

INCORE STUDY VISIT TO SRI LANKA
8th-16th October 2005

Contents

	Pages
Background	2-2
Participants	3-5
1. Overview of Sri Lanka Peace Process	5-8
2. Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission	9-11
3. Meeting with Neelan Trust	12-14
4. 'Partnerships to Promote Peace' Presentation	15-22
5. Power Breakfast with Janice Tracey	23-26
6. Meeting with Ceylon Chamber of Commerce	27-30
7. Meeting with Secretariat Coordinating the Peace Process	31-33
8. Meeting with National Anti-War Front	34-35
9. Meeting with INPACT	36-37
10. Meeting with Colombo University	38
11. Debrief with the Neelan Trust	39-41
Participant Feedback	42

Background

INCORE/University of Ulster Links to Sri Lanka

The University of Ulster (UU) has a variety of ongoing connections to Sri Lanka. A substantial number of Sri Lankan Teacher Educators have, for example, graduated from Masters programmes offered by the School of Education. The UNESCO Centre, based in Coleraine, has also played an important role in supporting the education reform process in the region.

As an action-oriented centre of excellence for peace and conflict research affiliated to the United Nations University, INCORE is committed to addressing the causes and consequences of conflict in both Northern Ireland and internationally. Since the centre was established in 1993, it has provided a variety of study tour programmes and short courses for individuals and groups from Sri Lanka.

Most recently, INCORE hosted a visit by the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Hon. Mahinda Rajapakse to Northern Ireland, 20th to 22nd March 2005. During this visit, the Prime Minister was briefed about varied peace and conflict related activity ongoing across the University; the current state of the peace process in Northern Ireland with a particular focus on strategies for breaking political stalemate and deadlock; and the post-conflict social, economic and physical regeneration of the region.

Business & Peace

Through its ongoing work in Sri Lanka, INCORE was introduced to the Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust – a grant-making organisation that aims to collectively promote peace, reconciliation and justice, sharing responsibility, resources and risks through strategic partnerships with civil society, public sector, private sector, academia and donors. More specifically, the Neelan Trust has identified the need to promote private sector involvement in the peace process in Sri Lanka and has therefore recently established an innovative partnership with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

INCORE immediately recognised the importance of this approach and discussed with the Trust whether they could benefit from exposure to some of Northern Ireland's knowledge and experience in this regard. Both organisations subsequently agreed that through its Local International Learning Project (LILP), INCORE would organise for a small delegation of individuals with proven track records of leading initiatives that have enhanced the contribution of business to peace in Northern Ireland to travel to Sri Lanka 8th-16th October 2005.

The main objectives of the trip were to:

1. Establish relationships between business leaders in Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland.
2. Exchange 'best practices' and lessons learned, and explore the possibility of replicating initiatives and strategies.
3. Plan for a more substantial visit from Northern Ireland to Sri Lanka in January 2005 to coincide with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce's annual economic summit.

This report summarises some of the discussions that took place during this visit and explores some of the broad themes emerging from them - it does not necessarily represent a consensus view.

Participants

Peter Bunting - Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Peter Bunting is the Assistant General Secretary for the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. Peter has the responsibility of co-ordinating and developing the Trade Union Movement in Northern Ireland. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) is the single umbrella organisation for trade unions on the island of Ireland. The Northern Ireland Committee (NIC) of the ICTU is the representative body for approximately 36 trade unions with 220,000 members across Northern Ireland. Peter also co-ordinates the work of NIC.ICTU Belfast office which includes eight staff members who support a variety of trade union initiatives.

The trade union movement actively contributes to social and development life in Northern Ireland. For example, as well as a number of community initiatives, Peter is involved in the following organisations: The Board of Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company; The Management Committee of Counteract (Anti-Intimidation Unit); The Management Committee of Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre; Belfast City Council Good Relations Committee; Economic Development Forum; and Concordia (Social Partnership Alliance).

A native of Belfast, Peter has been an active trade unionist since 1972. Prior to his appointment to Congress Peter served as General Secretary of the National Bus and Rail Union in the Republic of Ireland. Peter held every representative position within this trade union from shop steward to General President. He holds a BA (Hons) from the Faculty of Business, Economic and Social Science, Trinity College, Dublin.

Tom Fraser - University of Ulster

A native of Ayrshire, Professor Fraser was educated at Irvine Royal Academy; The University of Glasgow (MA in Mediaeval and Modern History, Ewing Prize); and The London School of Economics (PhD in International History). Appointed to the University of Ulster in 1969, from 1988-1994 he was Head of the Department of History, and from 1994-1998 Head of the School of History, Philosophy and Politics. He was appointed Provost of the Magee Campus in 2002.

Helen Lewis – INCORE, University of Ulster

Helen Lewis is Project Coordinator of INCORE's Local International Learning Project (LILP) - a project designed to promote the exchange of knowledge and experience between Northern Irish and international policymakers, academics and practitioners on key peace and reconciliation issues. Before coming to INCORE, Helen worked in conflict resolution as a Programme Associate at Search for Common Ground in Washington DC and in international development based in Sub-Saharan Africa. Helen moved back to Northern Ireland after spending 2 years in the United States as a Fulbright Scholar completing her MA in International Relations at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University. She has a BA and MA in History from the University of Edinburgh.

Conal McFeely – Creggan Enterprises Limited

Conal is Founder member and current Development Executive for Creggan Enterprises, a social economy enterprise company providing 100,000sq feet of retail, community service and workspace provision. Since its inception in 1991, CEL has acquired an asset base in excess of £3.5m, and has attracted investment in excess of £9m. CEL has been responsible for the creation of 165 jobs and is seen as a model of best practice within Northern Ireland and beyond.

Conal's board membership and social economy advisory roles include: Department for Social Development: Urban Regeneration and Community Development Group – Member of Academic and Practitioners Group advising government re: Neighbourhood renewal strategy throughout Northern Ireland, Social Economy Network / Forum: Strategy & Structure Working Group

Advisor developing a new social economy framework for Northern Ireland; The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland Local Strategy Partnership (Derry/Londonderry); NIC ICTU Representative on Interreg IIIA Monitoring Committee.

Founder member of Maydown Precision Engineering, Creggan Enterprises Limited, John Hewitt Co-op Bar and Restaurant; Belfast Unemployed Workers Group; Social Economy Solutions; Social Economy Agency, and voluntary director, Ulster Community Investment Trust; The Playhouse; Cresco Trust and Acorn Fund. Publications include: Death of a Factory – a community response to a multinational closure; Building a Social Economy for the New Millennium; The Art of Mediation – The Politics of conflict transformation.

Vilma Patterson – Women in Business Network

Vilma is a Director of John G Duff (Annadale) Ltd est.1948, recently diversifying from being construction contractors to becoming Consultants for natural and artificial grass. Being a small specialist Company Vilma carries out many roles including that of Finance and Administration Director and Training Co-ordinator and Quality Assurance Auditor. She also has responsibility for the recruitment and management of staff, and overseeing the Equality Policy and the Health and Safety Policy.

Under Public Appointments, Vilma was appointed to the Independent Monitoring Board for Maghaberry Prison in 1996. The duties of the Board include monitoring the prison establishment and the care and welfare of prisoners. This also includes following up on complaints and queries raised by prisoners on any issue concerning their time in prison. Chair of HMP Maghaberry Board 1999-2002.

Vilma is currently Chairman of the Northern Ireland Association of Members of Independent Monitoring Boards. This organisation represents the Members of the Independent Monitoring Boards of the three prison establishments in Northern Ireland. The Association will liaise on Policy matters and identifies areas of concern within the Northern Ireland Prison Service, Northern Ireland Office, Agencies and relevant bodies. Vilma has managed the relevant processes and policies involved in the changeover of the Northern Ireland Prison Service to the newly established independent secretariat office within the Prisoner Ombudsman's Office, which included overseeing a legislative change of name, making amendments to the office's statutory role and supervising the exchange of administrative support..

Was founding Chair of the Women in Business Network for the greater Belfast area 2002 – 2004 and helped develop the vision and strategy for the Network. In 2004 Vilma participated on a US State Dept study visit to the USA in order to look at female entrepreneurship. Vilma has also worked to bring together the women's business networks in Northern Ireland under a single umbrella organisation and create linkages with similar networks in the island of Ireland.

Vilma sits on the Entrepreneurship Forum, the 'Go for It' Advisory Board and on the Training Committee of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB). A member of Kirk Session in her Church, she shares special responsibility for youth work both within the Church and in the community which is on the edge of an interface area in Belfast. In New Year Honours 2004 she received the MBE for services to business and the community. Married to Geoff with one son and one daughter.

Gillian Robinson - INCORE, University of Ulster

Gillian Robinson, is Director of INCORE at the University of Ulster and Director of ARK (The Northern Ireland Social and Political Archive www.ark.ac.uk). She is the 2003 Eisenhower Fellow from Northern Ireland. She has been involved in the monitoring of social attitudes in Northern Ireland since 1989 and co-directs the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey series. Her research interests include social attitudes, gender roles, policy development in transition and

research methodology including issues around researching violent societies and comparative methods. She has published extensively on these issues including six books and numerous articles.

Janice Tracey – Londonderry/Londonderry Chamber of Commerce

As Chief Executive of the Londonderry/Londonderry Chamber of Commerce, Janice has responsibility for the delivery of current economic development projects, the development and delivery of future projects, the implementation of Chamber's short and long term strategy and the provision of a wide range of services to member companies. Janice acts as the interface between the Chamber and their partner organisations i.e. educational establishments, government bodies (North & South), support agencies, training organisations and the community and voluntary sector.

She is also Chairperson, Women in Enterprise; Board Member, EURES Cross Border Partnership; Committee Member, Chamber of Commerce Education Committee; Committee Member, Chamber of Commerce Economic Committee; Core Steering Team Member on the Integrated Plan for Small Business Development; Member of INI Stakeholder Forum; Member of NI Energy Holding Company; Member of NW Stakeholders Alliance.

1. Overview of Sri Lankan Peace Process - Bala Krishna

Monday October 10th 2005, 9:30-10:45

- 1.1 Bala welcomed the Local International Learning Project (LILP) Delegation to Sri Lanka and explained that he would use the session to provide them with a brief background to the Sri Lankan peace process. He began by describing how Sri Lanka's political system and economy tends to exclude minorities. This can be traced back to the imposition of a Westminster model of democracy imposed on post-colonial Sri Lanka. Whilst this model stipulates that Parliament should not take decisions that discriminate against minorities, in reality the two major political parties have ignored this guarantee since Sri Lanka's independence in 1948. Parliament has become superior to the constitution and minorities have traditionally felt excluded from mainstream political and economic life. Their right to active participation has also been violated. For example, during the 1970's Tamils were denied the right to non-violent protest.
- 1.2 These factors, together with inspiration taken from South Africa and the Middle East, contributed to the resort to violent tactics by some Tamils. From the Middle East, for example, Tamils imported the concept of the 'homeland' and benefited from practical forms of assistance such as participation in training camps etc.
- 1.3 By 1979, the introduction of a Prevention of Terrorism Act had escalated and militarised the conflict. With the eruption of riots in Colombo in 1983, and India's increased involvement, particularly in terms of military support, the conflict seemed to have become intractable. Both sides were operating with extreme brutality and working to convince their own side that negotiations were not possible.
- 1.4 Bala outlined six key dynamics at play in the conflict in Sri Lanka, 1) the perception of 'the other' and 'the enemy,' 2) the ready availability of arms, 3) the faith in arms as a means to achieving desired ends, 4) the role of the media in controlling information, 5) a readiness to take orders that pervades culture in Sri Lanka, and 6) a cult of war and heroism.
- 1.5 The root cause of the conflict however, is ultimately that power has been exclusively associated with the majority in Sri Lanka. Bala referred to India as the only example of a state that been successful in preserving both its unity and diversity, and suggested this could largely be attributed to India's commitment to secularism.
- 1.6 The agreement of a ceasefire in early 2002 was a blessing to all parties in the conflict. It emerged from a mutually hurting stalemate, in which both sides knew they couldn't win militarily, but on the other hand, neither side wanted to back down or accept loss. External international pressure - particularly from the diaspora, Norway and the UN - was also important in bringing the ceasefire to fruition. The first economic contraction in the country's history in 2001 also contributed emerging from a combination of power shortages, budgetary problems, the global slowdown and continuing civil strife.
- 1.7 Unfortunately, the ceasefire was born with a range of problems. Firstly, it lacked a solid all-party commitment to peace and significant public support. Secondly, the ceasefire was not properly defined – especially in relation to human rights issues. Thirdly, the process that was put into place to monitor the ceasefire was inadequate. In particular, it was limited by its focus on complaints made solely by the parties to the agreement, and consequently its investigative capacity has been severely constrained. There was also significant confusion over the role of the ceasefire monitors - were they to act as mediators and facilitators of the peace process?

- 1.8 For all its faults however, the ceasefire did provide valuable space for dialogue and generated genuine hopes for peace. Indeed, opinion surveys now suggest that at the time of the ceasefire 80-90% of Sinhalese, and more than 90% of Tamils, were ready to say 'no' to war.
- 1.9 Bala argued that the Government subsequently failed to deliver in three key areas, 1) addressing the legacy of the war and the 'mindsets' that had sustained it, 2) developing any deep understanding of the Tamil psyche, and 3) establishing an interim or transition administration during which demilitarisation and other measures could have been introduced.
- 1.10 More recently, a variety of issues have undermined the peace process. These have included the involvement of the United States (US) and Japan in organising a donor conference in Washington DC to which the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) - a proscribed terrorist organisation in the US - was inevitably unable to attend. The LTTE's submission of proposals for an Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA) have also come up against majority politics and, in particular, the issue of the Presidential succession. Meanwhile, the LTTE has faced a crisis in terms of an internal split with its Eastern commander with possible links to government military intelligence. These events culminated in the recent assassination of Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar in August 2005.
- 1.11 Bala explained that civil society has responded to the conflict by calling for a bipartisan approach and the development of a constitution that facilitates pluralism, multiethnic power sharing and political resolution. A key problem however, is that the work of civil society has not been consolidated by a mass peace movement. This can, in part, be attributed to the enduringly 'feudal' nature of Sri Lankan society. As a result, people are not inclined to challenge authority, are often state/party-centred in their thinking and generally supportive of a culture of violence. However, ethnic conflict can never be resolved by two parties. Hence there is a need for greater efforts on the part of civil society and for the development of a broader peace agenda including democracy, human rights and development.
- 1.12 Dealing with the past has also been a huge challenge and Bala pointed to the importance of Northern Ireland and South Africa having both recognised that the future cannot be reached by living in the past. Civil society must therefore push for mass education and understanding of the past. During his visits to Sri Lanka in the late 1980's and early 1990's, John Hume played an important role in launching this process by, for example, collecting more than 700,000 signatures on a mass peace petition.
- 1.13 Bala noted that in ignoring all boundaries, the Tsunami provided an important lesson to Sri Lanka – yet Sri Lanka's leaders have failed to recognise it. The Tsunami also resulted in an upsurge of people pushing for peace. The possibility of a joint mechanism for distribution of relief and aid presented a unique opportunity to develop relationships between the LTTE and the government and to introduce elements of power sharing. However, this opportunity was lost due to the politicisation of the issue.
- 1.14 As regards the upcoming elections, Bala noted that currently Ranil Wick-remesinghe is being portrayed as the candidate closest to, and most welcoming of, minorities. However, whoever wins, it is extremely likely there will be some upsurge in violence.

- 1.15 Religion also remains a key factor in the conflict. Interestingly, Christianity encompasses both ethnic constituencies in Sri Lanka which provides a real opportunity for developing relationships. However, this opportunity has not been taken advantage of to date.
- 1.16 A member of the LILP delegation asked about the contribution of Trade Unions to the peace process. Bala explained that trade unions in Sri Lanka are heavily politicised, overwhelmingly welfare oriented and have suffered from a major cull of their leadership. The Teachers Union however, has introduced effective 'health for all' and 'education for all' campaigns.

More generally, the conflict in Sri Lanka is not perceived as a 'national' or 'mainstream' problem. Hence, there is a lack of engagement from all sectors of society. Nevertheless, there is some evidence that this may be beginning to change, for example, as studies of the economic impact of the war are being produced and as new leaders begin to emerge. The attack on Sri Lanka Airport in 2001 was an important turning point in this regard as it forced the business community into recognising that it could no longer continue to simply ignore the war.

2. Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission – Vilja Kutvonan

Monday October 10th, 11:30-12:15

2.1 Vilja introduced herself as a lawyer by profession and explained that the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) created the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) through the signing of the ceasefire agreement on February 22nd 2002. SLMM currently consists of members of the five Nordic countries and staff coming from those countries generally spend one year at a time in Sri Lanka. Vilja suggested that she take the group through the ceasefire agreement - its Preamble, four Articles and Annexes - and outline SLMM's role in monitoring it.

2.2 First, Vilja outlined the role of the SLMM as one of receiving complaints of possible violations of the ceasefire from the government, the LTTE leadership and the armed forces of both Parties. The majority of complaints however, come from the general public in the North and East of Sri Lanka.

The intention of SLMM is to reduce the tension between the Parties by rapidly inquiring into any alleged ceasefire violation. SLMM then tries to solve problems and disputes that arise through the SLMM Local Monitoring Committees in the districts and/or through direct contact between SLMM HQ and the top leadership of the Parties. SLMM informs the Parties on a regular basis about the number of received complaints and ruled violations. These numbers are made public every month on the SLMM website (<http://www.slmm.lk/>). However, SLMM estimates that received complaints are only a tiny fraction of actual ceasefire violations.

2.3 The ceasefire has undoubtedly made life easier in Sri Lanka – particularly in terms of facilitating freedom of movement. Vilja highlighted how Article 1 of the ceasefire states parties shall not move munitions, explosives or military equipment into the area controlled by the other party.

However, an important confidence building measure negotiated around the ceasefire agreement was that SLMM would facilitate some limited movement of armed troops in and out of areas exclusively controlled by one party or the other through provision of an escort service. This was particularly important for troops based in LTTE controlled areas entirely surrounded by government controlled areas. Following an ambush however, SLMM escorts of troops have been stopped and there has been no official troop transport since – exacerbating tension between the parties.

LTTE cadres (the term used to refer to their military officers) are still allowed into government controlled areas, provided that they carry an id card, are unarmed except for one cyanide capsule and that they wear civilian clothes. Instances have been recorded however, of cadres being found in possession of a large number of cyanide capsules thereby arousing suspicion.

2.4 Article 1 of the ceasefire also states that the parties have agreed to a total cessation of military action. Vilja noted that, in fact, a shadow war is ongoing in the jungle areas – killing more than 360 people since February 2005. The area around the East coast is particularly troubled and close to a state of anarchy.

2.5 Vilja explained that disputes over the ceasefire are largely centred on transport and disarmament. The recent split within the LTTE has posed a particular problem in this regard as Karuna's break away faction did not exist at the time of the ceasefire and is therefore under no obligation to disarm. Moreover, the government is not prepared to

deal with Karuna. There are also a variety of other armed elements linked to the army, political parties and other minority groups that are yet to be confirmed. Indeed, conflict in Sri Lanka is not just about the government versus the LTTE but includes a variety of other disputes, for example, conflict between Muslims and Tamils over land. The ceasefire is limited in that it does not address these disputes.

- 2.6 SLMM finds it particularly difficult to fulfil its mission as there are rarely any witnesses willing to come forward to testify to violations of the ceasefire. This is understandable given the brutality of the war to date. Moreover, witnesses are inevitably dissuaded by Sri Lanka's exceptionally low rate of prosecutions – which is approximately 4 out of 100 cases. More generally, SLMM does not possess any investigative powers but merely observes and records violations.
- 2.7 Article 2 of the agreement contains various clauses on 'measures to restore normalcy.' Vilja suggested that the ceasefire was particularly lacking here in failing to proscribe child recruitment – up to 60% of LTTE forces are between the ages of 9 and 19.
- 2.8 Vilja responded to criticisms of SLMM for failing to engage in human rights monitoring. She noted that powers to do so were simply not enshrined in the ceasefire agreement and that the best solution to this would be to negotiate a separate human rights agreement.

*The Ceasefire Agreement can be viewed in full online: <http://www.slmm.lk/documents/cfa.htm>
Recent summaries of recorded complaints and violations can also be viewed: <http://www.slmm.lk/>*

3. Meeting with Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust Tuesday October 11th 2005, 09:30-10:30

Patrick Canagasingham, Executive Director of the Neelan Trust opened the session by describing how the Trust is devoted to the legacy left by Dr Tiruchelvam - a scholar, activist, legislator, practicing lawyer, social scientist and politician who was assassinated in July, 1999. The Trust was subsequently established in 2001 and is supported by the Ford and Rockefeller Foundation as well as various bilateral donors.

Since its establishment, a range of partnerships have been developed with Harvard University, the International Community Peace Network, Voluntary Services Overseas, INCORE (International Conflict Research, University of Ulster), the International Centre for Ethnic Studies and the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

As an indigenous grant making institution, the Neelan Trust's vision is of the establishment and protection of a just, equitable and peaceful society. Its mission is 'to collectively promote peace, reconciliation and justice, sharing responsibility, resources and risks through strategic partnerships with civil society, public sector, private sector, academia and donors.'

The Trust's grant-making is focused on human rights, rights-based approaches to conflict prevention and resolution; power-sharing and devolution arrangements (particularly looking to India and Pakistan as models); alternative and inclusive models of negotiating peace and transition; reconciliation; and coexistence.

Shirley Candappa, Programme Director described a number of successful activities recently funded by the Trust including:

- The Uva Wellasa Farmer Women's Organisation use of theatre to promote dialogue and education between communities in Moneragala in the South and Batticaloa in the East.
- The production of two documentaries in Sri Lanka. The films, 'The Art of Forgetting' and 'Lanka-The other Side of War and Peace' document the stories of victims of both the ethnic war as well as of those victims of the southern rebellion during the period 1989 to 1991.
- The Civil Rights Movement's initiative to promote fair and free elections that called on people to take a look at each particular candidate, and avoid casting their votes for candidates who had a history of involvement in violence tactics.

* Various members of the group asked whether the Civil Rights Movement's initiative ran the risk of excluding those who have transformed from violent to political means but continue to view their past use of violence as 'legitimate.' Patrick suggested this was not the case as the campaign was focused specifically on the use of violence as a tactic during elections – a phenomenon more common in Sri Lanka than in Northern Ireland.

The Trust takes a unique approach to its grant-making by focusing on sustainability, innovation, and mainstreaming capacity building – devoting 20-30% of its funds to this end. Moreover, in the past, the peace process in Sri Lanka followed one-track or at best, two-track diplomacy with the private sector being isolated from it. The Trust's unusual approach is therefore to partner private sector organisations with civil society organisations to promote peace initiatives. Private sector involvement at both an active level and at the level of lobbying has achieved impressive results in South Africa, and Northern Ireland and it is believed that similar results can be achieved in Sri Lanka.

This approach will build on research carried out by the non-governmental organisation International Alert (http://www.international-alert.org/our_work/themes/business.php), as well as the 'Sri Lanka First' media campaign, and the Business for Peace Alliance (BPA) that promotes business to business cooperation. By forging cross-sectoral partnerships, however, the Neelan Trust will take this work to a new level.

- 3.6 Patrick highlighted the Trust's recent agreement with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC) regarding how they will work together to fund the following initiatives:
- Capacity building of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) involved in promoting peace, reconciliation, justice and human rights
 - Dissemination of pro-peace messages via Media activities on peace building (electronic and print media) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
 - Performing arts (drama, music, dance), visual arts (posters, murals, comic books, pamphlets) to carry the pro-peace message.
- 3.7 The group discussed the value of connecting Northern Ireland to Sri Lanka. Patrick suggested this lay in three main areas:
1. Sharing 'best practices' and learning from one another.
 2. Collaboration to promote multi-track diplomacy.
 3. Mutual institutional strengthening.
- 3.8 Members of the group noted that similarly to Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka is in a transition period that provides a unique window of opportunity to impact on politicians and bureaucrats.
- 3.9 LILP delegates described how a pot of funding provided the necessary incentive for different community representatives, business persons and politicians to come together in various 'Local Strategy Partnerships' (LSP's) in Northern Ireland to distribute money locally to community projects and programmes. This could be an important model for Sri Lanka to draw on.
- 3.10 Other 'best practices' that Sri Lanka could potentially draw on were suggested by the group including:
- Social auditing – as a process that enables an organisation to assess and demonstrate its social, economic, and environmental benefits and limitations. It is a way of measuring the extent to which an organisation lives up to the shared values and objectives it has committed itself to.
 - INCORE's Conflict Resolution Evaluation project that aimed to: collect evaluation models currently being used in this field and identify relevant approaches from related fields; summarize the academic literature specific to conflict resolution and peacebuilding evaluation; and convene a working group to begin to explore and refine the key questions and challenges.
 - The city visioning process that took place in Derry/Londonderry/LondonDerry/Londonderry
 - The YouthCouncil for Northern Ireland, University of Ulster, and Public Achievement 's 'Youth Work in Contested Spaces' project that aims to build the capacity of the youth work community.

- The work of the Nerve Centre in Derry/Londonderry which brings popular music, film, video, animation and interactive multimedia together under one roof. The Nerve Centre promotes creative collaboration and fusion between artists and provides a cultural outlet for many young people who feel excluded from what is traditionally regarded as the "arts sector."
- ADM/CPA, Anne Molloy and Martin O'Brian's anti-poverty work.
- Northern Ireland's Community Relations Council which was set up to promote better community relations between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland and, equally, to promote recognition of cultural diversity; and Future Ways at the University of Ulster that works to find practical and human ways that people can live, learn and work together equitably with their differences in a society emerging from conflict.

4. Partnerships to Promote Peace Presentation Tuesday 11th October 2005, 15:00-17:30

4.1 Patrick Canagasingham, Executive Director of the Neelan Trust, introduced the LILP Delegation to an audience of 30-50 civil society organisations. Each member of the delegation then gave a brief Power Point presentation outlined below:

4.2 **Gillian Robinson: Northern Ireland, An Overview**

Facts & Figures

- 1994 Ceasefires
- 10 April 1998 Belfast Agreement
- 3,600 killed, 30,000 injured
- 22 May 1998 Referenda North and South endorsed the Agreement
- December 1999 legislative Assembly
- February 2000 Assembly suspended
- Oct 2002 Assembly suspended

Political Parties

Unionist/ Loyalist/ Protestant

- Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)
- Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)
- Progressive Unionist Party

Nationalist/Republican/Catholic

- Sinn Fein
- Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP)

Paramilitaries

- Ulster Volunteer Force
- Ulster Defence Association
- Ulster Freedom Fighters
- Irish Republican Army

Why the Peace Process?

- Realisation that the war could not be won
- SDLP engagement with Sinn Fein
- Discrimination against Catholics beginning to be addressed
- Increased willingness by many within civil society, eg business, trade unions and community groups to actively engage in process of contact
- Some new parties
- International support USA, Europe, South Africa

Today

- Deeply divided society
- Increased residential segregation
- Segregated educational system
- Challenge of reconciliation
- Increased diversity from immigration
- Recent violence in loyalist areas
- But things have moved on since 1998

4.3 **Tom Fraser, Partnering with Universities**

- UU Tech: Consultancy, Patents, IP
- UUSPP

	Companies	Employees
Magee	9	255+ (inc 50 incubation)
Coleraine	7	43+
Jordanstown	10	55+
	<u>26</u>	<u>353+</u>

4.4

Conal McFeely: Partnerships in the Social Economy

What is a Social Economy Enterprise?

- It has social and economic aims.
- Objectives might be to create jobs, provide services to neglected or demand-deficient areas, training for the unemployed, recycling, community finance, community child care or community managed workspace.
- It will be owned and managed by the people it aims to help and its stakeholders.
- It can have a mix of income: Grants, fees/sales, public sector contracts, fund raising and volunteer input.

Types of Structures

- **Credit Unions** – providing access to community finance.
- **Co-operatives** – associations of persons united to meet common, economic and social needs through jointly owned enterprises.
- **Community Businesses** – enterprises which have a strong geographical definition and focus on local markets and services.
- **Housing Associations** – providing access to housing for special needs and other disadvantaged groups.
- **Intermediary Labour Market Companies** – providing training and work experience for the long-term unemployed.
- **Social Firms** – providing employment and training to people with disabilities and to other disadvantaged groups.
- **Charities Trading Arms** – enabling charities to meet their objectives in innovative ways as trading companies.

The Scale of the Social Economy

- 3 billion people - half the world's population - are to a significant extent involved and benefit from the Social Economy.
- An estimated 725 million people are members of co-operatives affiliated to the International Co-operative Alliance.
- Almost 10 million people are employed in the social economy within the EU with 1 million social enterprises accounting for 10% of GNP.
- Represents between 5% and 8% of economic activity in Northern Ireland.
- 5% equates to 30,000 jobs, 8% to 48,000 jobs.
- The sector in NI is comparable to the tourism industry 5.6% or the construction industry 5.1%
- All EU Member States' National Plans must facilitate growth of the social economy.

Social Economy In Northern Ireland

- Population 105,000
- Catholic population of the city is 75.4% and the Protestant population is 23.3%

- Derry/Londonderry is ranked the second most deprived region in Northern Ireland
- Derry/Londonderry has the worst economic activity rate of any city in Northern Ireland or Britain - 38% of the working population are without a job (25,080)
- 46% of the Derry/Londonderry population live in the most deprived Super Output Areas of NI

Peace Building

Creggan Enterprises addresses the legacy of the conflict that has accentuated high levels of social and economic deprivation within the Creggan area by:

- stimulating investment
- encouraging entrepreneurship
- creating and maintaining jobs
- facilitating skills, capacity building and developing cross-community interchange
- building community sustainability.

4.5

Vilma Patterson: Women in Business Networks

Topics of Discussion

- Research
- Context of female entrepreneurship in Northern Ireland
- Why do we need networks for women?
- What is the value of networks?
- Current position

Research

- Evidence based research was carried out due to a growing recognition that women are under represented and that they have a valuable contribution to make to the economy.
- Overseas Economic Co-operative Development (OECD)
- Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)
- Household Entrepreneurship Survey - NI

Why do we need Networks for Women

- Research has shown that women do not have equal opportunities in terms of work experience.
- Social expectations regarding women's roles and family responsibilities usually mean that women assume a greater responsibility for household and dependent care.
- Social structures and the way women socialise influence the human and social capital endowments with which they start and grow their businesses. Source OECD

Context of Female Entrepreneurship in NI

- In the USA women owned businesses equate to 22%
- In England women owned businesses equate to 9%
- In Northern Ireland women owned businesses equate to 5%
- Government launched an 'Investing in Women' Strategy to increase the number of women owned businesses

What is the value of the Networks?

- Business Women's Networks nurture and support women
- Environment is non threatening, tailored specifically for business women
- Women succeed in developing both personally and with their business
- Business to business opportunities

Current Position

- 5 women's networks covering the whole of Northern Ireland.
- Membership increasing with both women thinking of and starting their own business
- Increased percentage of women starting their own business
- Linkages being formed with similar business women's networks in the island of Ireland.
- New initiatives being developed to assist women to grow their businesses.

Finally

- Women are empowered to join other mixed networks and forums
- Improved communication links, particularly sole traders and small businesses
- Role models and the potential for peer mentoring.

4.6 **Janice Tracey: Londonderry Chamber of Commerce**

Who Are We?

WE ARE

- A business representation organisation
- Made up of 270 member companies from across all business sectors
- In Business for Business

-the leading voice of business in the NW

What Do We Do?

WE REPRESENT MEMBERS' BEST INTERESTS

We promote the creation of world class physical, economic, and social infrastructure appropriate to the city's role as the regional capital of the NW.

...We Influence...We represent ...We Network. .We Provide Services....

How do we do it?

Partnership
and
Leadership

The Impact of Europe

The EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (Peace II)

Peace II is a unique EU funding programme which covers Northern Ireland and the six border counties of Ireland and aims to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and promote reconciliation.

Local Strategy Partnerships

4.7 **Peter Bunting: Trade Union Partnerships**

Irish Congress of Trade Unions

- Confederation of Trade Unions on island of Ireland – North and South
- 56 Trade Unions affiliated
- 800,000 members of whom 220,000 based in Northern Ireland
- Largest Independent Civic Organisation in Northern Ireland

- 1964 – Recognition of Northern Ireland
- 1966 – Campaign on Citizens Rights in N. I.
- 1969 – Programme for Peace and Progress
- 1976 – Better Life For All Campaign (Fair Employment Legislation)
- 1987 – Peace Work in Progress
- 1987 – Hands Off My Mate Campaign
- 1989 – Legislation banning flags and emblems from workplace
- 1990 – Establishment of Counteract
- 1993 – Organisation of Street Demos
- 1994 – Declaration by CBI and ICTU on Workplace Shared Space
- 1994 – G 7 – Social Partners
- 1998 – Campaign Yes for Good Friday Agreement
- 1998 – Support of Patton Commission
- 2000 Onwards:
 - Engagement with Paramilitary Groups
 - Cross Party MLA Group
 - Mediation Role
 - Organised Mass Rallies against sectarian killings

2001, Peter Shirlow Survey:

- 18–26 year olds 68%
- 95% of children socialised
- Single identity schools
- 70% of Social Housing single identity

- Social Integration
- Education, Housing and Cultural
- Re-generation of Trades Councils
- Council of the Isles
- TUC / ICTU / STUC / WTUC
- Interface Engagement
- Anti-Sectarian Fund
- Support for Community and Voluntary Sector
- Leadership Course

It is imperative that a cessation of violence is not seen to be an end in itself. Real peace can only come about when the socio economic problems can be addressed.

“In many ways the unions represent the most robust repository, at a mass level, of a civic culture, stemming from their commitment to social solidarity.”

Wilson and Gallagher

4.8 Following their presentations, the LILP delegation invited questions from the audience. An interesting discussion then followed examining issues such as:

- The risks and opportunities of partnerships
- The gap between male and female entrepreneurship
- The intersection between ethnic minorities in Northern Ireland and sectarianism, for example, do ethnic minorities vote along sectarian lines?
- The importance of the IRA's recent decommissioning
- The role of the US in the Northern Ireland peace process

5. Institute of Directors Power Breakfast with Janice Tracey Wednesday 12th October 2005, 07:30-9:00

5.1 Mr Juriansz from the Institute of Directors welcomed the LILP delegation and, in particular, Janice Tracey to the breakfast. Janice began her remarks by thanking everyone for coming along despite their busy schedules and noted how good it was to see such a high level of interest from the business community in how the private sector can contribute the peace process. She then introduced herself as Janice Tracey, Chief Executive of the Chamber of Commerce in Derry/Londonderry.

5.2 Janice noted that in talking about Peace and Economic Development – 2 sides of the one coin – she would try to give a broad overview of the impact that the Chamber of Commerce in Derry/Londonderry has had on Progressing Peace in the North West region and promoting Economic Development.

In doing that, Janice explained that she would be looking back and talking about how some progress has been made, and looking forward to the possibility of a better future and surmising how we might get there.

She noted that given the short period of time of available, she wouldn't be able to cover all the interlinking actions carried out by various other stakeholders and sectors such as the role played by Politicians, the public sector and the role played by the community and voluntary sector from both sides of the divide. But, she would give a flavour of how the private sector can make an impact on the peace process and a few examples of areas in which they can engage.

5.3 Derry/Londonderry is the 2nd City in Northern Ireland. It is located in the Northern tip of an island which covers 2 jurisdictions and has been a centre of conflict for over 30 years. In the darkest days of conflict when civil unrest was at its most volatile, Janice described how the business community could only react to the external forces of hatred, mistrust, discrimination and extreme violence. This reactive state was not a natural one for the entrepreneur who is normally proactive and visionary.

Sectors such as tourism, night-time economy, arts, sports and the retail sector were particularly adversely affected by the routine bombing of city centre and the constant security alerts and clashes between rival groups.

In this context, the challenges for the manufacturing sector included maintaining distribution channels, recruiting staff, maintaining moral, and discrimination to name but a few. Unreliability and inefficiency, two of the main enemies of successful business became common place.

Foreign Direct Investment was rare and business confidence was so low that the growth rate for indigenous businesses was expressed as a negative.

Heavy expenditure on security meant that there was little left for investment in access infrastructure and what was left was spent on the First City – Belfast – 75 miles away from Derry/Londonderry.

- 5.4 However, Janice then went on to describe how verified decommissioning has taken place - taking the guns out of day to day life in Ireland and how civil society is moving swiftly towards normalisation.

The tourism sector, recognised as a key economic driver by both the public and private sector is performing at its highest rate since the conflict began with numerous business initiatives arising out of increased business confidence. The potential for tourism was one of the key issues that led the private sector to become more heavily involved in the peace process with the realisation that the dividend from peace would be a vibrant and thriving tourism sector, led by the private sector.

The retail sector still has challenges but they are from multinationals rather than conflict. Manufacturing is in decline – a challenge not necessarily related to the conflict but a challenge nonetheless.

Derry/Londonderry has fast been developing a sense of self-confidence and may have acquired itself a new suitor. Northbrook Technology, Homeloan Management Ltd, and Prumerica are examples of the large ICT and financial services businesses taking advantage of this regions newfound fondness for technology.

There has also been enormous growth in the rate of indigenous business start ups, with an unprecedented number of people choosing the path of self employment. Since 1998 numbers of new business starts have grown from 50 per year to 350 per year and rising fast.

- 5.5 Despite this progress, Janice suggested there are still challenges ahead – Derry/Londonderry has moved from a fourth class to a 2nd class access infrastructure. It relies heavily on public sector employment and high numbers of the population are economically inactive (over 40%). Some of these challenges, but not all, are a legacy of the conflict.
- 5.6 All in all, there has been a massive increase in business confidence. This coupled with a strong social economy sector, based on the principles of self help and community sustainability sees the city and the region moving in the right direction. It's what the Chamber calls the 'changing face of Derry/Londonderry.'
- 5.7 Since 1885 – Derry/Londonderry has had a Chamber of Commerce. It has had various Champions. The Chamber has identified and nourished leaders and potential leaders in a planned and strategic way and given them a mandate from the private sector to: negotiate with government, represent in partnerships and mediate at the grass roots level. Janice stated that the mandate from a strong business community cannot be overestimated.
- 5.8 Janice outlined how the Chamber has focused on partnership and leadership on two levels. At a strategic level the Chamber lobbied, influenced, represented, negotiated and downright nagged at government, politicians and civil servants. It also used the power of “employers” and “wealth creators” to force the hand of these key decision makers towards peace and sub regional decision making.

At an operational level the Chamber worked with its member companies, the businesses at the coal face to stimulate ownership and civic responsibility, build their capacity, enhance their processes and encourage progress in their business life cycle.

- 5.8 Janice concluded that business involvement in the peace process is not just about money – although that always helps. She described a number of examples, including how business leaders have helped to negotiate deals around contentious parades in Northern Ireland, as well as the Chamber’s involvement in regeneration work.
- 5.9 The regional approach of the Chamber has also been critical – an approach that depends on:
- Recognition of the island of Ireland as our optimum business operating environment.
 - Concurrently securing the support of the “LONDON” connection.
 - Partnering with neighbouring chambers from both across the border and the political divide.
- 5.9 She noted that the Chamber is not politicised and indeed the private sector more generally is not political. However, they have taken a conscious decision to influence politicians and their policies this year through:
- In camera dinners with key political leaders.
 - Business lunches with key political speakers.
 - Seminar with the head of policing for Northern Ireland.
 - Conference with head of NI Civil Service as keynote speaker.
 - Hard hitting policy papers on business issues.
 - Media statements on challenging political issues.
- 5.10 Janice concluded that business must take ownership and responsibility in the peace process, and this will bring the inevitable dividend of peace and prosperity.

“The private sector has been to the fore in peacebuilding and co-operation and nowhere more than Derry/Londonderry. They see that peace and economic development are two sides of the one coin.”

(Dermot Ahern, Minister for Foreign Affairs (Ireland) 7th October 2005)

6. Meeting with Ceylon Chamber Of Commerce Wednesday 12th October 2005, 9:30:11:00

- 6.1 Mr Deva Rodrigo, Chairman of Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC) welcomed the LILP delegates to Sri Lanka and noted that he frequently uses the example of the 'Celtic Tiger' in his speeches. He noted that if Sri Lanka could emulate Ireland's growth in GDP per capita income, which is now higher than €35,000, then it would be well on its way to economic success.
- 6.2 Peter Bunting provided some background to Ireland's economic success in this regard. First, he described the Programme for National Recovery agreed in 1987 between the Government and the 'social partners,' that is, the trade unions, employer associations and other civic associations. This agreement was a trade off for the Trade Unions as it set pay rises below the rate of inflation in return for additions and improvements made to various social programmes which, for example, increased welfare and benefits, and reduced taxation for the marginalised and greater provision of affordable housing and childcare.
- 6.3 Economic growth subsequently grew to an average of more than 5 per cent per annum. However, this growth has also brought with it some problems. For example, it has generated a high demand for immigration and Ireland must now grapple with issues such as racism and exploitation of migrant workers.
- 6.4 Over the years, industrial disputes have also decreased. This industrial peace has not only allowed businesses to plan their costs but reduced the 'trust deficit' between the private sector and the trade unions. Peter noted how crucial partnerships and dialogue were, and still are, to the Celtic Tiger. He also stated that tensions nevertheless remained.
- 6.5 Other contributing factors to Ireland's rapid economic growth included a relatively low corporate tax rate – especially in contrast to that in Northern Ireland. The Institutes of Technology also played a key role in the development of the Celtic Tiger through provision of entrants to the workforce. Indeed, changes were made to their curricula to meet the needs of Ireland's high tech cluster. The increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Ireland was also important, though Peter highlighted how for FDI to be really useful it is important that firms locate their R&D sections in-country
- 6.6 Conal McFeely complimented the Chamber on their commitment to corporate social responsibility and introduced himself as someone who has worked at the grassroots level in communities that have borne the brunt of the conflict in Northern Ireland. He described the importance of linkages between the private and community and voluntary sector in Northern Ireland and how similar linkages developed through the CCC's upcoming Economic Summit in January could contribute to consolidation of the ceasefire in Sri Lanka.
- 6.7 Conal then discussed the significance of the historic Conference on Trade and Investment held in Washington DC in May 1995 which focused on developing economic opportunities in Northern Ireland and the border counties in the South. By engaging both business and political leaders this conference was critical in promoting forward thinking and risk taking. It also drove home some hard lessons from America's corporate world.
- 6.8 This conference also introduced participants to economic and social models, particularly in terms of growing small and medium enterprises (SME's) and social enterprises.

Conal has been personally involved in social economy ventures in the Creggan community area in Derry/Londonderry. These initiatives have successfully regenerated the area having delivered both an enterprise park and more than 165 jobs. This model is now being replicated at opposite ends of the political/religious spectrum in the Lisburn area.

- 6.9 Conal described how the Irish model of social partnership with its involvement of not only trade unions and employer associations but a wide range of civil associations, its use of deliberation as much as bargaining and its focus on decentralised agreements was introduced into the peace process in Northern Ireland.
- 6.10 Tom Fraser highlighted the importance of having a strong university presence in Derry/Londonderry and how the University of Ulster is currently driving forward in terms of world class research in specific areas such as ICT, artificial intelligence and nano-technology. A key challenge is that many students perceive the public sector to be the 'gold standard' of employment in Northern Ireland and are therefore less interested in starting up their own companies and entrepreneurship more generally.
- 6.11 Gillian Robinson discussed the relevance of INCORE, University of Ulster as an international centre of excellence for peace and conflict research located in a deeply divided city – Derry/Londonderry – in Northern Ireland. She discussed the work of the centre in terms of its focus on research, teaching/training and working with policymakers and practitioners. Helen Lewis added that INCORE has a long history of comparing Northern Ireland's experience of peacemaking and peacebuilding with that of other countries emerging from conflict and has found that this type of exchange can, 1) facilitate the transfer of best practices and policies between different countries, 2) foster imaginative ways of co-operation and compromise, and provide space for the development of relationships that would not otherwise have been established, and 3) give hope.
- 6.12 Janice Tracey emphasised the importance of 'joined-up' and partnership approaches in resolving or transforming any conflict. She described how the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce has demonstrated real leadership and taken unprecedented risks in engaging in this type of work. Janice also noted that she senses a real willingness on the part of the private sector to become more involved in the peace process in Sri Lanka and suggested this willingness needs to be harnessed.

At one time, Janice suggested the private sector in Northern Ireland did think of marching ahead alone and believed that their principles, for example, around wealth creation would be enough to sustain prosperity. However, this was not allowed to happen due to leadership provided by key individuals and partnerships. Peace and prosperity cannot be built alone.

- 6.13 Vilma Patterson outlined her background as an independent monitor of prisons, her service on various government committees regarding entrepreneurship and her experience as a female entrepreneur in the male-dominated construction industry. She described how important exchanges and partnership programmes with other women in the UK and the US had been for her own professional and personal development. In particular, they showed her the extent to which women are underrepresented in terms of entrepreneurship in Northern Ireland, for example, around 22% of enterprises are owned by women in the United States (US), whereas this figure is only around 5% in Northern Ireland. Whilst, it is not easy for business to promote underrepresented groups it is their responsibility to do so.

- 6.14 Rezani Aziz, Chairperson of the Women's Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Commerce in Sri Lanka, reiterated the importance of pushing for greater representation of women and participating in exchange programmes etc.
- 6.15 The importance of not only a successful Sri Lankan economy but a peace dividend for everyone (including ex-prisoners/combatants) was discussed. The group noted that whilst this would involve taking some risks they would nevertheless prove worthwhile.
- 6.16 Members of CCC described how Northern Ireland was both big and small enough for Sri Lanka to be able to relate to. In contrast to Northern Ireland however, Sri Lanka is deeply lacking in terms of formal institutions, networks and other umbrella organisations. This is particularly the case in relation to trade unions which are overwhelmingly concerned with workers rights. Sri Lanka subsequently leads the developing world in terms of its labour standards however, this focus has also inhibited partnership and leadership on other issues.
- 6.17 To end on a note of optimism, Peter noted that if the Sri Lankan situation seems daunting then it is worth remembering how quickly Ireland has transformed itself from being a country with an unemployment rate of 18% that exported more than 50,000 of its graduates every year into the Celtic Tiger it is today.
- 6.2 Patrick Canagasingham from the Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust and Deva Rodrigo, Chairman of Ceylon Chamber of Commerce then signed a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to work together to fund the following initiatives:
- Capacity building of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) involved in promoting peace, reconciliation, justice and human rights
 - Dissemination of pro-peace messages via Media activities on peace building (electronic and print media) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
 - Performing arts (drama, music, dance), visual arts (posters, murals, comic books, pamphlets) to carry the pro-peace message.

7. Meeting with Secretariat Coordinating the Peace Process Wednesday 12th October, 11:30-12:30

- 7.1 Mr Seneka Abeyratne, Director, Economic Affairs provided a brief background to the peace process in Sri Lanka noting that a 'mutually hurting stalemate' currently exists between parties and that six rounds of peace talks collapsed in April 2003 - effectively discontinuing Track 1 diplomacy.
- 7.2 The ceasefire agreement has subsequently eroded. However, there has been interaction between parties in relation to development, for example, the Ministry of Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation has been active in the North East and LTTE controlled areas. There has also been a certain amount of coordination at the military level and in relation to humanitarian assistance, for example, members of the LTTE attacked by the renegade LTTE commander, Karuna, have been transported to hospitals in Colombo. All such interaction has been kept relatively low key.
- 7.3 At the same time, ongoing violence in the East impinges on the ceasefire agreement and, as the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) informed the group earlier in the week, these incidents are perpetrated predominantly by the LTTE.
- 7.4 Seneka emphasised that there are more than two parties to the conflict in Sri Lanka, for example, it also encompasses Muslim groups, factions such as the EPD or that led by Karuna, Tamil anti-LTTE groups etc. The situation is therefore extremely unstable. Moreover, if peace talks are successfully re-launched then they must include more than the two main parties.
- 7.5 As regards prospects for the future, Seneka noted that important research has recently been carried out regarding GDP output in a variety of regions before and after the signing of the ceasefire agreement. Interestingly, this research has shown that the regions that responded the most (i.e. whose GDP grew fastest) to the peace deal were the North and East. Jaffna's GDP, for example, grew from about 3% to 12%. In fact, the response of these regions to the signing of the agreement was almost immediate. This research also demonstrated that foreign direct investment (FDI) doubled and became longer-term in nature.
- 7.6 The response of the North and East to the ceasefire agreement provides some hope for peace. It suggests ordinary people in the region will ultimately come out against a return to all-out war. However, the government of Sri Lanka must provide an environment that enables ordinary people to do so.
- 7.7 Media coverage of the upcoming Presidential elections in Sri Lanka is currently portraying one candidate as supporting a return to war versus the other candidate working towards peace. Seneka suggested things are not so simplistic and, in fact, the 'pro-war' candidate has stated that he is prepared to have direct talks with the LTTE.
- 7.8 The key issue is really how to work with the political, rather than military, wing of the LTTE and engage them in democratic politics.
- 7.9 The Tsunami presented a number of opportunities to advance this process. For example, the head of the political wing of the LTTE was invited to join the Task Force for Rebuilding the Nation established in its immediate wake. They declined however, on the basis that they would prefer an alternative structure. Seven meetings followed during January and February - ultimately resulting in the Post-Tsunami Operational

Management Structure (P-TOMS) signed in June 2004. Importantly, P-TOMS is designed to operate at 3 levels – national, regional and district and presents a real opportunity to promote co-operation and powersharing between the parties. Unfortunately, P-TOMS has become caught up in legal wrangling over whether its powersharing clauses are constitutional and is currently stuck in court. Seneka suggested it was likely that P-TOMS would not be resolved until after the election.

- 7.10 The ceasefire agreement has also been challenged in the courts by the JVP and is likely to come under review at some point in the future. Indeed, Ian Martin, an international human rights advisor is currently in Sri Lanka laying the groundwork for a possible future agreement on human rights – one of the key deficits of the original ceasefire agreement.
- 7.11 Seneka discussed the LTTE's proposal for an 'Interim Self-Governing Authority' and their strategy that it must be the sole basis for future peace negotiations. He noted that this proposal takes no account of minorities such as Muslims or Sinhalese in the East of Sri Lanka.
- 7.12 The establishment of the National Advisory Council for Peace and Reconciliation in October 2004 marked an important step forward in terms of the government recognising the value of consultation with not only elected representatives but also religious leaders and leaders of civil society. Unfortunately, its civil society sub-committee has not exerted significant influence as it has not been able to access politicians, in particular, the President.
- 7.13 The lack of social interaction between communities is also inhibiting peace in Sri Lanka. Importantly, generations in the North have grown up knowing nothing but war, whilst many people in the South have difficulty even identifying with it. Whilst, there are a few tokenistic initiatives addressing this, more sustained efforts are needed. The business community has also been traditionally unable or unwilling to engage.

8. Meeting With National Anti-War Front Wednesday 12th October 2005, 14:00-16:00

- 8.1 Based on his previous employment with the National Anti-War Front (NAWF) Shirley Candappa, Programme Director, Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust provided the LILP delegation with some background to its work. From NAWF's perspective, a political solution to the conflict will not succeed without significant changes to social attitudes in Sri Lanka. The NAWF therefore focuses on facilitating peace and reconciliation dialogue between the North and South and amongst groups such as plantation workers, trade unions, women and youth. The NAWF works to develop a call for peace from ordinary people rather than politicians.
- 8.2 NAWF's recent programmes have involved using the Tsunami as a way to bring plantation workers together – historically divided by the sense of Tamil workers 'taking over' plantations during British colonial rule. Workers committees promoting welfare and security have also been established. NAWF has made particular efforts to start a new discourse with trade union leaders - a generation of whom was lost in the wake of the government response to the general strike of 1980.
- 8.3 Students have also been a particular focus for NAWF. They have developed a programme which exposes more than 4,000 O and A-Level students in provincial schools to films about the war and education about human rights through 'Human Rights Learning Centres.' This programme has resulted in students participating in the governing councils of their schools and successfully promoting non-violent problem solving. Over 70 Sinhalese students were also involved in dialogue with the leadership of the LTTE. Study circles for alternative discourses have been established for university students focusing on issues such as pluralism and heterogeneity and principles of equality.
- 8.3 It has been especially important for the NAWF to educate women about their rights given that many women were displaced during the war and lost family, property and limbs to the conflict. Women are especially vulnerable in Sri Lanka and despite being the traditional income earners are often not treated as human beings. In 2004, the NAWF helped organise a demonstration against the war on International Women's Day and in September organised a Women's Congress attended by more than 800 women from all over the country.
- 8.4 NAWF runs a variety of cultural programmes aimed at developing respect for humanity and understanding between communities. These have an important North/South dimension as many people in the North do not realise that the majority of the South are, in fact, against the war and vice versa.
- 8.4 Twelve People's Forums have also been established in rural areas with the aim of strengthening and empowering local people as well as mapping the conflict and providing an early warning system. The Forums include men and women representatives from various ethnic backgrounds. Tom Fraser noted that similar efforts, backed by American funds, had been made in Northern Ireland but had ultimately failed to take shape.
- 8.5 The LILP delegation discussed the current state of the peace process in Northern Ireland and various opportunities for collaboration between civil society there and in Sri Lanka. The group was struck by how similar the challenges to grassroots peacebuilding were in both contexts.

9. Meeting with INPACT (Initiative For Political And Conflict Transformation) Thursday 13th October, 11:00-15:00

- 9.1 Tyrol Ferdinands opened the session by describing INPACT's view of society. He suggested that Sri Lankan society remains feudal with the addition of some democratic institutions. This has generated many contradictions, for example, women in Sri Lanka gained the vote before their counterparts in the UK but are currently marginalised and underrepresented. There is also a significant consumer subculture which has developed since the opening up of the economy after 1977, yet there is also widespread poverty. These contradictions are even enshrined in the country's name, the 'Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.' It is important to remember that Sri Lanka does not therefore function as a Western democracy and the implications of this are that the currency of politics is patronage.
- 9.2 Group and community rights have subsequently been neglected – contributing to various uprisings, for example, on the part of the Tamils and on the part of youth in both 1971 and 1979. INPACT therefore takes an explicitly 'group rights approach.' Importantly, this approach takes account of caste which is an omni-present but rarely talked about issue in Sri Lanka.
- 9.3 INPACT's three programmatic strategies target local and national politicians and Sri Lanka's multiple conflicts (rather than just in the North East) they include, 1) research, 2) training including intra and multi-party work, and 3) providing space spaces to bring politicians together to explore their own political behaviour.

INPACT does not, however, engage in public advocacy and has no preferred outcome for the conflict, rather it promotes transformative processes. In terms of how INPACT carries out its work, it finds politicians often approach them rather than the other way round. Where this is not the case then they generally ask political parties to nominate participants. Importantly, their beneficiaries include extremists from across the political/religious spectrum. INPACT promotes inclusivity and therefore works with partner organisations where and when necessary, for example, in the Northeast.

Much time is spent talking and building relationships with these politicians rather than pushing for an immediate impact. Preparedness and the readiness to push when the right moment arises is key to INPACT's success.

- 9.4 Janice Tracey noted how difficult it must be to avoid any particular interest in the outcome of the conflict and peace process. Tyrol and Indika Perera agreed and suggested they could only ever go so far as stating that Sinhala nationalism must come to terms with Tamil nationalism in some way. INPACT staff are therefore carefully selected and must all demonstrate political instinct but, at the same time, be prepared to subsume their ego.
- 9.5 The group discussed the relative weakness of civil society in Sri Lanka. Tyrol attributed this to civil society's origin as a protest and advocacy movement in Sri Lanka – yet this is a role it has now outgrown. Where civil society has been successful has been in introducing and educating people about new ideas and concepts such as human rights. However, it has not taken this to the next level and is not a stakeholder with significant political influence. For example, during discussions around the establishment of the

Post Tsunami Operation Management Structure (PTOMS) civil society failed to garner any sort of public campaign in support of it.

Civil society is also overwhelmingly donor and funder driven and as a collection of NGO's it therefore often fails to connect with local politicians and local people. Another important factor is the feudal legacy in Sri Lanka which means many people expect and demand authority and strong rulers.

- 9.6 Vilma Patterson asked about the role of the business community in promoting peace and Tyrol noted that this has only come onto their agenda in the wake of the attack on the Sri Lanka Airport in 2001 which showed that peace was in their self-interest.

10. Meeting with Prof. Uyangoda, Colombo University Friday 14th October, 13:00-14:30

- 10.1 Tom Fraser and Helen Lewis met briefly with Professor Uyangoda of Colombo University to discuss potential collaboration between their respective universities. They agreed this could be developed in relation to the following four areas:
1. Colombo University's ongoing co-operation with University of Bradford and its Peace Studies programme.
 2. A postgraduate research programme, for example, with an exchange of students between Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka.
 3. Research around new dimensions of the conflict in Sri Lanka, for example, the Tsunami has put the issue of forced migration on the table and there is also new interest in defining peacebuilding from a 'Southern' perspective.
 4. A conference comparing peace and conflict issues in Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland – this could potentially be developed into a book.

11. Debrief with the Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust Friday 14th October 2005, 10:30-13:00

- 11.1 The group reflected on the general success of the study visit in terms of it having exposed them to the full complexity of the situation in Sri Lanka, the fantastic hospitality of its people, and the inspiring work of the Neelan Trust and many others.
- 11.2 Patrick Canagasingham noted that the delegation from Northern Ireland had had a huge impact on all whom they had met in Sri Lanka. This was particularly significant in terms of the group having repeatedly delivered the message of inclusivity, partnership, leadership and taking risk. The composition of the group in representing a variety of different sectors and different constituencies in Northern Ireland was also helpful in this regard.
- 11.3 Peter Bunting noted that there was a huge amount of work to be done with the trade unions in Sri Lanka - especially in relation to building relations with business, NGO's, government and other partners. If the trade unions were to come together to any degree they could significantly increase the quality of life of their own people and multiply any peace dividend that may come. Peter expressed his surprise that no-one in Sri Lanka was specifically trained in trade unionism.
- 11.4 The group noted that exposure to the real minutiae of the Northern Ireland peace process would be important for any future Northern Ireland/Sri Lanka activities as the detail of reforms etc. is tremendously important.
- 11.5 There was also some regret that due to constraints on time and resources (and the pilot nature of this visit), the group were unable to visit other regions outside of Colombo or to get a real sense of grassroot/neighbourhood settings. Sustainable peace will depend on ordinary people as well as the politicians.
- 11.6 Vilma Patterson noted the great potential for further connections between women in Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka.
- 11.7 The importance of giving greater attention to small and medium enterprises (SME's) was discussed. Given that big, multinational companies are likely to continue trading whether peace holds or not, the tourism sector and SME's become important stakeholders to target.
- 11.8 The potential for Northern Ireland involvement in the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce's upcoming Economic Summit in January was discussed as well as the possibility of orienting the entire summit around the theme of peace. The group was overwhelmingly positive about this idea, referring again to the importance of Washington hosting an economic summit for Northern Ireland and the contribution this made to the peace process.
- 11.9 Helen Lewis noted that in terms of follow up:
1. INCORE/LILP would produce a full report of the October study visit.
 2. INCORE/LILP would invite representatives from the Neelan Trust and the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce to visit Northern Ireland in November to take the above suggestions forward and, in particular, to develop plans around the economic summit in January.

3. If other members of the group wanted to follow up any links they had made during the trip, for example, in relation to women/trade unions/community workers then she would endeavour to support them in doing so. However, in order to avoid trying to do too much and being all things to all people, the primary focus of the partnership between Neelan Trust and INCORE/LILP would remain promoting the role of the private sector in the Sri Lankan peace process.
- 12 Patrick closed the session by again thanking all the delegates from Northern Ireland for their participation and presenting each of them with a small souvenir of their stay.

“I welcomed the opportunity to share business initiatives implemented in Northern Ireland...there is the potential for future contact and linkages to be formed with the possibility of strengthening the work being carried out in Sri Lanka to create a more peaceful and representative society.”
(Participant Evaluation)