



# NEWSLETTER



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF CARITAS SRI LANKA

Vol - 5

No - 9

October - December 2011

## SRI LANKA WORKING GROUP (SLWG) MEETING 2011

This annual event was held from 11 -14 October 2011 in SEDEC, attended by 16 Caritas Partner Representatives, as well as the National Director and the Diocesan Directors along with their respective delegates. The theme this year was 'Church's role in the possible development models for Sri Lanka, based on the current socio economic reality'.

The SLWG brings together every year a group of Partners and local Caritas representatives who study the current situation in the country, plan responses to identified issues and reflect on the level of future cooperation as well as ways of strengthening the accompaniment process.

The Inaugural Session on the first day, chaired by Most Rev Dr Harold Anthony Perera, Chairman of Caritas Sri Lanka SEDEC, was graced by distinguished guests including the Apostolic Nuncio, His Excellency Most Rev Dr Joseph Spiteri, several Bishops and Heads of Diplomatic Missions. The keynote address based on the SLWG theme was delivered by Most Rev Dr Vianney Fernando, Bishop of Kandy while the Apostolic Nuncio spoke on the 'Role of the Catholic Church in the field of Integral Human Development, based on Caritas Veritate'.



The working sessions which followed were facilitated by Mr Duncan Maclaren, former Secretary General of Caritas Internationalis who also made a special presentation on the topic 'Church's role in development: from Rights Based Approach to Dignity Based Approach' while Prof. Rohan Samarajiva, Chairman/CEO of LIRNE Asia as guest speaker provided 'An analysis of the present social, economic and political situation in Sri Lanka'.

The working sessions included a revisiting of the strategic priorities spelt out in the Caritas Sri Lanka Strategic Plan for the 8-year period 2009-2017 and several group discussions. The ground work was also laid for a SMART Plan of Action for the forthcoming 18 months, both at National and Diocesan levels. At the same time, the deliberations at the meeting produced important outcomes that would serve as guideposts for the future. Several new recommendations for a way forward also emerged from the intense round of discussions, experience-sharing and joint reflections.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN MIGRATION - Theme of Caritas Migrant Day event

"Let us firmly resolve that we shall no more permit our migrant workers to be exported, exploited, exposed and abused", said Rev Fr George Sigamoney, National Director of Caritas Sri Lanka SEDEC at the International Migrant Day commemoration event held at the SEDEC Auditorium on 17th December 2011.

Introducing a Research Booklet launched on this occasion, Fr Sigamoney said that the study is a pointer to the fact that with all the well-intentioned measures taken at various levels to make migration safe and fruitful for the citizens of our country, there are severe gaps in the entire process that continue to deny the legitimate benefits which must accrue to a migrant worker.

The study was undertaken as an extensive research across several Districts in the country and involved meeting with several Governmental and Non-governmental agencies, interviewing migrant returnees to capture their stories of both success and failure, analyzing the relevant issues and finally coming up with important recommendations which will help surmount the numerous problems that have made migration such a hazardous undertaking and unhappy experience for many Sri Lankan women.



"Far too long have the migrant workers' rights been violated", the Caritas National Director noted. "Far too long have we failed to hold governments responsible for their safety and welfare. Far too long have we ignored to demand full and proper implementation of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant

*Cont. to page 2*



Cont. from page 1

Workers and Their Families”.

Copies of the research booklet, titled *Migration of Sri Lanka Women – Analysis of Causes and Post-arrival Assistance*, were handed over to the Chief Guest Hon. Dilan Perera MP, Minister of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare, Rt. Rev. Dr Raymond Wickremasinghe – Bishop of Galle and Mrs Shyamali Ranaraja, Attorney-at-Law and Employment Consultant.



Welcoming the participants to this event, Mr Jayashanka Basnayake, Manager of the Caritas Integral Human Development Program observed that in Sri Lanka where more than one million migrants are working abroad, the category of workers who are most exposed to various challenges are the women domestic workers employed in Middle East countries.



Dr Cletus Perera, Bishop of Ratnapura, Rev Ebenezer Joseph, General Secretary of the National Christian Council (NCC), Rev Fr Mervyn Fernando, Rev Fr Henry Silva, Rev Fr Leopold Ratnasekera OMI, Ven Prof Bellanwila Wimalaratne Nayake Thero, Ven Maduluwawe Sobitha Nayake Thero, Ven Brahmanawatte Sivali Nayaka Thero, Ash-Shaikh S H Adambawa and Siva Sri Ramachandran Babu Sharma Kurukkal.



CHA was represented by Dr Jeevan Thiagarajah, Executive Director who in his submission said that since all religions have laid down guidelines for human living, faith-based reconciliation holds out the best hope our country.



### INTERFAITH DIALOGUE ON RECONCILIATION

As part of the Caritas initiative to forge a National Dialogue on Reconciliation, SEDEC in association with the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA) hosted a group of religious leaders for a discussion on 2nd December 2011 at its auditorium. The objective of the program was to create a platform for furthering the cause of peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka and to highlight the role of the religious leaders in the pursuit of this objective.



Welcoming the participants, Rev Fr George Sigamoney, National Director of Caritas Sri Lanka said that healing and reconciliation are the need of the hour in this post war situation. Many hearts still remain wounded after the crippling conflict which ended in a brutal war in 2009. “We need to be challenged by a common moral responsibility to heal the wounded hearts in our nation”, Fr Sigamoney said, pointing out that religious leaders have a crucial role to play in this process. “We also need to work together to prevent future conflict”, he told the religious leaders present, among whom were Rt Rev

### CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING ON SAFE MIGRATION

A 3-day capacity building training program on Safe Migration and Prevention of Human Trafficking was held at SEDEC auditorium from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> November 2011 for a group of 16 Diocesan representatives of Tricomalee/Batticaloa, Badulla and Ratnapura.

### HOUSING IN BADULLA DIOCESE FOR WAR VICTIMS

Six houses built by Caritas for war victims were handed over to beneficiaries in Buttala (Badulla District) on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2011 by Rev Fr Sam Perera, Diocesan Director of USCOD Badulla, in the presence of Ms Tory Jones and Ms Sarah Barrett of CAFOD-UK which provided financial assistance to complete the construction of the houses.



“It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop.”



### OUTREACH PROGRAM FOR CHILD PROTECTION VOLUNTEERS

A training workshop was held on 28<sup>th</sup>&29<sup>th</sup> October at Subodhi Institute, Piliyandala for a group of 57 volunteers who accompany the members of the Children's Societies formed in the dioceses under the Caritas Child Rights and Child Protection Program.



10 such Children's Societies have been formed under each of the 13 Diocesan



Centres where 10 volunteers are assisting the Diocesan Program Coordinators and accompanying the children in the various activities. Their dedication and their voluntary collaboration with the Diocesan Centres has enriched the program and contributed immensely to enhance the dignity of the children.

The current training workshop was designed to build their capacity and to strengthen their role in serving the children. Two parallel sessions on Child Rights were conducted by the Resource Persons. Ms Sajeevani Abayakoon, Attorney-at-Law attached to the Legal Aid Commission, facilitated the Sinhala language session while Mr. Selvagunapalan, Attorney-at-law attached to the Human Rights Commission, handled the Tamil language session.

An exposure visit to Marcsri Home for Disabled Children in Kalutara was also included in the 2-day program which was arranged under the guidance of Rev Sr Nilanthi Ranasinghe FMM, Program Officer for Child Protection in Caritas Sri Lanka SEDEC.

### CHILD RIGHTS TRAINING FOR MANAGERS OF CHILDREN'S HOMES

A 2-day Capacity Building Training Workshop was conducted

on from 30<sup>th</sup> October – 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011 for a group of 47 Managers of Children's Homes operated in the Western Province by the Department of Childcare and Probation. The program held in the SEDEC Auditorium was part of the series of



workshops initiated under the theme "Capacity building on management of child abuse within a Child Rights Framework."



### ORIENTATION PROGRAM ON SAFE MIGRATION

A group of 20 participants from the Dioceses of Trincomalee / Batticaloa, Badulla and Ratnapura as well as the National Centre attended an orientation program on Safe Migration and Prevention of Human Trafficking held at SEDEC auditorium on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011.



### CAPACITY BUILDING FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT

A group of 40 Diocesan delegates from 13 Caritas Diocesan Centres and the National Centre commenced a 4-day capacity enhancement training on Project Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) at the SEDEC Auditorium on 21st November.



Welcoming the participants, Mr Newman Fernando - Senior Executive Manager of SEDEC invited them to avail themselves of this opportunity to obtain insights on how they could implement projects and programs in an efficient and effective manner so that the vision and mission of the organisation may be better achieved.



The training workshop was based on five modules which will be spread out over a period up to February 2012. It was designed and presented by PASSAsia, a leading institution in the field of training for success and it was coordinated under the guidance of Mr J P Sagayaraj, Head of the Projects Unit of Caritas Sri Lanka.



PROTECTION OF EVERY CHILD, OUR PRIME RESPONSIBILITY

Caritas Sri Lanka marked Universal Children's' Day on 1st October with a group of around 100 student leaders, teachers and parents at an event held in the SEDEC auditorium in Colombo.

Ms Shirani Rajapakse, Director - Education and Special Programs in the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka in her address to the participants of this program said that there are special laws in the country to protect child rights and that mechanisms such as the National Child Protection Authority are in place to give effect to these laws. She told the students that they have a right to free Primary Education and also to good schools and good teachers. Physical and mental well-being are their rights, too. She reminded the children that if they have no time to play, it amounts to a denial of their right.

Rev Sr Nilanthi Ranasinghe, Caritas Program Officer for Child Protection in her introductory remarks observed that children teach us child-like trust and many other things, even in their helplessness. They are valuable members of society and they need love and respect in order to grow to their full potential, she said. The students, teachers and parents took part in separate group discussions where they explored their own understandings of child protection and what they expect from each other in their inter-relationships.

The reports emerging from the group activity provided valuable insights into how children, parents and teachers see each other. All the participants appreciated the fact that this program provided a space to share their views and express their feelings in an encouraging atmosphere.

Rev Fr George Sigamoney, National Director of Caritas Sri Lanka in his synopsis requested parents and teachers to speak to their peer groups about the important aspects the students had shared at this forum. He asked that this dialogue be continued and he offered some words of advice to the students, too. At the conclusion of the program, all the participants were given souvenirs to mark Children's' Day.



CARITAS SRI LANKA CHRISTMAS GET-TOGETHER OF STAFF & FAMILIES



Rev.Fr. Jude Raj Fernando, Director, Caritas Colombo - Sethsarana Joseph Vaz Centre, Pradeepa Mawatha, Colombo-8. Tel. no : 2685414, Fax No : 2695419. E-mail : ccaritas@slt.net.lk

Rev.Fr. Sam Perera, Director, Caritas Badulla - USCOD St. Bede's Home, Badulla. Tel. no : 055 - 2222635, Fax no. : 055 - 223574. E-mail : uscod@slt.net.lk, sampererakodi@yahoo.com

CARITAS NETWORK IN SRI LANKA



Rev.Fr. Damian Arsakularatne, Director, Caritas Galle - SED No: 2/1, Templers Road, Kaluwella, Galle. Tel. no : 091-2244138, Fax no : 091-2233710. E-mail : galle@caritassedgalle.org, frdamiancaritassedgalle@gmail.com

Rev. Fr. Abraham Barnaba, Director, Caritas Chilaw - SEDEC Kurunegala Road, Old Town, Madampe. Tel. no : 032 - 2247638, Fax no. : 032 - 2247638. E-mail : frbarnabas\_2006@yahoo.com, caritaschilaw@yahoo.com

Rev.Fr. Francis X. Dias, Director, Caritas Trincomalee - EHED 295, Dockyard Road, Trincomalee. Tel. no : 026 - 2222204 , Fax No : 026 - 2222474. E-mail : ehedtc@slt.net.lk, ectco@slt.net.lk

Rev. Fr. A. Yavis, Director, Caritas Vanni - HUDEC HUDEC Office, Kilinochchi. Tel. no : 021-2285805, Fax no. : 021-2285805. E-Mail : caritasvanni09@gmail.com, chudecvanni@slt.lk

Rev. Fr. Cryton Outschoorn, Director, Caritas Batticaloa - EHED P.O.Box 45, No.52, Webber Street, Batticaloa. Tel. no : 065-2222125, Direct : 065-2225458, Fax no.: 065-2227017. E-mail : ehedbatti@slt.net.lk, director@ehedcaritasbk.org

Rev.Fr. Bernard Regno, Director, Caritas Jaffna - HUDEC No.14, Deogu Street, Mathew's Road, Jaffna. Tel. no : 074 - 471613, Fax no.: 021 - 2222571. E-mail : hudec@slt.net.lk, caritasja@slt.net.lk

Rev.Fr. Paaris Jayamaha, Director, Caritas Anuradhapura - Sethsaviya Maaminiyawa Road, Maradankadawela. Tel. no : 025-2265295, Fax no.: 025-2265295. E-mail : caritasanp@slt.net.lk

Rev.Fr. Camillus Janz , Director, Caritas Kandy - SETIK 255/50, Dr.C.D.L. Fernando Mawatha, Katugastota Road, Kandy. Tel. no : 074 - 471613, Direct: 081 - 2222775. Fax no: 081 - 2222775. E-mail : setik@slt.net.lk

Rev.Fr. Texie Dissanayake, Director, Caritas Ratnapura - SethMini Bishop's House, Hospital Road, Eheliyagoda. Tel. no : 036 - 2258410, Fax no. : 036- 2258495. E-mail : sethmini@slt.net.lk, sethminir@yahoo.com

Rev.Fr. Ajith Rohan Fernando, Director, Caritas Kurunegala-Janasetha St. Anthony's Church, Pallandeniya, Maspotha, Kurunegala. Tel. no : 037 - 2237147, Fax no.: 074-698854. E-mail : janasetha@slt.net.lk

Rev.Fr. M Jeyabalan, Director, Caritas Mannar - Valvuthayam Main Street, Mannar. Tel. no : 023 - 2232140, Fax no. : 023 - 2232893. E-mail : valvum@slt.net.lk, caritasmn@slt.net.lk