THE SRI LANKAN DIASPORA – THE WAY FORWARD

ORGANISED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF

THE DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA,

AND

THE FEDERATION OF MALAYSIAN SRI LANKAN ORGANISATIONS

DATES:
28–31 AUGUST 2008

VENUE:
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA CAMPUS
KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

PROFESSOR P. RAGUPATHY – NORWAY

PROF. DAGMAR HELLMAN – MUNICH

DR. VITAJ MENDIS – GERMANY

TAN SRI DATUK PROF. DR. KHOO KHAY KHIM – MALAYSIA

PROF. K. INTHRAPALA – SYDNEY

DR. MURUGAR GUNASINGAM – ARCHIVES, SYDNEY

PROF. V. NITHYANDANDAM – NEW ZEALAND

MR. VISAHAN SUBERAMANIAM – ARCHIVES, LONDON

MR. ANTON RAVINDRAN – GENOVATE, SINGAPORE

PROF. S. SATHIA SEELAN – JAFFNA UNIVERSITY

PROF. CHITRALEKHA MAUNAGURU OF THE BATTICALO UNIVERSITY

A/PROF. R. CHERAN – UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR CANADA

PROF. RAJAH RASIAH, UNIVERSITY MALAYA

A/PROF. DATUK DR. D.M. THURAIAPPAH, UNIVERSITY PUTRA MALAYSIA

MR. V. SRIKATHIRGAMANATHAN, DENMARK

MR. JAY JAYATHESAN, LONDON

DR. A.R. MOHAMMED IMTIAZ – PHILADELPHIA

MR. MARIAMPILLAI SELVIN IRENEUS – GERMANY

PROF. A SAMMUGADAS – JAFFNA

DATO’ DR. G.K. ANANDA KUMARASERI – MALAYSIA

MR. VIJAYA SAMARAWICKRAMA-TAYLORS, MALAYSIA

SPEAKERS

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

1. Datuk Assoc. Prof. Dr. D.M. Thuraiappah, Chairman of Economics Bureau, Federation of Malaysian Sri Lankan Organisations (FOMSO)

2. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kumaran Suberamaniam, Ketua Jabatan Pengajian India, Fakulti Sastera dan Sains Social, University of Malaya

3. Prof. Dr. Rajah Rasiah, Chairman of Economics Bureau, Department of Technology and Innovation, Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya

4. Prof. Dr. Dagmar Rajanayagam, Department of Social Strategies, University of Munich, Germany

SUBCOMMITTEES

1. Program Co-ordinators:
   Mr. K. Thanarat
   Mr. Vijayarat Vijayasingam
   Mr. Poobalan Mahalingam
   Dr. John Thavaselvan
   Dr. Raj Kumar Maharajah

2. Cultural Program
   Mr. Sivanathan Retnam

3. Social Program and Registration
   Mrs. Sarojini Pasupathy
   Miss Hemalatha Balasubramaniam

4. Dinner Program
   Ms. Sumita Gnanarajah
   Mr. K. Tharmabalan

5. Logistics Program (Transport, Audio-visuals)
   Mr. N. Rasanayagam
Sri Lankans have emigrated to different parts of the world over centuries, resulting in the creation of a vast Diaspora straddling the Globe. They are to be found in the United States, Canada, in Europe, in Australia, in UK, in Malaysia and elsewhere in sizeable numbers totalling more than one and a half million. In most cases they have blended into the fabric of the countries in which they find themselves and have actively contributed to the nation-building process in those countries.

In doing so, they have acquired new dimensions, new perceptions and perspectives and even new values. They have undoubtedly encountered problems in the course of their progress. They have proven their potential in those different countries.

This Forum, which follows on the previous attempts in Toronto and in Sydney, seeks to examine the many aspects of the Diaspora. The related issues, and the outcome thereof, will affect the direction which the future of the Diaspora will take. Unless the current generation takes steps to cooperate in a positive manner, to network, to promote, to review and to update its academic, commercial and linguistic, cultural and other activities and create a global infrastructure to coordinate these activities, there is a distinct possibility that the Diaspora as we know it today will not only diminish but quite possibly disappear in the course of time.

In this context, therefore, various aspects, and in particular, those listed below, need to be explored in considerable depth:

1. Demographic, Geographic, Linguistic
2. Networking

from the point of view of:

1. Women and Youth
2. Educational
3. Commercial
4. Socio-Cultural
5. Professional

Sri Lankans have been and are a resilient people. Their determination to succeed wherever they are is amply evident. This Forum seeks to harness and galvanize this resilience and determination into a bonding of the Diaspora which would be capable of meeting the challenges of the future.

Datuk Assoc. Prof. Dr. D. M. Thuraiappah
Chairman of the Organising Committee