



*"A journey of God's love for all"*

# CARITAS SRI LANKA SEDEC

Social and Economic Development Centre

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# OVERVIEW OF CARITAS SRI LANKA

The Church consciousness of its social responsibility which is reflected in the Gospel and Catholic Social Teachings (CST), with an effort to promote social welfare in an impaired political and social system with unjust resource allocation, through the promotion of policy dialogue and social welfare, is shaping the development trajectory more inclusive, sustainable, and that advances social justice.

Caritas Sri Lanka - SEDEC is the Social arm of the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka under the leadership of the Catholic Bishops Conference in Sri Lanka (CBCSL), is independent of all political parties and ethnic groups and promotes qualitative changes in the structure of the society through policy promotion and welfare programs supported by donor partnerships and collaboration.

## VISION

"Realization of a Just Sri Lankan Society based on the Gospel values of love, forgiveness, peace, unity and equality-lived, promoted and protected irrespective of Caste Creed and Nationality"

## MISSION

"Empowering people through animation and being in solidarity with their efforts for Integral Human Development"

## OVER-ARCHING GOAL

"Integral Human Development for people most vulnerable, marginalized and extremely poor"



# STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY SECTORS

## PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

- Protection mainstreaming
- Child protection & wellbeing
- Ending domestic violence
- Ending violence against women and girls
- Rights of the different-abled
- Measuring wellbeing & protection impact
- Income generation
- Skills development &

## BUILD CAPACITY FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RISK REDUCTION, MITIGATION AND RESPONSE

- DRR programs
- Disaster risk analysis
- Community-based disaster preparedness planning
- Emergency response
- Recovery, and long term development

## FOSTER SUSTAINED DIALOGUE FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

- Mitigating ethno-religious intolerance & tensions
- Promotion of community co-existence
- Leadership development and knowledge-based communities
- Issue-based community advocacy
- Strengthening local governance and access to efficient public services
- Measuring community transformation impact

## PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE & INFLUENCE CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

- Food security
- Mainstream Climate Change Adaptation measures across all relevant programs
- Advocacy for development, implementation, and nforcement of environmental laws,regulations, and policies
- Community based programs and approaches for environmental health and justice

## INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

The organizational development for change management with a concern to developing its resource base and the development of human resources to effectively promote social change through its programs is a strategic concern with the proliferation of the need of concrete planning and effective management of organizational resources



## SECTORS OF SPECIALIZATION

MICRO FINANCE

SUSTAINABLE  
AGRICULTURE/FOOD  
SECURITY

CAPACITY BUILDING

PEACE BUILDING &  
RECONCILIATION

EMPOWERING  
COMMUNITIES

DISASTER  
PREPAREDNESS &  
RISK REDUCTION

EDUCATION

SAFE MIGRATION AND  
PREVENTION OF  
HUMAN TRAFFICKING

FOSTERING  
RELIGIOUS HARMONY

HEALTH, WATER &  
SANITATION

RECONSTRUCTION/  
REBUILDING &  
LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT

HUMANITARIAN AID  
MATERIAL AND  
LOGISTIC ASSISTANCE  
TO THE VICTIMS

HUMAN RIGHTS  
PROMOTION AND  
ADVOCACY

ENVIRONMENT



# MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP CHAIRMAN

Rt. Rev. Dr. Justin Gnappagasam

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka (BCSL) met on 9 June 2022 at the National Seminary of Our Lady of Lanka in Kandy, for the second annual meeting and decided to appoint Rev. Fr. Luke Nelson as the National Director and successor to Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke of Caritas Sri Lanka- SEDEC.

The Catholic National Commission for Justice, Peace, and Human Development serves 03 years and usually runs another term. The National Secretariat of the Commission, Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDE is at the core of the Social Apostolic work mandated by CBCSL.

Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke was commended by the CBCSL for the committed service he rendered during his tenure from 2017 to 2022 at the Secretariat, especially at a most difficult time of our history marked by unpredictable disasters such as the Easter Sunday bombing, COVID-19 pandemic, and the present economic crisis in Sri Lanka. . They also appreciated the changes brought about at CSL, especially in aligning the Caritas Network with International Management Standards and creating space to make CSL self-sufficient in terms of the local fundraising opportunities.

The coming period will be equally challenging for the new National Director with the impending food crisis, job losses, fuel shortages, educational crisis, and especially, with impacts felt by the poorest and vulnerable communities that Caritas serve in the face of the shrinking economy in Sri Lanka.

We, Catholics are always invited to live with hope and to experience the goodness of the Lord at every second despite the negativities surrounding us. Pope Francis's latest Global Campaign for Caritas Internationalis, "Together We" calls all the citizens of earth to revitalize the integral ecology and to act for the cries of the poor.

While appreciating and honouring the service rendered by Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke with immense dedication for the last 5 years, I wish him the best of luck and God's Blessing for the new life opportunities he is bestowed with.

I also wish Fr. Luke Nelson, that the Good Lord may strengthen and guide him with the spirit of the Lord, every step and decision he takes at Caritas Sri Lanka on behalf of the poor and vulnerable people in this country.







# MESSAGE FROM THE FORMER NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke

Caritas Sri Lanka- SEDEC is overwhelmed to welcome its 12th National Director to lead the umbrella of the Caritas network with its 13 Diocesan Centres. The times are such that Caritas needs a well-seasoned and multifaceted National Director to lead the entire country team in one direction in the face of the crisis.

Hence, I am pleased to know a person of such caliber has been elected by the CBCSL to lead the social arm of the local church. Fr. Luke Nelson has a prolific carrier behind him with many responsible portfolios falling on his shoulders. He has proven beyond reasonable doubt that he can stand up against any challenge. Therefore, we the members of CSL wish him God's choicest blessings and the wholehearted support and cooperation for the call he has been chosen in reaching out to the poorest of the poor in these tragic times.

Caritas has been at the forefront during the war, in the post-conflict era, and in disasters. Despite the donor fatigue after the post-conflict era, as the country moved to the upper middle-income country, CSL has managed to win some dependable Globe partners from among CI Federation and outside. Unfortunately, Sri Lanka is still a dependent country where political instability , dishonesty and corruption have been remarkable features.

As the outgoing National Director, I take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to the CBCSL including Bishop Chairman and Vice Chairman for the trust they kept in me and the continuous support they gave me during my tenure to fulfill my duties as the National Director.

Then the present and past Diocesan Directors and the DC staff for the wonderful support.

Finally, yet importantly, my National Centre staff, who have been with me committed for the cause we all, are called for until the end.



# MESSAGE FROM THE NEW NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Rev. Fr. Luke Nelson Gamini Perera

The pastoral constitution of the Modern World 'Gaudium et Spes' says, 'Read the sign of the times' to look for new solutions for the pressing issues of the world. The situation of the country is extremely volatile and precarious, but I see opportunities on our hands in order to explore and bring solace and relief to the people we serve.

While I thank the CBCSL for the trust placed in me, I assure all of you that I will do the utmost for the welfare and betterment of the organization and the network. As a priest and a Diocesan Director, I have acquired some experience in the grassroots level execution of programs in addition to my administrative skills sharpened over the years of service in the Vineyard of the Lord. I remember such opportunities, experiences, and times of fond memories with a sense of gratitude especially, to all those who worked with me.

I hope and pray that my journey, no doubt would be equally adventurous in the time to come.

I wish the National Center together with the 13 Diocesan Centers will work under the principles of cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and participation with the prime objective of helping the poor and marginalized of this country as stated in the vision and mission statements of Caritas Sri Lanka.







# Bidding Farewell

## Outgoing National Director – Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke

Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke was ordained into the priesthood on 25th July 1992 for the Arch Diocese of Colombo.

During his Priesthood, he served at many Parishes and was also the director/ editor of Messenger at the Catholic Press in Colombo

At the plenary meeting held by the Catholic Bishop's Conference on 4 May 2017, Rev. Fr Mahendra Gunatilleke was appointed as the new National Director for the Catholic National Commission for Justice, Peace and Human Development, Caritas Sri Lanka – SEDEC.

During his tenure of service in the organization, he adopted and implemented many new strategies pertaining to the development of the organization and execution of the programs and for the welfare of the organization.

## Easter Bomb Attack

There was a series of bomb attacks on Easter Sunday 2019. During the crisis, Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke displayed his leadership skills and initiated a psychosocial pastoral program to bring relief to the people affected.

## COVID-19 Pandemic

During the Pandemic, Rev. Fr. Mahendra, was able to persuade the Partners in obtaining resources to help the poor. He executed the programs with the support of the staff and was never tired until the mission was completed.

## Strategic Plan

Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke initiated and organized an International Partner's Forum, in view of obtaining support for the development of two Strategic Plans of CSL.

## Political instability & Economic Crisis

During the economic and political crisis, Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke, introduce the DRR Plan under the caption "Enhancing Resilience of the Victims of the Economic Crisis in Sri Lanka" where an "Emergency Appeal" was submitted to Caritas Internationalis (CI) in order to request pledges and commitments to support the vulnerable and neediest citizens of our motherland.

## Completion of the New Building

After the takeover of Caritas Sri Lanka by Rev. Fr. Mahendra Gunatilleke, he spearheaded the construction of a seven-story building. It was declared opened on 18th March 2021, under the patronage of His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Winston Fernando, Charmin, CBCSL, Rt. Rev. Dr. Justin Gnappagasam, Chairman, CSL Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxwell Silva, Vice Chairman, CSL and the Diocesan Directors of the Caritas Network.



# Welcome

## Incoming National Director Fr. Luke Nelson



The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka appointed Rev. Fr. Luke Nelson as the new National Director on 9 June 2022. He is a senior priest from the Diocese of Chilaw with years of experience in the administrative and management sphere, especially within the church circle.

Rev. Fr. Jayasooriya Kuranage Luke Nelson Gamini Perera born to J.K. Moses Perera and V.W Leegiya Fernando on 14th December 1964, is the eldest son of a family consisting of four brothers and a sister.

He received his primary education from the St Joseph Vass College, Wennapuwa, and later, he joined the St Paul's Minor Seminary at Marawila where he completed his secondary education attending St Xavier's College, Marawila.

His higher education was completed at the National Seminary of Our Lady of Lanka, Ampitiya, and was ordained a priest on 20th July 1991 at Mother of Sorrow's Church Nanimadama.

Fr Luke Nelson had been working as the assistant parish priest in St. Anne's National Shrine, Thalawila from 1991-1992, Nattandiya - 1992, Borelessa -1993. Then he served as the Vice-Rector at the St. Paul's Minor Seminary in 1994 and then was appointed as the parish priest of St. Mary's Cathedral in 1995.

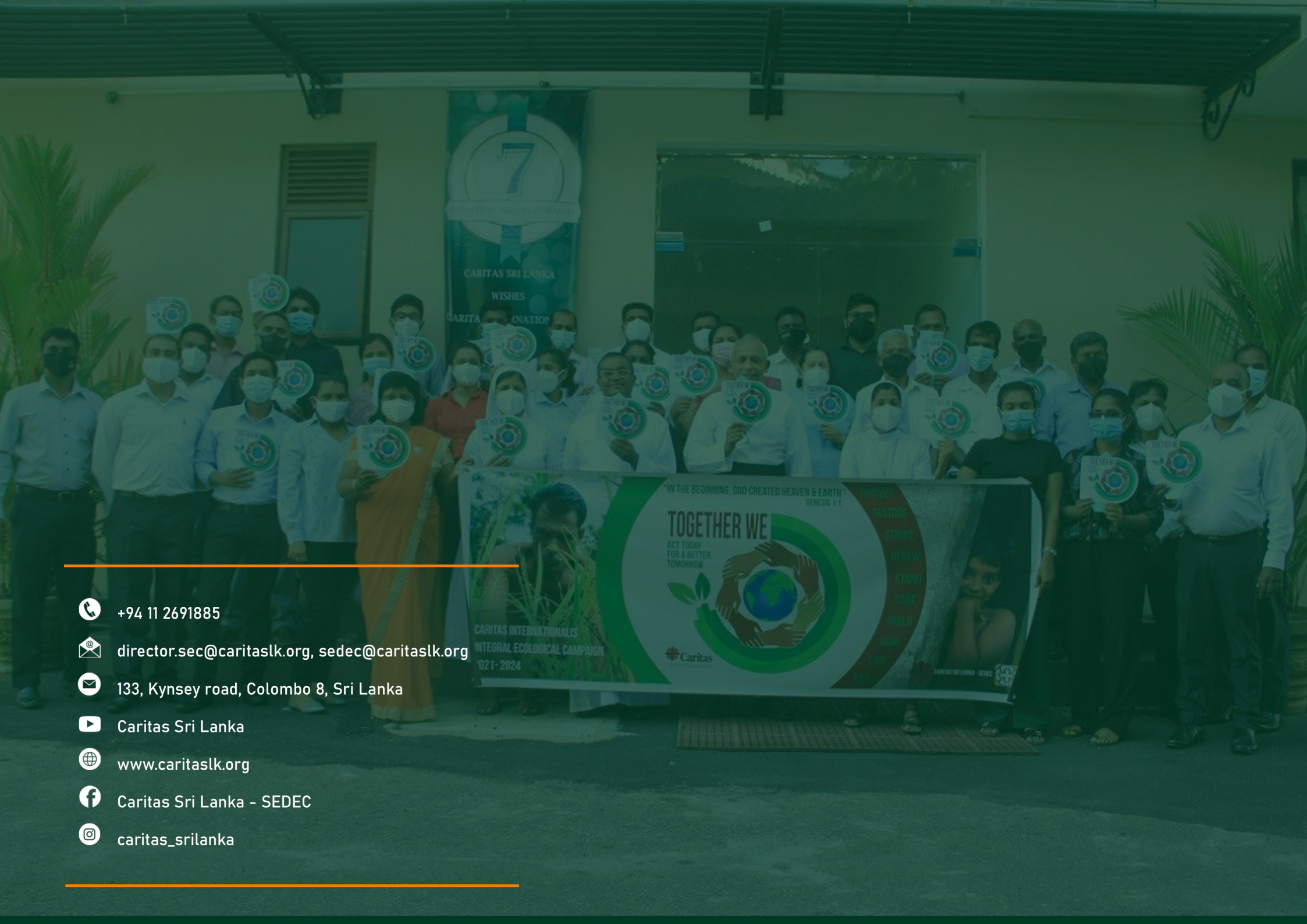
He was the parish priest at St. Anthony's Shrine, Kottapitiya and served as the Administrator at St. Anne's National Shrine, Thalawila.

He also served as the Diocesan Director of Lakrivi and Holy Childhood Societies. He was once the Bursar of National Seminary Ampitiya, and later became the Procurator General in the Diocese of Chilaw.

In 2019, he was appointed as the Director of Caritas Chilaw - Janasaviya, SEDEC.

He was also the National Director for the National Catholic Commission for Interreligious Dialogue and Ecumenism in 2021.





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