

Making Sustainability the Next Metric

Post 2015 Sri Lankan Development Priorities



This presents nine development priorities that were formulated drawing on discussions that we had with civil society activists from across the country. Moreover, we have also included the principle measures that must be taken to attain these priorities.

This is a joint initiative undertaken by the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) with the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement.

1 Making an attitudinal change and improvement

To become a developed country, it has to be rich with human resources—in other words with skills and knowledge. It is also necessary that the people are attitudinally prepared to take on the challenge posed by the development process. This buttresses both the material and qualitative development of a country.



+ Promoting solidarity in place of individualism

Unlike in the past, at present people have become more individualistic. It is very difficult to see any communal activities among them. Unity and co-operation has diminished. This has to change.



+ Emancipating ourselves from the sense of dependency

Since people have become dependent on neighbours, relatives, state or non-state organisations, they fail to make it on their own. They are of the opinion that the state has to interfere in everything. In order to become a developed country, it is necessary to rid oneself of this sense of dependency.



+ Becoming mindful of the obligations that one has towards one's country

While on the one hand one must demand that the state grants the rights of individuals, it is also important to think of the obligations that individuals have towards the state. No development could be envisioned without the participation of the people.



+ Prioratising the right development goals

It is necessary to reflect on the positive and negative consequences of any action in advance. It is necessary to make sure that the consequences are not negative and that they do not adversely affect the people, animals, and eco-systems.

+ Agriculture must be appreciated as an important aspect of development

Society places a great deal of value on white collar jobs but agriculture, employments in the technical sector, self-employment, and labour intensive employments are not appreciated. All livelihoods and professions have to be appreciated.

2 Promoting eco-friendly development



+ Environmental protection should be a part of development planning

In order to mitigate the damage that is caused by material development it is necessary that planning takes into account the environmental dimension and preserve the eco equilibrium. This cannot be solely attained through laws and regulations; it is also necessary to change the wrong attitudes of people.



+ Development planning should not be approved without an assessment of the environmental impact

Development, without assessing the environmental impact could have disastrous ramifications for the environment and for human way of life. Therefore, it is imperative that a risk assessment is done and its recommendations are implemented.



It is necessary to think beyond economic development and consider environmental development a factor of overall development. Pursuing a well-balanced development policy will pave the way for a sustainable future for the next generation.



+ Promoting environmentally friendly agriculture

The use of pesticides is a great threat to the eco-system and human health. Sri Lanka has plenty of traditional/indigenous know-how and resources for an environmentally friendly agriculture. Exploiting these resources and the know-how, we can head towards an environmentally friendly agriculture.

“ The existing system disregards the feasibility report. Development projects such as airports and ports do not take into account the environmental risk assessment. In the future we will have to face grave consequences. It is necessary to have an awareness of bio-diversity. ”

3 Development planning according to public needs



+ Consulting the civil society and general public in developmental planning

The objective behind this is to meaningfully involve the public in the decision-making process. Through a productive exchange with these stake-holders, it is possible to get a better understanding about people's aspirations and also to disseminate correct and timely information in order to make the decision-making process more productive and correct.



+ Prioritising the programmes which address the needs of people

When the government is planning to make a developmental intervention, it is necessary to assess whose needs that intervention is serving. It is necessary to prioritise the programmes that fulfill the aspirations of the public the most.



4 Use of traditional/local knowledge for development

It is important to formulate an indigenous vision for development by fusing traditional knowledge and the resources that we have in the country with modern knowledge.



+ Making use of traditional/indigenous know-how in the development projects

In Sri Lanka there is a great deal of knowledge that can be used for the progress of many fields. By using this knowledge, we can make the implementation of plans more efficient and also obtain the active contribution of those using resources.

“When we are planning and implementing a project, it is good to incorporate local knowledge. We have to accumulate local knowledge from all the institutions. Farming methods, time, traditional pesticides, spiritual influences, planetary positions—all this could be included in what is considered traditional knowledge. It is necessary to pay attention to such traditional know-how.”



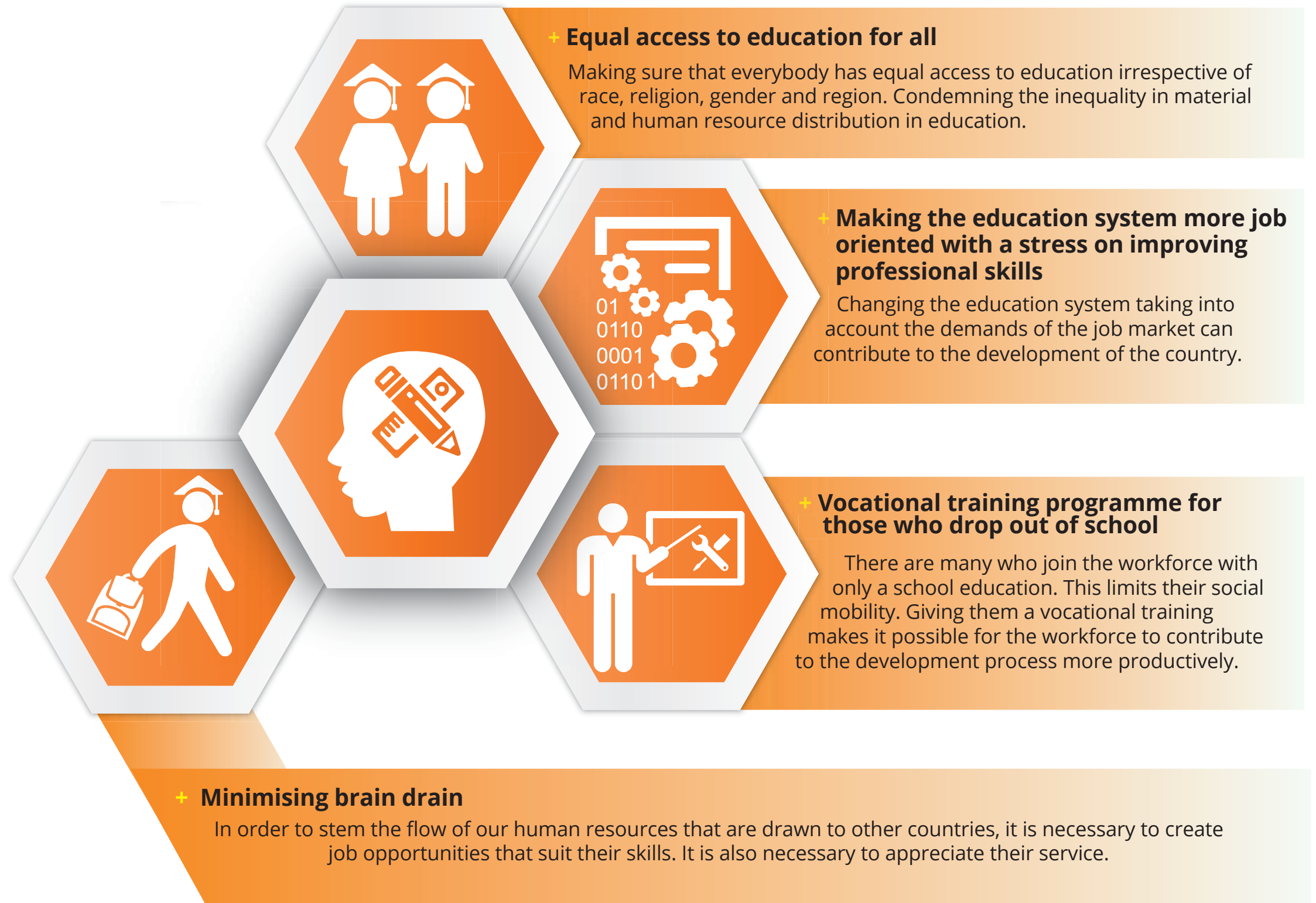
+ Encouraging products made of local resources

Instead of exporting the resources of the country simply as material without value addition, utilising those resources within the country increases production and generates job opportunities. It is also important to limit importing what could be produced locally and take measures to promote local production.



+ Supporting traditional/indigenous agriculture and eco-friendly agriculture

5 Improve the quality of education and develop human capital



6 Ensure equality



+ Minimising the unequal distribution of wealth

In Sri Lanka 53.2% of the domestic income is claimed by the highest earning 20%. Only 5% is claimed by the lowest earning 20%. In order to attain a more sustainable development, measures have to be taken to mitigate this.



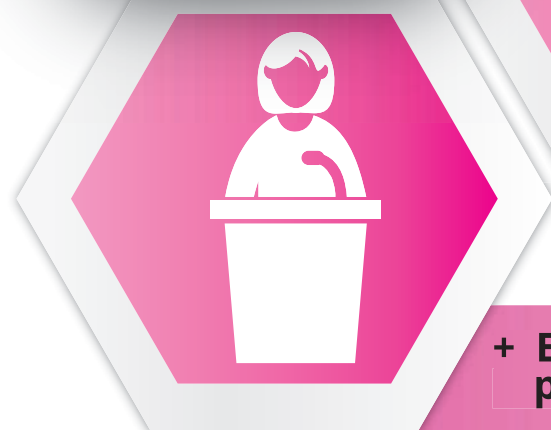
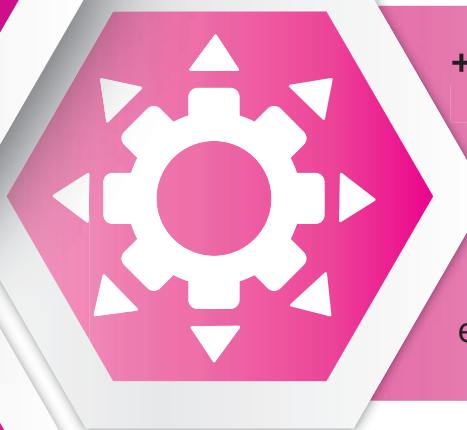
+ A national mechanism to guarantee that resources are equally distributed

In Sri Lanka there is a disparity in the distribution of resources and other facilities. This disparity has distanced the rural areas from the development process. Taking measures to address these disparities is a prerequisite for sustainable development.



+ A national mechanism to guarantee that the benefits of development are distributed equally

In order to channel the benefits of development to all provinces in the country, it is necessary to have a balanced regional development process. In doing so, it is important to pay more attention to improving those provinces that do poorly on economic and social indices.



+ Equal opportunities for women (greater participation in the economic process and the representation in politics)

Among the economically inactive population in the country 74.9% are women. Even though the internationally accepted standard for women representation in politics is 30%, in Sri Lanka it is much lower. The political representation of women in the Parliament is 5.8%. Therefore, it is important to improve the women's participation by addressing the issues that have contributed to the lack of female participation.

7 Good governance



+ Everybody must be equal before the law

Those with money can purchase law and hide evidence. It is necessary to start a discourse in society about the existing system of justice. It is also necessary to think if the constitution suits the country. The judiciary, legislative assembly and the Executive have to be changed. Independent commissions have to be empowered and enacted.



+ Good governance and accountability

The state and all state institutions are accountable to people. It is necessary to create such an environment, at institutional level and also through an attitudinal change in individuals.



+ Minimising waste and corruption

Waste and corruption that plague most sections in Sri Lanka have become a major stumbling block to development at present. Good governance must condemn waste and corruption. Therefore, it is important to have rules and regulations that guarantee transparency.



+ Safeguarding fundamental rights

Safeguarding the right of a human being to exist as a human being is the responsibility of the state and of every individual. Respecting human rights help us create the environment that we want to inhabit. Being mindful of human rights helps create social being and a just society.

8 Build a healthy nation

Thanks to the free healthcare system, Sri Lanka performs well on the development indices. However, we must have a programme to deal with the challenge of rendering a quality and equitable healthcare service.



+ A quality, equitable Healthcare System

Although the health sector seems to have improved materially to some extent, it is doubtful if this is enough to render a quality service. The fact that this material development is limited to Colombo and other main urban areas, has increased inequality. It is necessary to take steps to improve the healthcare service at rural and provincial levels.



+ Making the food production free of chemicals

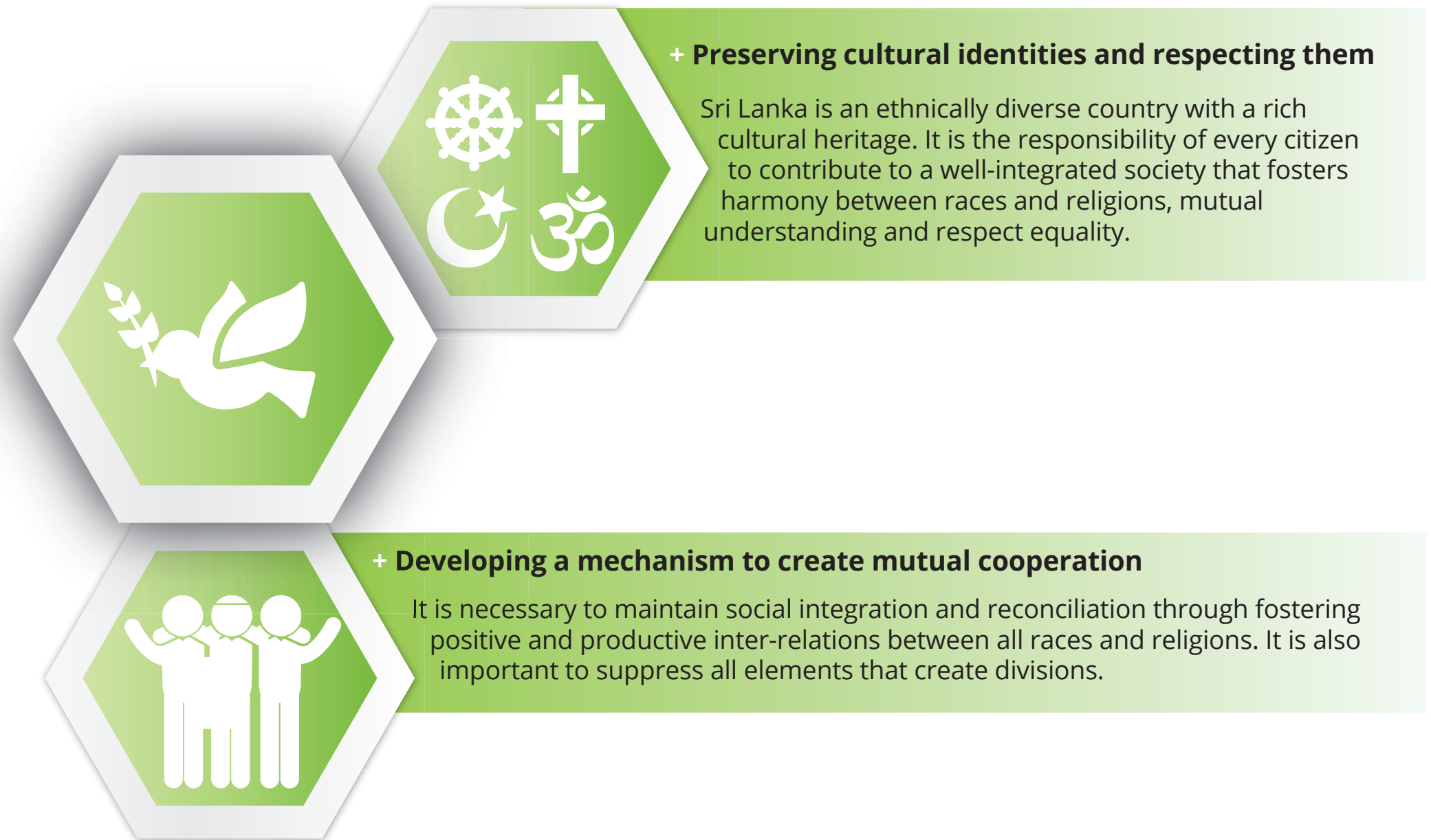


+ Preventing noncommunicable diseases

At present in Sri Lanka noncommunicable diseases have started to spread. Therefore, it is important to remain mindful of these diseases and take measures to prevent them.



9 Build Peace among ethnicities and religions



+ Preserving cultural identities and respecting them

Sri Lanka is an ethnically diverse country with a rich cultural heritage. It is the responsibility of every citizen to contribute to a well-integrated society that fosters harmony between races and religions, mutual understanding and respect equality.

+ Developing a mechanism to create mutual cooperation

It is necessary to maintain social integration and reconciliation through fostering positive and productive inter-relations between all races and religions. It is also important to suppress all elements that create divisions.

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Every community must be given the understanding to create positive inter-relations. There is turmoil in the country, acts of revenge and defamation. The tri-lingual policy only exists in name. It has to be implemented. There must be a programme to properly implement it.

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