

Sri Lanka Round Table

New Perspectives in the Sri Lankan Peace Process - The Current Political Situation and the Role of the International Community

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Executive Summary

The concept of a Sri Lanka Round Table aims to initiate and sustain a continuous dialogue among Ministry officials and specialists from civil society and academia to improve co-ordination of German, Swiss and other European contributions to peace-building. The Round Table in Berlin offered an opportunity for the two negotiating parties to present their approach in relation to the peace process as well as for European desk officers and experts to deepen their co-operation. All participants attended in their personal capacities and agreed with the principle of non-attribution ("Chatham House" rule). Dr. Jayampathy Wickramaratne, Senior Adviser Ministry of Constitutional Affairs, and Mr. Puleedevan, Secretary General LTTE Peace Secretariat gave inputs on the current political situation and perspectives for the peace process. The former stressed three essentials: The need for a rapid and successful Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Reconciliation and Development process (RRR & D) in the whole country, the need for creative political solutions such as finding interim-interim institutional arrangements in the peace process, and the urgent need to change the constitution by an constituent assembly. Central elements of the new interim-constitution amongst others shall be a changed electoral system, and the abolishment of the executive presidency. Mr. Puleedevan described key causes of the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict since independence and important settlement attempts by Tamil politicians before 1983. Regarding current needs of the peace process, he lay emphasize on the establishment of the Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) as soon as possible as only through ISGA the still unfulfilled needs of the people in the NorthEast could become adequately addressed. The devastated situation in the NorthEast was further outlined in a presentation, comprising key functions of the newly established Planning and Development Secretariat of the LTTE as well. The following discussion focused on the role of ISGA and how normalcy for the people in the North and East could be achieved as well as on challenges a change of the constitution without a 2/3rd majority would vest. Dr. Tania Rödiger-Vorwerk, German Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ) and Mrs. Dicky Methorst, Ministry for Foreign Affaires, the Netherlands, elaborated their understanding of the role of the international community in the peace process. Dr. Rödiger-Vorwerk commenced with pointing out that her position is in full conjunction with the German Foreign Office's position due to close consultation. She stressed the importance of German contributions to peacebuilding and development so far and outlined the lack of a coherent response from the donor community to the peace process as one central and most pressing challenge of today. Amongst other things, the way forward was seen in supporting Norway's role as a facilitator and strengthening the EU as one of the co-chairs. Mrs. Methorst mentioned that implementation of the Tokyo conference so far has been ad hoc and inconsistent. The international donor community should clarify better how it will use its influence and resources to support the peace. From her perspective, the EU as one of the co-chairs could play an important role in promoting the establishment of a framework which will assist donors in coordinating their actions. A monitoring mechanism, understood as a transparent process of assessment of progress, would be important as well as response scenario's on a case by case basis. A discussion on coordination and benchmarking by the international community commenced in which Mrs. Methorst stressed the need for an even handed and flexible approach.

Dr. Tania Rödiger-Vorwerk and Mrs. Dicky Methorst both stressed the need for an intensified and more coherent co-ordination of approaches to peacebuilding and development in Sri

Lanka. Furthermore, both signaled their Government's preparedness to further support these processes if and when requested, provided that progress is being made by the domestic political actors themselves.

A discussion on options and opportunities for the peace process followed. The question how to link constitutional reform with the peace process was critically discussed and a possibly strengthened benchmarking of the international community as well. To what extent the ISGA proposal could become a foundation to compromise between the parties was scrutinized and the issue of inclusivity in the peace process was touched upon. Finally, the question whether the international community would need to develop a joint vision for a peaceful Sri Lanka was taken up again and one participant concluded that the development of a joint GOSL / LTTE development vision would be even more crucial. Participants took the opportunity to give constructive and critical feed back on both parties approaches to the peace process and a vivid discussion on how the international community – mostly from a European perspective - could achieve a more coherent and principled approach to the Sri Lankan peace process. The Sri Lanka Round Table was by and large perceived as a very good opportunity for an open-minded discussion, for networking and trust-building, and will certainly be followed-up.

1. Introduction

The concept of “Round Table” discussions on ethno-political crisis regions was originally initiated by semi-public agencies in Germany and Switzerland to initiate and sustain a continuous dialogue among Ministry officials and specialists from civil society and academia to improve the coordination of German respectively Swiss contributions to peace-making and peace-building in those regions. All participants attend in their personal capacities to encourage a frank and open exchange. The events are closed-door and the proceedings follow the Chatham House rules. Having one or the other resource person from the crisis region in Europe has often been a good opportunity to organize such Round Tables. The Berghof Foundations’ principles of multipartiality and inclusivity, were kept to the largest possible extent possible in Europe, inviting 40 participants, including representatives of the Tamil and Sinhalese diaspora.

The goals of this particular Sri Lanka Round Table have been threefold. Firstly, to offer desk officers from German and other European political, development and civil society agencies an opportunity to learn about the most recent developments in the Sri Lankan peace process after the elections from 2nd April, particularly with respect to the way, how the two negotiating parties envision their next steps in the negotiation process.

Secondly, to offer an opportunity for representatives of the two negotiating parties to present their approach with respect to the negotiation process to an international forum of desk officers and experts from civil society dealing with Sri Lanka and to get a feed back from them how they assess these approaches.

Thirdly, it aims to facilitate personal contacts and networks among the European desk officers and experts dealing with Sri Lanka to enhance a more coherent and principled approach from the side of the EU and other European countries with respect to the Sri Lankan peace process.

2. Organisation, Participants, and Funding

The first Sri Lanka Roundtable was organized by the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies, Colombo and Berlin in conjunction with German Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development, the German Federal Foreign Office, and the Sri Lanka Embassy in Berlin. Workshops and trainings aiming at supporting the peace process in Sri Lanka are a core activity of the Resource Network for Conflict Studies and Transformation (RNCST) of the Berghof Foundation, Colombo Office. The RNCST is funded by the Swiss Foreign Ministry, and the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development through the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). This particular workshop was organized by Wolfram Zunzer, while Dr. Norbert Ropers was the principle facilitator. Miriam Lambusta and many staff members both from Colombo and Berlin supported the endeavour greatly.

Members of the administration of the GTZ, the German Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development, from the Commonwealth Secretariat, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, and from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway attended the roundtable. All other participants were working for non-state German development organizations, were members of the Sri Lankan diaspora in Germany or academic experts. Additionally, a staff member of Swisspeace/KOFF and the Ambassador of Sri Lanka in Germany, participated.

3. Proceedings and Key Issues

Welcome and Introduction of Participants and Program

Dr. Norbert Ropers, Director of the RNCST, welcomed all participants and speakers, which was followed by a brief round of personal introduction. Furthermore, it was explicitly agreed to apply the Chatham house rules. All participants therefore comply with non-attribution, which means that no personal references to third parties such as quoting, and no public information about the content aired in the workshop should be given without explicit permission.

Morning Session on the Current Political Situation and Perspectives for the Peace Process

Dr. Jayampathy Wickramaratne, Senior Adviser Ministry of Constitutional Affairs, stated at the beginning of his speech that the stalled peace process is to resume soon. He furthermore said that an ex- UN diplomat is becoming head of the GOSL Peace Secretariat and the constitutional reform process shall come under the President's purview and be dealt with by in detail by an advisory committee. Dr. Wickramaratne stressed that preference should be given to a clear and successful process of RRR plus D. From his perspective as an adviser to the government, it is most important that people must feel concrete change and feel a clear impact of the peace dividend. It's not enough to have a general feel-good factor if there is no trickle-down effect visible for the citizens. Therefore, a specific Ministry for RRR plus D related issues has been established. It is planned to have its own research department. At the same time it is hoped that the international community becomes a key supporter of the 3-RRR + D processes.

In a second part of his speech, Dr. Wickramaratne emphasized the need for finding creative solutions, given the political challenges the current minority government faces. Therefore, interim-interim institutions shall be established first. With respect to the peace process, the

ISGA proposal of the LTTE is a basic document for negotiations even though there are serious reservations against it on the side of the government. It is definitely no barrier to talks. There will be hard bargaining, which the respective constituency must accept. From the ideal perspective of the GOSL, establishing of interim-structures shall be closely linked to finding a permanent solution. The unresolved question is how can compromises be found with the LTTE. Currently, from the perspective of the delicate political power balances in the South, it is most important is to embark on a process of changing the constitution. The latter not only aims to abolish the executive presidency but to introduce a large numbers of constitutional improvements, as well as aspects with relation to the peace process.

Dr. Wickramaratne pointed out that since 1978, when the proportional representative election system was introduced, it has practically become impossible to achieve a 2/3rds majority. This gives the UNP a virtual veto power on constitutional change. A change of constitution has to take at least the following points into account:

- need to change the electoral system
- the executive presidency has to be abolished
- language rights and human rights have to be added
- for accommodating final solution of the peace process, the special majority required for amending the constitution must be an achievable majority and should depend on the electoral system.

Therefore, the current constitution needs to be changed and an interim-institution to be introduced. That should be done through a constituent assembly. The process is likely to be challenged in courts but such a challenge could be met.

The constitution would have of an interim character, in the sense that major changes will have to be made once an agreement is reached between the Government and the LTTE. The Constitution Bill of 2000 contains several chapters that have received cross-party support and can be included. These include the chapters on fundamental rights (including social, economic and cultural rights and children's rights), language rights, judiciary. Local government. The supremacy of the constitution will be re-established by bringing back judicial review of legislation.

Once agreement is reached, whether interim or final, it will be made part of the constitution. The government expects, going by past experience, that the UNP will find some excuse not to support a solution and as such, it is important to lay down an achievable special majority for future constitutional amendments. Once a solution is agreed upon, the relevant constitutional provisions would be entrenched.

In the following brief discussion, the issue of inclusivity/participation of the UNP in parliament was raised as well as the question whether provisions shall go further than the 13th amendment.

Mr. Puleedevan, Secretary General LTTE Peace Secretariat, started outlining key aspects of the history of the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict since after independence. He explicitly mentioned Bandura Silva, the Sinhala Only Act and the many major attempts by Tamil politicians to deal with the increasingly difficult political and inter-community relations by peaceful means before

1983. These and others have to be taken into account to understand the current situation. The latter is centrally influenced by the fact that the new government of Sri Lanka accepts the LTTE as the sole representative of the Tamil people as did the former and negotiations shall be based on the ISGA proposal. Then Mr. Puleedevan pointed out that a quick establishment of the ISGA is necessary for delivering humanitarian aid to the people in the NorthEast. After that one of his colleagues from the Peace Secretariat gave an in-depth multi-media presentation on the severe socio-economic impasses in the NorthEast. He especially emphasized that working already during the pre-transition period would lead to the necessary and accelerated RRR+D process. For achieving this goal a Planning and Development Secretariat of the LTTE has been found. Its core competencies are threefold. Firstly, it aims at developing a sound macro economic policy, and organizing the exchange with international agencies and multilateral donors. Secondly, it tries to match expert skills with qualification needs in the RRR-D process in the NorthEast. Thirdly, it deals with capacity and procedural institutional development such as to deliver proper project management structures, reporting and evaluation systems.

Discussion

On the question whether the LTTE is expecting the GOSL to accept the ISGA proposal first before talking about core issues, Mr. Puleedevan answered that the ISGA has to be addressed first as it reflects the needs of the people in the NE. Another question with relation to the planned changed of constitution, was whether, there are plans for changing the existing paragraphs on Buddhism as one basis of the state in the constitution. Dr. Wickramaratne answered that this would only be changed latter on for the time being. A number of participants stressed the need to reach normalcy in the North and East first and therefore the ISGA proposal shall largely be accepted by the government. Others were more skeptical to what extent the government has the political space to deliver on these issues.

The second part of the discussion concentrated on the question how normalcy can be reached as effectively as possible in the pre-transition phase. Dr. Wickramaratne pointed out that it is not the President who is heading the 3R plus D Ministry and that from his perspective it will take at least 12 and up to 18 months for establishing an development authority/ISGA mechanism for the North and East. Therefore one should start immediately on an interim-interim basis. Furthermore, sections of the JVP currently oppose a decentralization of the state and in the past UNP and PA had blocked any significant change of constitution. Therefore, a rapid change of constitution followed by a referendum is crucial.

With respect to the statement that the establishing of the development body / ISGA for the North and East might take up to 18 months, Mr. Puleedevan explained that the World Bank and the UN had alone needed 9 months to establish NERF and the process of establishing SHIRN had been so much slowed down that it never became operational. Thereof, it should be made sure to prevent such things to happen again and to do implementation more speedily this time. On the question whether power sharing arrangements would have the same importance as the abolition of the executive presidency, it was answered that there would no changes in the constitution with regard to power sharing without agreement with the LTTE beforehand. With respect to assumed impediments by the Indian government to go further with power sharing as in the case of the Indian states, it was said that important Indian diplomats had signalled that this would completely be the business of the GOSL.

First Afternoon Session on the Role of the International Community and the Sri Lankan Peace Process

Dr. Tania Rödiger-Vorwerk, German Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development outlined cornerstones of the long and good German-Sri Lankan relationship as well as the current German perception of the peace process.¹ Germany is perceived by the Sri Lankan government as an important partner not at least because being the second largest bilateral donor according to aid volume. The fact that Germany is host to a large Tamil diaspora is seen as an asset in the German-Sri Lankan relations from the side of the LTTE. Furthermore, German Development Cooperation has been among very few donors who have been engaged in the North during war times. In addition Germany has started strategic alliances with other donors working on peacebuilding in Sri Lanka in order to enhance its impact by jointly supporting peace projects (e.g. RNCST with Swiss Government and FLICT with DFID). Since 2001, there has been important portfolio changes. New projects have been developed for which other donor countries have taken over co-funding. Currently work on a new strategy is progressing, which will be discussed with the Sri Lankan side later this year. Germany has already contributed to the joint mechanism between the two parties, NERF, even if the fund is not activated yet. Germany cannot be seen only as a bilateral donor with its portfolio, as Germany is a member state of the EU. Therefore, the EU as a co-chair in the peace process is the appropriate actor, which should be supported by the member states. Germany is respecting the Oslo/Tokyo principles in its development co-operation.

The biggest strength of the donor community in Sri Lanka is the determined commitment to support the Sri Lankan peace process. Even though there is no peace agreement yet, the donor community tried immediately after the MOU to support rehabilitation in the North and East of the country within the RRR framework in order to create normality and trust in the peace process for the people in the former conflict zones. In spite of the setbacks with joint mechanisms between the conflicting parties (e.g. SIHRN) the donor community is trying hard to ensure pragmatic and flexible support to the North and East (e.g. NERF fund).

The fact that various donors with different approaches to supporting the peace process are engaged in Sri Lanka could be seen as an asset for the peace process as different actors have different entry points and abilities to support the peace process. The UK is perhaps the donor with the most comprehensive approach to peacebuilding in Sri Lanka due to a clear political approach to development cooperation in combination with the strength of a joint strategy and funding mechanism between the three ministries (DIFID; Foreign and Defence). There is a group of donors that have a clear commitment to peacebuilding and peacemaking comprised out of Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Canada, Switzerland and Germany. Most of them mainly give support to peacebuilding through NGOs and funding of the government and LTTE peace secretariats. Bilaterally and within the EU these donors have a clear positioning towards human rights and human security. The Netherlands have taken over the EU presidency. As part of this mandate, they are supporting the UK within its positioning in the various donors fora. Japan is by far the biggest bilateral donor to Sri Lanka and approaches peacebuilding mainly through programme support to rehabilitation in the North and East. The World Bank mainly support peacebuilding through rehabilitation on the North and East and supporting liberal market economic agendas. The US is currently strengthening its support to Sri Lanka mainly in the fields of governance and also gives

¹ The following position taken by the representative of the German BMZ, Dr. Rödiger-Vorwerk, is in full conjunction with the current German Foreign Office's position due to close consultations beforehand.

support explicitly to the East. Within the donor community Norway plays a special role due to its facilitator role. While Switzerland does not play a big role as a donor, it is slowly moving into a more prominent role as a political actor within the peace process and could be a supportive actor in addition to the Norwegian facilitation.

The biggest **challenge** ahead for the donor community so far is the lack of a coherent response to the peace process. There are incoherent policies on different levels and issues resulting in an incoherent support to the economic and peace agenda in Sri Lanka. At the same time, the new government has not yet spelled out its development vision for the country as a whole, identifying solutions to problems of a highly fractured and unequal society. As part of the peace process, there is the need to develop such a vision jointly with all parts of society as soon as possible. Donors could have an essential role in facilitating such a process if and when requested by the GoSL and LTTE. In order to support the peace process and the future development agenda at the same time, donors need to engage with all conflict parties in a constructive and transparent way. In this regard, the on-going efforts to measure the progress of the peace process by means of benchmarks have to be handled with sensitivity. The discussion should be understood as supporting incentives to the process instead of an external control biased towards GoSL.

Moreover, the envisaged communication strategy to make the peace dividend visible for the people in the North and East has to be improved even though it is normal that rehabilitation takes longer than expected. Tamil feelings of being disadvantaged in the process, supported by claims that there is not sufficient aid going to the North and East as promised, are partly justified, partly not.

For Germany it is necessary to intensify the dialog relating to a common strategy with its partners in the European Union and especially with the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark because of their strong engagement in Sri Lanka. Further strategic alliances with other relevant and like-minded bilateral donors as for example Canada and Switzerland are crucial. With regard to Germany's position within the EU, Germany could help to clarify and strengthen the role of the EU as a co-chair through a clear political positioning. Given a continued Sri Lankan commitment and ownership of the peace process and acknowledgement of the Norwegian facilitation, the donor community should further reflect how to support Norway best. Other actors such as the Swiss Government could engage in a dialogue with the Norwegians with regard to the facilitation arrangement.

Under the condition that GoSL and the LTTE show their will for peace, their ability for compromise and their will for a joint, coherent and comprehensive development strategy the donors could continue to support an inclusive peace and development process. The responsibility for coordination efforts and the development of a joint strategy is seen on the Sri Lankan side.

Mrs. Dicky Methorst from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, outlined her position on the role of the international community and the Sri Lankan peace process as follows. Since the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) in 2002, there has been a particularly strong commitment of the international community for the peace process in Sri Lanka, especially with respect to monitoring efforts pertaining to the security principles laid out in the CFA. The crucial areas of development co-operation and the political process have been strongly linked up since the Tokyo declaration. Notwithstanding the joint efforts by the international community, there has also been confusing signals coming out of the recent Tokyo declaration, such as the "Millenium Account" by the US government, promising 100 Mio \$ for Sri Lanka without clarifying beforehand key conditions for disbursement in joint strategic

political consultations with all key actors. Hereby, it remains unclear what projects are receiving these funds in what ways.

For the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, co-ordination is key. A crucial partner is British DFID and the EU in Brussels. In this perspective, the disbursement of aid is closely linked up with the common political process geared at finding a lasting peaceful solution. Therefore all actors should be in consultations, with regard to what could additionally be done by the EU. This strengthened engagement should be based on a principled approach, including the concept of human security as one of its key foundations.

From the perspective taken, important policy adjustments are necessary in Sri Lanka, especially in the fields of discriminatory policies such as language policies, which need to be abolished. Milestones for an the continuing assessment of the political situation and the peace process are the accommodation of Muslim demands, the compliance with the CFA and effective implementation of funds for RRR-D. For the international community, one important challenge in this respect is to measure progress jointly as there have yet only small steps taken towards this end, and it also means to develop rather specific performance indicators jointly.

Generally, the position of the Netherlands is that more monitoring mechanisms, understood as a process of assessment, would be helpful. A prerequisite would be to include many more consultative meetings in the process. This shall lead to a more systematic process of donor co-ordination, which is necessary. Given the complexities of the follow-up meeting series from Tokyo and the different dynamics in the political and the aid process, a donor working group should be set up.

The following principles (“principled approach“) are regarded as key for the approach:

- even handed and balanced approach
- no mechanic formulas for political decision making or implementation
- conditionality only selectively on a case to case basis
- for different disbursement channels, different indicators should be developed and used by the involved international actors
- internationalising of the process has to be effective

Other issues that need further clarification are the different roles of different donor countries, the concrete level of co-ordination and to what extent co-ownership in the peace process can/shall be taken over by international actors.

Discussion

Following, an in-depth discussion on co-ordination and benchmarking by the international community commenced. Some participants stressed that the international community shall not only have a principled but also flexible approach, taking care to treat both parties equally. Another participant asked which concrete hopes are linked to the international communities intention to further strengthen co-ordination mechanisms, and what could the reaction of the international community could be, if benchmarks set by them would be breached by one of the parties to the conflict. In reaction, Mrs. Methorst further substantiated her position:

- the approach should be principled but flexible as steps in the peace process are necessarily incremental
- there is a strong need to deliver on the ground
- a donor working group is established, including a.o. EU, DFID, World Bank, ADB, Switzerland, US, Canada and Sweden, which meets regularly and develops

standards/mechanisms for monitoring. Japan and Australia attend the meetings as observer.

- this group shall develop scenarios of possible responses if the parties to the conflict would practically try to “frustrate” the process
- an even handed approach is especially important on the project level, otherwise international actors might become part of the problem

With respect to a question on the co-ordination of international development activities, Mrs. Vorwerk pointed out that this co-ordination should be preferably taken over by the Sri Lankan side. Finally, there was a discussion on the role of India, in which most voices emphasized the need for getting India more pro-actively involved both in political and RRR + D processes.

Second Afternoon Session on Options and Opportunities for the Sri Lankan Peace Process

For this facilitated discussion forum, nine issue areas had been prepared. There were contributions from the expert audience on six of them.

Right from the start, the discussion focused on the issue how to link constitutional reform with the peace process. One participant questioned, whether the discussion about constitutional reform might at all lead to progress on the core unresolved political questions in the peace process. Other voices put the question forward whether linking constitutional reform and the peace process would be an overload for the GOSL's capacity to manage multiple discourses and negotiations in a very tight framework. Finally, one participant questioned which influence the legacy of majoritarian politics in Sri Lanka might have on the process of constitutional reform.

The second major issue touched upon, was the question whether the international community should help to develop a vision for a peaceful Sri Lanka which was also taken up later again. Initially, a participant put a statement forward, assuming that all major parties to the conflict are currently happy with the status quo. Another participant pointed out that the fuzziness of expressions such as benchmark, vision, and joint vision, as well as the relationships between these terms need to be clarified much more amongst the stakeholders. Challenging the approach of the international community so far taken, one participant asked how the international community can be sincere about their development efforts and how can they ascertain to take a human centered approach. In a reply it was pointed out that the EU countries have major differences in their way to support peacebuilding and development. Furthermore, the hypothesis was put forward and discussed, whether the absence of a shared clear cut goal for interventions by EU countries could mean that they will not be able in their endeavour to support peacebuilding and development successfully.

Thirdly, a discussion centered around the question, how to achieve a joint agreement on the ISGA as soon as possible. The question how long it will take to negotiate ISGA was not more precisely answered. A second point was made with respect to the ISGA, questioning whether the whole proposal needed to be enhanced substantially. One answer was given by a participant, pointing out that in the past there was a lack of concrete proposals and the current ISGA proposal is concrete and has been accepted by both parties as a basis for further talks. Another challenge was touched upon, namely how to practically legalize the ISGA-agreement or parts of it in the constitution. From the background of a supposed federal solution to the conflict a critical request was made, why the ISGA has included an election commission for the North and East already. Members of the international community pointed

out that the dialogue on how to achieve a joint agreement on the ISGA has not seen enough practical, pragmatic considerations and that the documents on the table could make more common ground possible.

Fourthly, there was a debate on how to improve RR-D as soon as possible to support the peace process. Initially, participants stressed that RR-D shall be enhanced before agreement on ISGA becomes implemented. Others called for finding of an interim solution and taking humanitarian needs serious as soon as possible. The question was raised, whether LTTE structures inhibit the socio-economic development of the North and East. Another participant asked how the LTTE could become an effective political actor. This call for a changed role of the LTTE was answered by voices, stressing the unique Tamil experience with democracy on a local and national level in Sri Lanka, which needs to be accounted for.

Fifthly, there was a discussion on how to ensure/enhance inclusivity during the peace process. Topics raised were the role of the TNA and the alleged domination of other Tamil voices in the political arena as well as the results of election monitoring. One answer by a participant was that historically justice is not given but taken.

Sixthly, the issue of whether the international community should help to develop a vision for a peaceful Sri Lanka was taken up again. Participants from Germany asked openly, what do the GOSL and the LTTE expect from the international community. Adding further to the procedural aspects, a participant stressed that a strengthened EU involvement would add to a balanced international intervention in the Sri Lankan peace process. Another participant suggested that the LTTE and GOSL themselves initiate a process to clarify their joint expectations vis-à-vis the international community. Finally, it was stressed that maybe not a vision for a peaceful Sri Lanka developed by the international community was needed but the development of a joint GOSL / LTTE development vision would be more crucial.

4. Concluding Remarks

According to the feedback we got from a number of participants, the key purposes of the first Sri Lanka Round Table in Berlin have been successfully met. Thanks to the two main guest speakers from Sri Lanka, Mr. Puleedevan and Dr. Wickramaratne, it was an outstanding opportunity for the European expert community to learn about the most recent developments in the Sri Lankan peace process after the elections from 2nd April and about the two negotiating parties vision for next steps in the negotiation process. The participants took the Round Table as an opportunity to give constructive and critical feed back on how they assess the approaches to the peace process by both parties to the conflict. Furthermore, the issues of the role of the international community and how to achieve a more coherent and principled approach from the side of the EU and other European countries with respect to the Sri Lankan peace process, was vividly discussed. Finally, it has been a great opportunity for networking and trust-building on all levels. Therefore, we will certainly venture to organize another Sri Lanka Round Table in Berlin, possibly before the end of this year.