Countries which is a substantial part of its global trade.

Sri Lanka’s exports to India have increased more than 4 times since the ISFTA India Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement was implemented.

Trade between Pakistan, Sri Lanka and India has also witnessed sustained positive growth despite the fact that the much awaited MFN status has not been bestowed upon India by Pakistan.

Bangladesh has attracted a fair amount of FDI - Foreign

Direct Investment from the commonwealth members as well which has resulted in increased exports and job skills.

It is a known fact that Australia and South Africa have been exporting a large percentage of their exports to The Commonwealth Countries.

Countries like Botswana and Namibia have a very large percentage of their total trade with the Common wealth and so has smaller members like St. Vincent and Samoa.

Given that the wheels of democracy are no doubt slow we have to be careful to ensure that a "win – win situation" is on the table for the member states.

As PTA's –Preferential Trade Agreements /FTA's - Free Trade Agreements / MFN- Most Favored Nation have demonstrated their success, this proven trade and people to people contact route requires to be tweaked to perfection.

As some agreements have resulted in "heartburn" in Countries due to lack of a comprehensive SOP Standard Operating Procedures the following suggestions are being put on the table for consideration:

A clear cut agreement which specifies goods with HS Codes and services clearly. For e.g. If goods require a SIL - Special Import License or appear in the OGL- Open General License requires to be specifically mentioned with the procedures to be adhered to in obtaining the same. Education of the coordinating bodies / Departments / Ministries in the member Countries. This includes the verification procedure of The COO Certificate of Origin. The procedure for clearance of goods with approximate time frames indicated.

An online mutually acceptable redressal body in member states to address issues within a specified time frame. The acceptance of MRA'S Mutually Recognized Agreement by member Countries which ensures that checks and re checks including laboratory checks are not necessary in the importing Country. If the checks / standards/ labeling can be standardized amongst the member Countries it would make this procedure more efficient. The costs can be also agreed upon and publicized to demonstrate transparency. As most international trade is denominated in U.S. Dollars this proves to be an added expense for Member Countries. For e.g. Member Countries use banks in their Country who have to involve their branches / correspondent banks in The U.S. to

transact the amount. This comes with a cost which is an added cost which is neither going to the seller or the buyer. The volatility of the currencies also play a substantial role in the increased landed cost in the importing Country. The Central banks in the member Countries can work out the modalities together with their own "basket of currencies" and agree on a common currency which is acceptable to both the buyer and seller member countries. The NTB's Non Tariff Barriers in each member Country will have to be identified and then addressed specifically. If trade is to be encouraged between the member Countries then the value addition criteria between the common wealth members can be looked into, to maximize the benefit to additional member Countries.

Penalties / stringent actions to be taken against elements that violate the agreement should be addressed to ensure that this agreement is not misused.

Its better late than never that we give this COMMON WEALTH – COMMON MARKET a try with our best efforts.

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The Significance of the Commonwealth and its Heads of Government Meeting

Prof Rajiva Wijesinha

The meeting in Sri Lanka in November 2013 of the Commonwealth Heads of Government provides a great opportunity for our government. This can be summed up in one word, Engagement, which Sri Lanka has not been very good at over the last few years.

The principles of engagement, which we need to understand, are very simple. First, we need to listen carefully to what others say. Second, we need to put our own perspectives and practices clearly and systematically. Thirdly, we need to search for common ground between us and our interlocutors, and work towards strengthening those commonalities and developing understanding of how mutual appreciation could be strengthened. Fourthly we need to work out where there are differences, and point out where these are because of inadequate understanding of our situation. Finally, where there are differences based on perspectives, we need to explain our own position clearly,

and indicate why changes on our part would not be beneficial to the Sri Lankan people. However – and this is a vital caveat to this last aspect – we must try to understand different positions, and listen to arguments supporting them, and if necessary adjust our own positions if those arguments are clear and convincing.

About each of these, there have been great difficulties some occasions as a small section of the leaders tend to put everyone who criticizes us in the same basket. Unfortunately this has made us lose credibility amongst those who, even if they have different approaches in some respects, are basically our good friends. The manner in which India is often treated in our media, and even by some in authority, is a shocking example of this absurdity.

The excuse offered for this behavior is that there are elements in India who are opposed to Sri Lanka and its interests. This may well be

true, because there are elements in every country who have their own views of what should be happening. But, the official position of leading officials in India has been extremely positive for the last two decades and more. To base our own position solely on actions of few Tamil Nadu politicians with domestic political agendas is not helpful to say the least.

With regard to putting our own perspectives we must stick to the truth and present it convincingly. The manner in which we fell prey to the charge of war crimes, which I believe to be preposterous, exemplifies this. When a false charge was made against us, at the end of 2009, we should have denied it on the grounds that it was a lie.

Given that we have excellent communicators held in high regard by the international community, we should be able to get across our points clearly and coherently. But I hope that those responsible have made sensible plans in this regard, and will ensure that credible interlocutors

are available, given the captive audience that we will have.

Though some of the actions and pronouncements of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navanetham Pillai could have been more balanced, by and large she said enough positive things which we should have built on. Her unequivocal condemnation of the Tigers was a great step forward, given how mealy mouthed many in the international community have been about this, and we should have made much of her clear message to the terrorist obsessed members, I believe only a small minority, of the diaspora. We should also welcome her recognition of the substantial development in the North, and use that to obtain assistance for what Human Resources Development in the conflict affected areas.

When we come to the area of differences, we need to understand where our critics are coming from. Where there is no argument about principles, we should show

how we have acted in good faith in defence of the interests of the Sri Lankan people. In this regard, we have taken several steps to implement the recommendations of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission. Even if it is too late now to have a dedicated Ministry for what is our best defence against criticism, we must set in place a communications strategy, using individuals whose credibility and integrity are not in doubt. Fortunately we have such individuals in abundance in various executive positions at the moment, ranging from the Ministers to the Secretaries, including the Media Secretary, who have done much to further the LLRC and the Human Rights Action Plan.

But in presenting what we have done well, and what further we plan, we should not attempt to defend the indefensible. We have taken adequate measures to ensure the primacy of the Rule of Law and the State is committed to support prompt action against violators. Given that we now have leadership in the Police that commands respect for both integrity and efficiency, we must encourage them to take tough

decisions, not only with regard to errant police officers but also errant politicians. Recent police action against several local government personnel who indulged in illegal actions is a case point. Allowing state agencies to be held guilty because of the abuses of a few is not fair to the Sri Lankan people or its democratically elected government.

In order to make best use of the opportunity to engage, we must also develop a suitable strategy that builds on our strengths and the strengths of our friends. We know that we have much to show with regard to our Youth and, with a sympathetic and capable Minister, that is an area in which our achievements, including our commitment to pluralism, can be showcased. With regard to business, though we have an communicator in the Governor of the Central Bank, we also need to promote greater efficiency and streamline our systems to encourage investment. But we should also put in place a strategy that makes clear our

determination to provide better job opportunities, together with appropriate training, for those who have been underprivileged for so long – and this means not only the people of the North and East, but also those in other areas that have been neglected in the past. Our current concern with top down infrastructure is insufficient to win hearts and minds, though we must also make clear that such work is a prerequisite for the people friendly development policies we are pursuing.

With regard to the Civil Society aspect of the Meeting, a sensible approach to community organizations must be formulated despite our worries – in a few cases justified – about some advocacy organizations. A system of establishing our priorities and then finding both local agencies and foreign funders willing, within our developmental parameters, of supporting these, will pave way for a much more efficient use of resources available than we now see. Again, this is where I hope sensible discussions will lead in time to the Ministry charged with Reconciliation also having a brief

to work with community organizations to promote this.

Finally, we need to consider where and how our efforts at engagement have worked well, and we should build on these. While we received much support from many Commonwealth countries to have the meeting here, we know that one or two were bitterly opposed to us. Though of course we should engage with them, and assuage the genuine fears of those who worry about some of our policies and practices, we should use the positive approach of others to show how misguided these excessively critical elements are. We should also make clear our appreciation of countries such as Australia which others were trying to dragoon into opposition to us, but which, without compromising on suggestions as to how we could do more to promote Reconciliation, maintained and asserted their confidence in our capacity to improve things for all our people.

In this regard, we must take our leadership role seriously. We cannot afford to neglect the important and responsible position we will occupy for the next two years.

We need therefore ideas and initiative, of the sort that led to our more articulate diplomats being appointed to positions of influence such as the Chair of the UN Working Group on the Right to Development. The President has a number of excellent ideas about the participatory and inclusive path to Development that countries like ours should take, and we should use this opportunity to get across a new vision, rather than simply responding to crisis after crisis. That will need innovative ideas and strong communications skills to make the fullest use of the opportunity CHOGM gives (and our current need) to shine internationally.

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CHOGM

A Political Victory for Sri Lanka

Dr NaVarathna Rambukwella

CHOGM – Why is it important?

Sri Lanka is hosting the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2013. Firstly, there is no doubt that it is an extremely important opportunity for Sri Lanka particularly due to the timing. It takes place at a time that the country has successfully overcome a decades dragged crucial issue in its recent history, and is moving upward rapidly in terms of both social development and community reconciliation. Secondly, CHOGM, a prestigious organisation of a group of influential world leaders, creates an opportunity for themselves to witness such developments in the country firsthand, and get comprehended the real and correct picture about what is happening in post-war Sri Lanka, instead of misconceptions created by distorted information that has been relentlessly produced by the various elements of hostile, anti-Sri Lankan propaganda campaigns. Once they realise the context in which the terrorism

thrived and operated in Sri Lanka, and the magnitude of its destruction, they will also realise how legitimate it was to fight and defeat it. What happened in Sri Lanka, in the disguised name of struggle for freedom from discrimination and persecution, was offcourse terrorism. It had no humane purpose except the instinct of establishing an authoritarian hegemony. Once these distinguished CHOGM leaders realise this, it will be obvious that they will nod their thoughtful heads and affirm that Sri Lanka, as a nation of hope for a better future for its people, has that fundamental right – fighting and defeating terrorism.

Post-war achievement:

Peace and current socio-economic and political progress in the country has been a reward for massive sacrifice of the entire nation made over almost three long decades. There is no robust method to explore and quantify how great a relief and consolation that peace has brought to everyone in every nook and corner of the country.

It is subjective. The faces of everyone, irrespective of any differences, resemble such joy of peace that they feel after the war. Now, war is over and peace is firmly established. The astute political leadership and its' all governing apparatuses have started another war against economic backwardness. The goal is to achieve socio-economic progress, catch up the lost precious time, more than half of Sri Lanka's independent political life, which would have used to fight poverty, and expedite development and bring benefits to the masses. This relentless effort has been uninterruptedly and steadily happening since May 2009, just after the humanitarian rescue mission in the country's North and East was declared successfully completed.

Interface between war and ceasefire:

At the time Mr Mahinda Rajapaksa was installed in to the office as President of Sri Lanka by an overwhelming majority, though LTTE terrorists denied fundamental democratic right

of the people of North and East provinces by forcibly preventing them from voting, the country was in a sense at the interface of war and peace. Most of the North and Eastern regions of the country were dominated by the LTTE terrorism. For some, it was LTTE de-facto governance. They had the capacity and therefore were more frequently managed to attack and devastate innocent lives and properties at will in the southern parts of the country as well.

It was so unfortunate that such atrocities had been committed in the country, both North and South, at a time that a Peace Agreement facilitated by and signed through a third country mediation was in place. The cease fire agreed upon had been monitored by an International Monitoring Mission led by the Government of the Republic of Norway. The agreement was still effective and honoured by the Sri Lankan government, and the government patiently avoided any compulsive reaction to

the LTTE terrorist provocations. However, there was a time that arrived when the government could no longer simply ignore its foremost responsibility of protecting the lives of its people and security of their properties. The government was also concerned of the tragic situation of the people in the North and East where the government had no physical access to during the ceasefire. However, the government continued to supply items particularly food and medicine to meet at least the basic needs of the people there through ceasefire monitoring personnel, though it was known that much of those supplies ended up in the hands of terrorists.

Terrorist anomalies:

By the mid of 2006, the peace agreement had been violated by terrorists over three thousand times. It had become well evident that the peace agreement was manipulated by the terrorists as part of their terrorist strategy, for example, as a way of taking time, recruiting, regrouping and strengthening their fighting capabilities. They had intensified

the suppression of ordinary people; coercive recruitments had increased; and, the children were forcibly taken away from their parents and trained as child soldiers. Smuggling of the shiploads of heavy weapons occurred in mass-scale and they were safely unloaded and transported to their bases under the disguise of ceasefire agreement. New terrorist bases were built-up in strategic locations and the reports received by the government clearly showed that all the ground work had been setting up for a massive scale onslaught on the government security forces who had been just confined to their barracks by the conditions of ceasefire agreement.

Basic supplies for the people continuously provided by the government under immense difficulties had been forcibly taken away by the terrorists in front of the international monitoring personnel. Much of them were used for their own consumption while some rations were delivered to the people under strict conditions of dominance. It was obvious, nationally as well as

internationally, that there was no democratic freedom for people, their voice was suppressed and they had no option, either be silent or raise your voice and get shot.

As was stated earlier, while all these subversive activities were openly happening, even in the presence of ceasefire monitoring personnel, the government security forces had been confined to their barracks by the terms of the Peace Agreement which were fully adhered to by the government. It was evident that the task of the international monitoring mission had been failing from every aspect.

Paradox and spill over:

It is very important to understand, the deadlock that the government were stuck in given such a situation. On one hand, it was the government's paramount responsibility to protect the people's lives and arrest the trends of the fast deteriorating economy in the country signalling the signs of inevitable societal collapse in the foreseeable future. On the other hand, the

government, as a responsible unit of democratic authority, had no escape from the bogus peace agreement it was trapped in. The government of the day however were clearly aware that it was the lesson of all previous governments which had tried peaceful settlements several times, pseudo-peace agreements were used for refuelling weaken terrorist war machine, and the democratically raised concerns against such anomalies had always gone unheard. The level of poverty in the country was also increasing. Social unrest was looming around and the hope of the nation had been darkened by the deepening uncertainty.

The turning point, rather what forced the government to spill over the limits of ethical and lawful tolerance that it had so far been in observance, was the action taken by the terrorists to close down the gates of Mavilaru reservoir, cutting off water supply to acres of farmlands risking livelihood of the thousands of rural farmers.

Humanitarian mission

The government launched the humanitarian rescue mission, first to secure the water supply to the farmers and then, as a way of avoiding such heinous acts happening again, to rescue the Eastern province from the clutches of terrorists.

Once the East was liberated, the humanitarian campaign was extended to rescue the Northern areas too from terrorism. The target of the government was to free the people held as hostages and disarm the terrorists equipped with heavy weapons including destructive missiles. The government was determined to eradicate terrorism from the country. In the face of ceaseless assault, terrorists were totally disarrayed and started attacking civilian targets in the non-combating areas of the country simply for the purpose of diverting the disciplined focus of and abating the humanitarian rescue mission. Yet, the government was further encouraged by the already immensely suffered people, everywhere in the country,

including the North and East, who really wanted to see off their suffering at any cost and have a hope for the future generations in the country. Even the last strategy of the terrorists to escape, fortifying themselves with “human shields”, was soon unsuccessful because people fled from their clutches and embraced the advancing security forces of the humanitarian rescue mission. With it, the terrorists were completely defeated and the guns of war became silent. The bloodshed of thirty years had ceased.

Peace:

Socially and humanitarially, the biggest achievement of the humanitarian rescue mission was peace. The government now turned its focus on planning for recovery and rebuilding but there were several immediate needs that required urgent attention and solutions. For example, clearing off the landmines, resettling the displaced, rehabilitating LTTE cadres including child soldiers are to name a few in the long

list of matters that needed immediate attention. That was a challenging, massive operation. Thousands of people were re-settled in their own lands. Children who had been recruited as soldiers were handed over back to their parents and their re-engaging in education and training was facilitated. Rehabilitation of all who had engaged in terrorist activities was completed, except of those few who had alleged criminal charges against them. They were kept in incarceration until the judiciary process was completed.

Housing and physical infrastructure building was also received important priority attention as it was obvious that they were fundamental for building economic and social infrastructure. Health, education, communication and community sectors required massive reconstruction and it was again a huge task for the government given the mass-scale destruction in them for almost three decades. However, the progress

achieved within four years of recovery and reconstruction was unprecedented. It was well evident by the economic contribution from the Northern Province to the national economy, which was recorded as high as 27%.

Northern provincial council:

Politically, the greatest achievement of the government was establishment of Northern Provincial Council. In the provincial council election, the voter turnout was significantly high and it was a clear indication of people of the North enjoying their basic democratic right which had been deprived for over three decades. At this moment, people of the North, like all others in the other parts of the country, have their own provincial administration elected by themselves. It will be the cornerstone of socio-economic and political progress of the province and the government to look forward to working in partnership with new provincial administration to further its development agenda for the North and ensure wellbeing of its people.

Reawakening Sri Lanka

The country's economic growth has risen up to 8%, the highest in the history of the country and currently fastest in South Asia. The per capita income has doubled. The level of poverty has significantly declined and the living standard of the people has risen well above the levels existed in the past. Constructions of infrastructure, such as new harbours, airports, highways, railways, bridges etc. are in acceleration. The growth indicators of the sectors such as agriculture, tourism, fishery, small industries, communication and housing are increasing, and demonstrate encouraging trends for a prosperous future. With peace, political stability, high level of human resources, and fast improving infrastructure, Sri Lanka offers an attractive venue for foreign investments.

The eminent leaders of the Commonwealth will witness this reality. They will also

realise that it is completely in contrast to the international propaganda by the remnant elements of the defeated LTTE terrorists and their sympathisers all over the world. The Sri Lankans are internationally dispersed community. There are many Sri Lanka expatriates of all Sri Lankan ethnic community backgrounds who do not wish to witness another socio-economic and political catastrophe which would drag the country again decades back. Sri Lanka cannot again afford to be another lost opportunity in Asia. The country and its people are deserved to benefit from the Asian economic advancement. CHOGM leaders will realise it. With firsthand information, witnessing ground reality by themselves and having their own independent assessment, they will decide to help Sri Lanka and its people to leave all suffered past behind, move forward

with social development and look into a much better and brighter future. There is no doubt, they will understand that it is their ethical obligation and the supreme purpose of Commonwealth – extending a helping-hand cooperatively and collaboratively to its peers at the time they need it in their own pathway to prosperity and harmony within diversity.

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CHOGM 2013: Most Propitious Window for Sri Lanka

Sugeeswara Senadhira

Sri Lanka is poised to be the focus of world when the country hosts the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM 2013) in November 2013. The Island-Nation will have a tremendous advantage when the leaders from more than 50 countries, representing more than one-quarter of the world's nations and two billion people, meet to discuss global and Commonwealth issues at a time when Asia is in the limelight as the continent of rapid growth and progress.

The CHOGM 2013 will also mark the ascendance of President Mahinda Rajapaksa from the position of a national leader to an International Statesman when he takes the mantle as Head of Commonwealth for the next two years.

The Summit provides the leaders an opportunity to discuss issues such as international peace and security, health, the environment and democracy. In the past, CHOGMs have attempted to orchestrate common policies on certain contentious issues and current events, with a special

focus on issues affecting member nations. CHOGMs have discussed the continuation of apartheid rule in South Africa and how to end it, military coups in Pakistan and Fiji, and allegations of electoral fraud in Zimbabwe.

On some occasions Commonwealth nations agree on a common idea or solution, and release a joint statement declaring their opinion. One aspect needs emphasis is that since the 1997 CHOGM, the meeting has had an official 'theme', set by the host nation, on which the primary discussions have been focused. Hence, it will be Sri Lanka's turn, as the host nation to propose an official theme.

Thousands of visitors, including Presidents and Prime Ministers, their foreign ministers, key business people, journalists and community and youth leaders are expected to attend CHOGM 2013 providing a golden opportunity to show case Sri Lanka to the world at

large. After a three decade long conflict Sri Lanka achieved peace in 2009, and moreover, has also achieved the political stability which ensures consistency in policy. The post-conflict era has ushered in an unprecedented conducive macroeconomic environment and there is comprehensive progress in developing the infrastructure of the country, particularly in the previously conflict-affected areas. Furthermore, Sri Lanka is finally embarked on a comprehensive reconciliation program, as it builds a pluralistic and inclusive society, in which all our communities can reap the dividends of peace.

What is most important in the economic front is that the CHOGM will provide tremendous opportunities for enhancing pan-Commonwealth trade, and contribute to the development of our regional economies, as well as those of other Commonwealth countries. Sri Lanka will also utilize this opportunity attract large scale foreign investments to the country.

The investor centre set up as a pre-cursor CHOGM recorded that Commonwealth investors are interested in wide range of areas including tourism, apparel, housing, assembling automobiles, hospitals, gem and jewellery, oil projects, power plants, steel pipe industry, interior décor, trading in food items and cosmetics and other types of manufacturing.

The Commonwealth Business Forum (CBF), which will take place on the sideline of CHOGM in Colombo in November will be a great opportunity for Sri Lanka to enlighten the world about the investment potentials in the country. The CBF will enlighten the potential investors about the investment potentials in Sri Lanka and to showcase the socio economic developments achieved by the country in the post conflict period. The CBF has a wider significance as not only the Commonwealth countries but countries outside the grouping such

as China, Russia and Japan will also get the opportunity to participate in the business forum.

The CBF will also serve as forum for high level dialogue on trade and investment between business and government leaders from the Commonwealth and beyond. It will highlight new global economic partnerships for trade and investment in key sectors across the Commonwealth and beyond. More than ten heads of state have already expressed their interest in speaking at the CBF.

A massive exhibition comprising 400 stalls displaying the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) of the country will also be held along with the Forum. The exhibition is aimed at establishing a network for the foreign investment to flow into the country and providing opportunity for local entrepreneurs to establish international business

relationships. The Forum expects the full cooperation of small and medium scale businesses as well as larger enterprises.

Most of the host states of CHOGM have gained many economic benefits. After the last CHOGM in Perth, Australia as the host state had attracted US\$ 10 billion in investments within the last two years. Though it is not realistic to compare with Australia, which is a large country, almost a continent, Sri Lanka too expect substantial investments as a peaceful nation with modern infrastructure facilities and situated very close to the international commercial shipping routes.

CHOGM is about much more than simply a meeting of leaders. Several artistic, cultural and sporting events to coincide with CHOGM and there are plenty of opportunities for community members to join the celebrations.

When it comes to international issues, the current economic crisis will be at the forefront of conversations at the CHOGM. Those conversations must include a discussion of how to ensure the realization of authentic human development in the midst of crisis — that is, policies that seek to promote the common good rather than bring wealth to a small segment of the global population. The common good cannot be reduced to an aggregate of income, wealth or expenditure — it must be centred on the dignity of each individual.

The CHOGM should focus attention to the imperative need on the reform of the international financial and monetary systems in the context of global public authority. In this process, the primacy of the ethics needs to be restored and, with them, the primacy of politics — which is responsible for the common good — over the economy and finance.

Due consideration must be given to the obvious responsibilities to society, in order to nourish markets and financial institutions which are really at the service of the person, which are capable of responding to the needs of the common good and universal brotherhood, and which transcend all forms of economist stagnation.

The CHOGM will provide opportunities to devise new and sustainable solutions where justice and compassion are the core principles on which economic and political decisions are made. The world's leaders, teachers, parents, media and all who are in a position to inform, educate and inspire communities have a responsibility to bring hope, understanding and solidarity of action. The role of the Commonwealth in promoting trade and diplomatic relations can be traced to its founding statement which clearly outlines the

Commonwealth as an association of sovereign nations that support each other and work together towards international goals.

Commonwealth countries share common heritage in language, cultural law, education and democratic traditions, amongst others.

The Commonwealth continues to play a significant role in the international political and economic architecture through consultations and cooperation in the common interest of their peoples and the promotion of international understanding through dialogue and cooperation. For example, at the annual Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Meeting that was held on the margins of the 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Ministers had an opportunity to discuss and consult on important global issues relating to the Global financial crisis, on specific themes that add value to the United Nations work, the ongoing mandate

on Environment and Climate Change, the implementation of Millennium Development Goals MDG's and the preparations for the Rio+20 Conference.

The CHOGM has an important role in assisting the states to meet aspirations of the people. Leaders must pay special attention to the economic and development needs particular to the Commonwealth's small states. For many, the ability to travel and work in another country and to send money home is vital. Remittances are a key private sector source of development financing which contribute to the resilience of communities even through periods of economic downturn and recession – global remittance transfers account for more than three times the value of total global official development assistance. But the cost of remittances remains unacceptably high and continues to impede the ability of some of the Commonwealth's most vulnerable people to access food, health care, and education.

Another important event on the sidelines of CHOGM is the Commonwealth People's Forum (CPF), which will take place in Sri Lanka from 10-14 November 2013, organized by the Commonwealth Foundation and hosted by a consortium of Sri Lankan civil society organizations with the support of the Sri Lankan Government. The CPF 2013 will share this year's CHOGM theme, 'Growth, Equity and Inclusive Development' and will focus on the Post-2015 development agenda framework.


The People's Forum provides an excellent opportunity for civil society to convene on the next global development agenda. The Forum will provide the participants from different organizations, networks and alliances from each of the Commonwealth countries to learn from each other and articulate their Post 2015 expectations. It is also a space for Sri Lankan civil society organizations to engage with their counterparts from across the Commonwealth. The CPF brings together civil

society representatives from around the world to discuss and debate key issues facing Commonwealth people. Held every two years in the run up to the CHOGM, the CPF is the single biggest opportunity for civil society to engage with Commonwealth leaders on global development issues. The CPF provides a valuable arena for civil society to build partnerships with public and private sectors offering opportunities for learning, networking and exchange.

The Commonwealth is keen on the continuity of its ideals and objectives through future generations. Hence the Commonwealth Youth Forum (CYF) is an inseparable part of CHOGM. It will be held for five days from Nov. 10-14, 2013, in the southern port city of Hambantota. The CYF is organized with several objectives: To allow youth leaders to exchange ideas and cultures, for youth participants to build skills and network, and to work toward identifying

the most vital challenges and opportunities facing young people today.

A Youth-Led Task Force (YLTF) will be responsible for the planning and the organizing of the CYF. The Task Force will consist of five youth leaders from Commonwealth member countries and five youth leaders from Sri Lanka, with co-chairs from each group. The YLTF is responsible for the entire programme, including the daily agenda, themes for plenary sessions and the identification of resource persons, among others. Many Sri Lankan youths taking part in these events will benefit from interaction with the youth from other Commonwealth nations and they will act as precipitators to further disseminate these ideals and objectives country wide.



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Egalitarianism and Development around CHOGM

Dr Chandra Embuldeniya

Commonwealth is an egalitarian intergovernmental organization of 53 independent, member states that were territories of the British Empire. All Commonwealth people should be treated as equals and have the same political, economic, social, and civil rights. It facilitates the removal of economic inequalities among people and if necessary in the decentralization of power. Commonwealth Secretariat drives the operational work and work with several NGOs with intergovernmental consensus through the Commonwealth Foundation. This is an amazing amalgamation of former colonies based on newly propounded binding values of democracy, freedom, peace, the rule of law and opportunity for all, diagonally opposed to the values and atrocities committed by the imperialists to enrich themselves during the colonial encapsulation of the number of mostly humble littoral nations with their naval and military strengths over a period of two centuries. Even though Sri Lanka carries many permanent scars

of the colonial era that spanned over 500 years (including Portuguese, Dutch, and British) it has pledged allegiance to the Commonwealth of Nations for upholding the newly propounded values of equity, .

The Commonwealth Heads of Government meet (CHOGM) once in two years in a member state and the thrust of the proceedings is stated in a declaration agreed by the Heads. This year (2013) the CHOGM will be held in Colombo with much fanfare amidst some debate. Browsing through the declarations issued previously, it is evident that developing countries among its members have immensely benefited in economic, social, political, technological, and educational means. Among the aces in the Commonwealth bag is the success against apartheid a carryover from the imperialist vendetta. It has collectively fought against apartheid until it was erased from its member states like South Africa and Rhodesia. Several declarations such as the Singapore (1971), Gleneagles (1977), and Lusaka

(1979) bear such credit to the Commonwealth determination. It had also coerced on internal issues of countries such as the military coups in Pakistan and Fiji. When it met in the backdrop of alleged electoral fraud that too has been the subject of discussion such as that alleged to have happened in Zimbabwe. Issues transcending national borders also have been the subject. Langkawi declaration (1989) on environmental sustainability, took up issues such as climate change, depletion of ozone layer, extinction of species, etc. The developed countries pledged not to link future international development aid to commitment on environmental sustainability or introduce trade barriers based on environmental sustainability issues.

The Harare declaration (1991) set out the Commonwealth's core principles and values, detailing the Commonwealth's membership criteria, and redefining and reinforcing its purpose. Harare reaffirmed the political principles laid out in the Singapore Declaration of twenty years before, and is considered one of the two most important documents along with

the Singapore declaration to the Commonwealth's unwritten constitution. Harare while upholding the Singapore values on security, equality, democracy, dignity and equity, enabled coercion as a means of persuasion. Millbrook (1995), is a policy program imploring democracy, rule of law, and good governance particularly concerned with the ouster of legitimate governments with undemocratic means. It allows the Secretariat to employ bilateral and multilateral punitive action against inflexible members. Under the Millbrook, the responsibility of the CHOGM is to uphold the Harare Declaration on the core political principles of the Commonwealth. The CMAG (Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on Harare Declaration) provides the Heads with their remit.

The last Summit was held in Perth (2011) during the severe economic downfall facing the developed countries, which also felt adversely by the smaller developing nations. So much so the British Prime Minister

arrived late for the Summit due to a European Union Summit on the financial bailout program.

The 2009 Summit in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago re-commissioned the EPG (Eminent Persons Group) to propose means of modernizing and introducing reforms. The report came up in 2011 and was opposed by India, Sri Lanka, South Africa and Namibia while UK, Australia and Canada moved to endorse and publish it. The failed attempt by EPG came under severe criticism by the Malaysian Chair of EPG and the UK Foreign Secretary, a member of EPG. Amidst the dissenting views, a charter of values for the Commonwealth as “one clear, powerful statement” without any agreement about enforcement was proposed and agreed. However two thirds of the EPG’s 106 recommendations were referred to study groups.

India snubbed the previous Summit in Perth. Indian Prime Minister skipped the Summit in protest against Australia’s alleged refusal to sell India uranium as it had not signed the Nuclear

Nonproliferation Treaty. India was led by the ceremonial Vice President at the Summit. The excuse given by India was that the Prime Minister’s calendar was full. However Australia later denied that the Indian PM pulled out over the purported uranium issue. Canadian Prime Minister walked out of the Summit during its last day when Sri Lankan President was invited to speak. He also threatened to boycott the 2013 CHOGM Summit, scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka even at that time. His concern is alleged human rights violations in Sri Lanka. UK also failed in its attempt to legalize LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual) rights through coercion using provisions of aid. This was seen as an attempt to foist social norms of another state.

The Commonwealth Charter was adopted on 19 Dec 2012, setting out its values as well as the commitment of its 53 member states to equal rights, democracy, etc. and signed by the Queen on the Commonwealth day (second Monday in March) which fell on 11 Mar 2013. The charter names 16

core values, namely, democracy, human rights, international peace and security, tolerance, respect and understanding, freedom of expression, separation of powers, rule of law, good governance, sustainable development, protecting the environment, access to health, education, food and shelter, gender equality, importance of young people in the Commonwealth, recognition of the needs of the small states, recognition of the needs of the vulnerable states, and the role of civil society. These fundamental values will form the fabric that strengthens the association and dialog of the Commonwealth of Nations.

With this backdrop the CHOGM canvas is smeared by a few inept strokes reflecting the will of a few powerful nations particularly that of Canada and UK heavily while India is resorting to its bullishness. It appears that all these three are eying to gain internal political advantage for parliamentary votes. The Commonwealth while being egalitarian irrespective of a nation's size or power is bonded together by the fabric

of values it expounds to uphold. The question of boycott by a fellow leader is directly in breach of the same values endorsed by the Commonwealth. It is incumbent upon a member country to draw attention to its concerns on any questionable issues at the Summit itself, instead of arrogantly boycotting for selfish political gain. It is the value and the opportunity Commonwealth presents to members that is likely to lose on such action. History will black mark, unfortunately the member country, led by such shortsighted leadership.

The Commonwealth covers more than 29,958,050 km², almost a quarter of the world land area, and spans all the continents giving shelter to a population of 2.245 billion, almost a third of the world population. The nominal GDP of the Commonwealth in 2012 was \$9.767 trillion, representing 15% of the world GDP measured in purchasing power parity (PPP). This

represents the second largest nominal GDP and GDP PPP in the world. These statistics bring to attention the dormant economic, political and social strength embedded in the Commonwealth, possibly for collective exploitation. As such some member states are making efforts to create a Commonwealth Union on the same outline as the European Union to facilitate a free trade area, visa-free travel area, common foreign policy, and representation at the United Nations and Group of 20. This concept is dazzlingly attractive and would cheerfully justify the spending of resources on Summits and meetings if leaders could substitute narrow political issues with broader economic concepts for the betterment of their people. The global economy now largely driven by the transnational giants (borderless companies) will no doubt have the economic opportunity for relocating knowledge based production in the developing countries where knowledge economy is a low cost option and that they will have the opportunity of integrating with the global economy with the Commonwealth Union strength.

Sri Lanka takes pride in hosting the Summit in November 2013 having expectations of international dialog, relationships and image building along with attracting foreign direct investments. During 30 years of war there were atrocious terrorist attacks killing thousands of innocent civilians. The government of Sri Lanka had to fight terrorism while having to stave off lewd international efforts to divide the country and bring down Sri Lanka's sovereignty. The international community turned a blind eye to the terrorist atrocities and helplessness of the government to bring peace during those hard times. Finally a determined effort by the newly elected President in 2005, took it upon himself to lead Sri Lanka to a complete annihilation of the terrorists in face to face fighting. He proved the hypocrisy and deception of the terrorists using peace negotiations supported by the international community to buy time to regain losses and stock arms. Finally the armed forces in 2009 cleared the menace of terrorism that kept Sri Lanka manacled to underdevelopment and on the threshold of a geographical division of the land. This has clearly

disappointed the forces that were striving to divide the nation and now use the immense illicit wealth acquired by the diaspora to do what they failed to achieve with guerilla war to achieve with media terrorism. There are lucidly concocted tabloid television stories and news media channels to fabricate evidence blaming the government of Sri Lanka for eradicating terrorism. There were plenty of opportunities for those media channels to portray the plight of people in Sri Lanka during the terrorist excursions into the cities and villages when hundreds of innocent civilian lives were taken off in a single vicious strike at a time. These questions should have been asked when the terrorists blasted explosives on a daily basis bringing untold misery to every one living in Sri Lanka. The CHOGM now presents an apt opportunity for the nation to expose the truth at first hand to the visiting leaders. The efforts made by the government of this sovereign nation along with many civilians to bring back national unity against the divisive

forces are amply recorded but hardly noticeable to the international media eye. This is the opportunity to get the majority of fair lenses to focus on the truth and the voices to be heard in keeping with the real spirit and deed of the modern Commonwealth.

The Tamil diaspora who are against the Sri Lankan patronage for the Summit no doubt have a huge political thrust and an essential need to portray Sri Lankan government as villainous. Yet, Sri Lanka is also to be seen and believed, for the peaceful coexistence of different ethnicities of the nation. Further, it hopes to expose ground realities to leaders at first hand, defend a strong position of integrity, unity and oneness and most of all celebrate ascending a virtuous leadership position at the Commonwealth for the next two years with honor and dignity. The rapid development of the areas, which were deprived of the taste of brick

and mortar development and human capital development until 2009, have phenomenally transformed literally and metaphorically into beautiful promising areas of prosperity. There is more work to continue with progress. This year's theme 'Growth with Equity; Inclusive Development' is an apt reminder of what all participants should be keen on exploring at this Summit.

Sri Lanka since 2009 has become a magnet for new investments around the five hubs promoted under the Mahinda Chintana development strategy. The government is developing infrastructure for Naval, Aviation, Commerce, Energy and Knowledge Hubs. The high standard infrastructure in these areas are fast developing while there is huge scope for investments in commercial projects. As a strategic location on the international maritime highway Hambantota port is brand new and is fast gaining reputation while Colombo port has commissioned capacity for the largest cargo vessels. International

airports at Mattala and Colombo are a boon to the tourism sector, and tourism itself is expected to draw 2.5 million visitors by 2016. Thousands of new hotel rooms are added annually to accommodate the tourists wanting a relaxing holiday in salubrious and ecofriendly environments for the nature loving and adventure loving tourists. Knowledge hub has investments in Sri Lanka from world class universities and it is now stepping into the mega level higher education projects catering to the regional needs. The Energy Hub and the Commercial Hub have gained momentum due to expanding economic activities and Sri Lanka will become South Asia's favorite location for regional business activities.

Equally well, it is the opportunity of the government of Sri Lanka to exhibit the painful history of efforts taken at peace while the terrorists maliciously took every opportunity to destroy those efforts provoking the government, the valiant

humanitarian relief efforts of the frontline forces to bring peace to civilian hostages kept by the terrorists, and finally the dawn of peace, rehabilitation, social integration, devolution and reconciliation. As it is, the UNHRC is looking into the allegations of HR violations in Sri Lanka. Even though it is evident that there are many undiplomatic advances on those efforts, Sri Lanka has made it transparent and patiently provide all diplomatic assistance for ongoing investigations. It is therefore in the right spirit of Commonwealth fellowship to leave the questionable allegations for the UNHRC to expound on and get on to the theme of 'Growth with Equity; Inclusive Development' to make headway on a solid Commonwealth Union for the benefit of humankind.

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Sri Lanka Free of Terror's Shadow and Looking to Future

Aruna V Abeygoonesekera

As Sri Lanka prepares to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) next month, it is unfortunate that critics of Sri Lanka like Amnesty International's New Zealand executive director Grant Bayldon remain blinded to the significant progress achieved by the Island Nation .

The decisive defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in May 2009 put an end to the era of suicide bombings, assassinations and indiscriminate violence that had terrorised the lives of all Sri Lankans, irrespective of their ethnicity or religion, for nearly 30 years. The military succeeded, at great cost to itself, in rescuing nearly 300,000 Tamil civilians who were being forcibly held as human shields by the LTTE during the final stages of the conflict.

Since the conflict ended, nearly all the 300,000 internally displaced civilians have been

successfully resettled to their former homes - an impressive feat for a small developing country emerging from 26 years of war.

Of 12,220 former LTTE combatants who surrendered to the Government, 96.2 per cent have been integrated back into their communities and are today engaged in rebuilding their livelihoods.

The remainder are facing judicial proceedings. Demining in former combat zones is 95 per cent complete. Since the end of the war, economic development has surged. Annual GDP growth has averaged around 7 to 8 per cent nationally, while the predominantly Tamil-populated Northern Province has recorded an unprecedented 20 per cent growth. These achievements must not be overlooked.

Most importantly, the period since May 2009 has seen the opening of democracy in areas that were previously

run under the totalitarian jackboot of the LTTE. Denied the opportunity to vote for years or to express any form of dissent at all, Tamils living in formerly LTTE-controlled parts of the country are now able to vote in local, provincial and national elections, and are represented at all levels of government.

Just last month, Provincial Council elections were successfully held in the North for the first time in 26 years, culminating in the victory of an ethnically Tamil political party.

The current democratically elected Government enjoys widespread support. President Mahinda Rajapaksa convincingly won the presidential elections in 2010 and his ruling party achieved a two-thirds majority in the parliamentary elections that took place later that same year. Consistent with the pluralistic nature of Sri Lankan society, his Cabinet consists

of ministers from all of Sri Lanka's ethnic communities.

Contrary to what is often reported, Sri Lanka has embarked on its own comprehensive domestic reconciliation and accountability process - the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Committee. It is unfortunate that Amnesty International chose not to participate in this process, despite being invited to do so. Indeed, the LLRC process was welcomed by the UN Human Rights Council. In July, the Government adopted an additional 53 recommendations from the LLRC.

What Sri Lanka needs right now is the support of all members of the Commonwealth. It is encouraging that New Zealand is taking a pragmatic and constructive approach by engaging constructively with Sri

Lanka at the upcoming Commonwealth summit. Prime Minister John Key and Foreign Minister Murray McCully are to be commended for their stance. Attempting to isolate the country at this critical juncture will only reverse post-war gains and undermine domestic efforts at reconciliation between ordinary Sri Lankans who are looking forwards to a future of security, freedom and prosperity, now that the long dark era of terror is over.



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REFERENCE





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