

CONFERENCE REPORT

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MOVING BEYOND CONFLICT...

Spirituality as a Resource for Reconciliation and Reconstruction



Conference held from 16th – 18th December 2008
BMICH / ABAYARAMAYA

Compiled by Amjad Mohamed Saleem

“In the depth of human multitude, there slumbers an immense spiritual power, which will manifest itself only when we have learnt how to break through the dividing walls of our egoism, and raise ourselves to an entirely new perspective, so that habitually and in a practical fashion we fix our gaze on universal realities,” – Pierre Teilhard deChardin, priest and paleontologist - ‘Hymn of the Universe.’

Introduction

World over, development policies have been top down, largely driven by market considerations in which people and communities have been left out from defining and taking responsibility for their own progress. The wars of identity, liberation, self-determination, religious hegemony and resource grabbing are escalating globally where the world is increasingly being seen through a singular lens of ‘good’ and ‘evil’, ‘us’ vs. ‘them’.

This unhealthy unipolar view of a ‘Clash of Civilisation’ concept has led to ambiguities and complexities with regards the perception of current global conflicts.

Concerns about different forms of fundamentalism, violence and exclusivity, while entirely understandable from a human rights and security perspective, easily compound the problem. Many will argue that in the globalising world such rivalry, competition, conflicts, and violence are a necessary tool to preserve the ‘values of freedom’. However such violence is only perpetuated from deeply delusive and divisive assumptions of single exclusive identities by sectarian activists who want people to ignore all affiliation and loyalties in support of one specific identity. Such exclusive identities are often negative, stressing difference rather than belonging, ‘opposition to’ rather than ‘support for’ something. Unfortunately whilst faith may rarely be the original source of the conflicts that results from this, it often becomes the arena in which conflicts are played out. Hence conflicts manifest themselves into rumour, hearsay and generalization which are the first steps that lead to the stereotyping of people (their faith, their culture and identity) and the denial of a diverse, lived reality, the opposite of respect, understanding and acceptance. As a consequence faiths (beliefs, culture and identity) become judged by the attitudes and actions of small and aberrant minorities.

New Solutions

More than four decades ago Martin Luther King had a dream of a new world. He said "*Our world is geographically one. We are faced with (a challenge of) making it spiritually one. Through our scientific genius we have made of the world a neighborhood; now through moral and spiritual genius, we must make it a brotherhood*".

This geographically one world in which the economic and market boundaries are fast dissolving is also a world of heightened uncertainty and fear, threatening continuity of the human race. With the collapse of socialism and now with the global financial crisis, an apparent sign of the failure of capitalism, deficiencies in the political and economic paths pursued world over so far have been demonstrated. Lack of spiritual values and principles (as a regulatory force) have been identified as a major cause for the failure,

The critical need of the time is a new thinking, new vision, new understanding, and new ways of relating with each other in an increasingly interdependent community. This new thinking will have to challenge people to accept diversity and create equal opportunities for diverse communities, ethnicities, traditions, cultures and faiths. The new solutions will have to realise that this richness and variety in diversity are part of a common global wealth that needs to be celebrated in global civil society and integrated into national life as a positive force for development and measures will have to be taken to arrive at a universally applicable new vision in which material progress is based on spiritual principles instead of basing them purely on material conception of life. The new solutions will have to realise that there is recognition of pluralism and in this plurality there exists multiple identities.

Nobel Laureate Professor Amartya Sen's premise in his book 'Identity and Violence' is that the key to good citizenship and social cohesion is the encouragement and retention of multiple identities. People have several enriching identities: nationality, gender, age, parental background, religious or professional affiliation. They identify with different ethnic groups and races, towns or villages they call home, sometimes football teams; they speak different languages, which they hope their children will retain, and love different parts of their countries. It is the recognition of this plurality and the searching for commonalities within this pluralism that will lead to greater respect. Ultimately, a solution that does not involve forgiveness and respect cannot create an environment for consolidating a lasting understanding and acceptance. It is in this recognition that the power of spirituality needs to be revisited and discussed.

There has already been a lot of debate on the role of faith and spirituality in social cohesion, conflict and diversity, and many critics will prefer to leave faith and spirituality out of the discussions. However one needs to realize that to do so will be at one's peril. Faiths are embedded in cultures and communities, whilst spirituality is part and parcel of everyday life. Indeed many people in rural parts of the world, less accustomed to diversity, would not find the distinction between 'culture' and 'faith' meaningful and would reject any attempt to denigrate the issue of spirituality. Historically, spiritual heritage has provided humanity the capacity for personal and social transformation. What one finds is that people take a lot of heart from their spirituality and the concept of spirituality (which can be defined as the higher values and ethics that concern human nature and purpose, leading to peace and harmony with one and others) can be used as a door towards building understanding based on common features in a language understood by most people. Hence any new solution will have to have spirituality as one of its ports for operation.

Creating a New Environment

The challenge is how would that environment be created and sustained? Mistrust is often based on ignorance and justified grievances. There are four things that are essential for this to happen effectively whilst reducing mistrust:

- Intellectual empathy
- Rationality
- Faith in oneself and others
- Spirituality

Intellectual empathy ensures that people who are in conflict with each other will have to acknowledge that everyone has justified grievances. Rationality and faith in one self and others will help us to disagree with someone's view, analysis or policy without doubting their sincerity and loyalty.

What do we understand by spirituality? Spirituality will be the glue that binds the factors together in a spirit of ethics, morals and basic humanity. It is the awareness of the interconnection of all things to provide the fuel for social change. In discussing spirituality, we neither talk about religion, politics nor do we debate how this world and all within it came into being. What is taken as given is the fact that 'All of us belong to this world, and we need to live in peace while we are living in it and protect it for those who will inherit it from us so that they too will be able to do the same for others coming after them.

In the broadest terms therefore "*spirituality is the ability to recognize among the diverse doctrines that there is a common space and substance from which can emerge a shared vision to trigger action for the unity of humanity. Compassion is the glue to keep humans - as individuals and communities- connected through ensuring care and safety of each other without endangering the rights all other living beings in their respective domains*".

These factors will ensure that any dialogue is undertaken in a spirit of forgiveness and non-retaliation so that people move towards respecting, understanding and accepting one another's differences in an atmosphere of justice and equality. These factors will introduce non-violent discipline into action. The great leaders of the world such as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela, have all professed and practised non-violent social actions as a way of establishing peace and justice. The role that spirituality plays in influencing this spirit of non retaliation and forgiveness can not be under emphasised. The obedience and cooperation that people voluntarily give to establish a governing power can also be withheld by the same people to remove that power when abused. This requires not only no violence but also peoples' awareness of their internal power and commitment to use it with responsibility.

A wise man once said, '*Between every stimulus and response there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In those choices lie our growth and happiness.'*'

Such is the meaning of spirituality. Within this space everyone is asked to take up a dialogue with their heart and conscience in an atmosphere of intimacy, sincerity and love in an order to choose the best response to a stimulus. Within this space is the horizon of all spirituality requiring man to acquire a force of being and doing, rather than to undergo despotic relentlessness of a life reduced to mere instinct. Hence self control, serenity, awareness of the other, respect for the fellow and tenderness which are not natural traits of man are acquired demanding a price of permanent personal effort. This is the struggle of man on the

journey of humanity through long and hard, thoughtful and measured work on one's self. Death, life, experiences, ordeals, pain, solitude, joy and happiness, are so many lessons to be learnt and taught on this journey.

Emphasis of the non-violence philosophy is the need for converting the opponent to the side of justice or seeking reconciliation with love and truth and not on the subjugation of the opponent with the power of might. A solution that does not involve respect for the opponent cannot resolve the underlying conflict and create an environment for consolidating a lasting peace.

The Sri Lankan Context

In Sri Lanka the divisive forces have worked their way, rendering within its shores a share of the global tragedies. The power of spirituality, flavoured by the various religious teachings that sustained peace and harmony for many centuries among the diverse citizens in this island, has been overtaken by greed and abuse of power. As a result, over the past few decades the country has experienced display of a conscious option of violence instead of using the power of reason and persuasion to solve a wide range of emerging problems.

This prolonged problem has polarized people ethnically and territorially. Conflicts start in the minds and hearts of people, and when people shut themselves for reasoning prejudice overtakes, and communication breaks down. Unfortunately, Sri Lanka has reached that stage, and we need to build trust among the various communities for nurturing unity by celebrating diversity. Many crucial opportunities have been missed for resolving those problems and have led to violent confrontations and war between the parties in conflict. From the Acehnese saying "There's always a time for the rain to stop and there's always a time for war to end" is derived our hope that in Sri Lanka too sanity will prevail one day to conclude the present conflict. Only when the guns are silent will the true challenge emerge from this conflict. As the fighting factions come together to build the 'dream nation' from the remnants of destruction, they will realize that threats and violence should have no place in that new nation.

Human nature is fundamentally spiritual and spiritual principles that resonate within the human soul provide an enormous motivational power for sacrifice and change. To truly reconcile, the state and people must become courageously non- violent, mutually respecting each other and this requires a change of heart. Sri Lanka has the spiritual base to make this change leading to a positive social transformation. The spirituality of this country however has stagnated and been blunted by various unscreened extraneous influences that freely floated within its borders over time, and therefore, it has to be sharpened realizing that everyone came from the same source and everyone living in this country has a space in it.

Bring back spirituality is a message that needs to be rekindled in our daily lives and dealings. When democracy is attained under the spiritual supervision, the weakest under it will have the same opportunity as the strongest. Societies that are spiritually nourished and sustained by the major religions will be led into "**a new environment that ensures equality and justice towards freedom of thought and expression, upholds and protects individual and collective human rights and dignity of all to pursue life's goals without fear and suspicion and contribute to national development**". This is what the people of this country are crying for.

The Conference

In December 2008, a conference entitled 'Moving Beyond Conflict: Spirituality as a Resource for Reconciliation and Reconstruction.' co hosted by the Congress of Religions, Mahabodhi Society, The Methodist Church Sri Lanka, the Hindu Priest's Council, Muslim Aid Sri Lanka (MASL) and the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) was organised in Colombo. The conference provided a forum to identify and harness resources of spirituality to build bridges across divides from ethnic, religious, territorial and language differences so that people can move beyond the stalemate of the violent conflict and constructively reposition themselves in anticipation of post conflict issues to live with dignity and honour with all communities without fear or suspicion of each other.

The specific objectives of this conference were to:

- a) Rekindle spirituality in people from their own religious traditions;
- b) Collectively develop common guidelines to prevent and resolve inter and intra ethnic conflicts;
- c) Facilitate a people-based movement - sustained by their respective spiritual traditions - that will be equipped to anticipate and dissipate potential tensions and hot spots before they erupt into major issues.

Delegates from across the country and the world deliberated for three days to arrive at a consensus that entailed understanding the need to move away from apportioning blame for the deceit and destruction, for the killing and maiming of combatants and civilians and for the missed opportunities for settling the problem in the country. It was understood that to go down the route that had been tread before would never move the country beyond the conflict.

Delegates realised that there was a need to take a new and bold step that would cast differences aside. In the words of one of the key note speakers, '*The days of looking for black cat in the dark room is over because we now know that there is no cat there*'

The conference demonstrated that people have the wish, the will and the capacity through their collective spiritual strengths powered by their respective religious foundations to make the leap required for the change necessary for the country. Confidence was expressed that the war would end some day, and when that happened, people would have to pick up the pieces and start reconstructing this country.

This is the challenge, not to curse the night so that it will go away but to light a candle (of spirituality) so that the darkness will disappear and we can see the light once again.

A number of presentations tried to define spirituality never for once equating spirituality with piety. Delegates were told that spirituality is the awareness of the interconnection of all things which provides the fuel for social change. In discussing spirituality, delegates did not talk about religion or politics or did they debate how this world and all within it came into being. It was understood that 'All of us belong to this world, and what is expected of us is to establish peace while we are living in this world and protect it for those who will inherit it from us so that they too will be able to do the same for others coming after them'.

Delegates agreed that people and communities have been left out from defining and taking responsibility for their own progress. In Sri-Lanka, the government wanting to be modern therefore adopted Westminster parliamentary system where in this system the winner even by

a 1% margin takes it all at the neglect of others; educational institution systems were changed to factories to turn out robots for job markets and not for nurturing human disciplines for community living; rural areas became marginalized, development was urban focused, nepotism, favoritism, discrimination, marginalization and alienation increased and the disgruntled took up arms.

In agreeing this, the delegates agreed that terrorism should be resisted even by using force if necessary, but there was also consensus that terrorism cannot be resisted by using counter terrorism. Winning over potential terror recruits is as important as killing or imprisoning current terrorists. Terrorism does not fall from the sky: it is created on this earth from political, economic, military, socio cultural and psychological well springs. The existence of root causes does not justify terrorism. However, terrorism cannot be defeated if root causes are not understood correctly and grappled with consistently.

As recent global events had demonstrated a lack of spiritual values and principles as the major cause of failure in the political and economic climates, delegates agreed that any measure being taken to address the challenges in Sri Lanka would have to consider material progress based on spiritual principles.

The spiritual guiding principles necessary to infuse human values and guide future policies for reconciliation and nation building were discussed under the following themes:

1. Honouring unity and celebrating diversity: - From various teachings it was realized that there is space for every living being while cherishing diversity of climate, history, heritage, temperaments and talents of the human race that inhabits this space. This recognized that each human born in a country is a trust of the whole in that country and any advantage of a part of country is best preserved and enjoyed by promoting comparative advantage of the whole country
2. Equity and Justice: - Justice and equity are the guiding principles for human well-being, and to maximize development of everyone and safeguard a country, equity and justice should be adhered to. In order to apply equity, opportunities need to be fairly distributed and justice is the vehicle through which equity can be ensured. Access to opportunities will not be equitable unless backed by resource commitment.
3. Eradicating social prejudices: - Past social inequities among men, women and children may have been caused by different survival circumstances. Differently able people also have not been fully integrated into the society. To create a climate of harmony and peaceful co-existence all fields of human endeavour will have to involve, without prejudice, every section of the people.
4. Morality and accountability in leadership: - Trustworthiness is the heart of all human interaction and engagement. Those who are put in public trust should bear responsibility of keeping that trust and must be willing to be held accountable for the manner in which they exercise authority. Morality, guided by strong spiritual conviction should become the foundation of leadership at all levels if true progress is to be achieved.
5. Resource use and environmental safety: - Spiritual and moral principles should ensure technological and economic considerations are appropriate for resource use. Saving natural capital for future generations will be an important consideration as against the temptation, for instance, of exploiting the natural resources beyond the renewable capacity.
6. Consultation and advisory groups: Constant monitoring and awareness of global changes and social implications will be required.

Based on these spiritual principles, the delegates agreed a resolution (See Appendix A) to solve the social problems. The resolution and guiding principles were then developed into a comprehensive action plan designed to bring all stakeholders together with the purpose of addressing the national issue.

Conclusion

The roots of all global crises can be found in human denial of the eternal principle of peace. Sir Richard Burton once wrote that '*All Faith is false, all Faith is true: Truth is the shattered mirror strewn In myriad bits; while each believes his little bit the whole to own*' (*The Kasidah of Haji Abdu El-Yezdi*), where he meant that you will find parts of the truth everywhere and the whole truth nowhere.

Currently with all spiritual and religious teachings everyone thinks that their little truth is the whole truth. However as delegates at this conference agreed spirituality is something greater than just plain theology and religiosity and is about identifying the common space and language to develop a vision for the unity of humanity. If we think in the grander scheme of things (beyond theology and ideology) to unite humanity with peace, respect and understanding, then each of us (with our faith and spiritual teachings) have a bit of that shard of broken glass. This can be pieced together on issues of commonality, as opposed to focusing on our points of difference. This is then the first step towards spiritual reconciliation between communities.

The need of the hour is co-operative models which cut across faith and theological differences to concentrate the material, financial and human resources on the common humanitarian objective of relieving poverty and suffering wherever and however it may occur. This coming together of faiths should serve as an example to all, that people can work together to further the cause of humanitarianism without compromising their individuality or beliefs. It underlines the value of faith based engagement to practical ends, which goes beyond dialogues. It is perhaps the 'missing link' between high-level interfaith dialogues and community action

Coming together on accepted common principles with the sole aim of interconnecting for social change can serve as an antidote to sectarianism, the polarisation of different faiths in multi-cultural societies and the potentially divisive effects of selective aid flows to particular faith communities. In particular, inter faith partnerships which are translated into civic action represents a template for a large cosmopolitan mosaic seeking to piece together the broken shards of a greater truth of serving humanity.

Appendix A

Moving Beyond Conflict: Spirituality as a Resource for Reconciliation and Reconstruction: The Resolution

At the end of a conference titled "Moving beyond Conflict: Spirituality a Resource for Reconciliation and Reconstruction" co-hosted by the Congress of Religions, Sri Lanka, the Mahabodi Society, Sri Lanka, The Methodist Church Sri Lanka, Hindu Priest Council, Sri Lanka, Peoples Acceleration Towards Peace (PATHS), Muslim Aid Sri Lanka and the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Sri Lanka held at the BMICH on 16th & 17th December 2008 we, the participants, representing religious dignitaries, civil societies and different professions from various districts of the country submit that we are:-

- *Concerned* that the prolonged conflict has intensified militarily, and as a result, human suffering has increased in the country
- *Mindful* that mistrust and distrust between and within the different communities have increased, and there is a need to build bridges to regain trust between communities
- *Unsure* that talks between the parties in conflict and other peace efforts underway will yield results in the immediate future
- *Optimistic* that in the near future hostilities that has gripped this country will come to an end
- *Convinced* that Sri-Lanka is basically a spiritual country,
- *Concerned* that there is an absence of interfaith-spiritual principles in pursuit of addressing humanitarian issues
- *Inspired* by renewed confidence that interfaith consultations and spiritual values can contribute to healing injuries caused by ethnic conflicts

Recognizing that conflict resolution in any country should address issues of ethnic diversity, equity and justice among people, accountability, people's security and safety we have resolved that:-

1. **Spirituality** and common human values founded and strengthened by the different religious teachings should be used as a force to promote inter-ethnic understanding and social cohesion
2. **Justice** in terms of human rights, resource access and allocation is better understood through spiritual and faith traditions and should therefore form the guiding principles in all future efforts directed towards peace building
3. **Economic development** should be guided by spiritual values to ensure ethical harnessing of natural resources, minimizing wastage as a mandatory policy measure as endowments for the future generations
4. **Educational systems** should be restructured to also include spiritual teachings of human values to mobilize people into accountability and building self reliant communities
5. Providing **incentives** (through recognition based humanitarian services and social transformation) to enhance the role of religious leaders in the society as focal points for community mobilization and counselling is needed
6. Formation of **inter-faith leader groups** in every village and networks of such groups with a view of developing a common identity and maintaining peace and harmony should be encouraged

7. The religious leaders should become **role models** in the society
8. The religious leaders should play a more **proactive role** with the support of the people to check excesses and prevent corruption of public servants
9. The need of the hour is to **depoliticise** all aspects of social life

We recommend that these resolutions be given serious policy considerations and backed up with the following guiding principles if we are serious about resolving the conflict and moving beyond:

Guiding Principle 1: Equity and Justice.

The world has taken a path of Dominion (use of might as right) rather than justice. Equality is misused in democracy as the majority takes it all after an election with the minority being marginalised. The questions to be asked when evaluating this guiding principle are:

- Should justice be the consideration for development?
- How can religious commonalities and spiritual principles help in inculcating and adopting human rights, trust and solidarity among people be included in national development?

Guiding Principle 2: Consultation

The world has reached a chaotic point as a result of production and development decisions are powered by greed and not by need. There is a feeling that people have not been consulted as unequal centralised decisions have been taken. The questions to be asked, when addressing this guiding principle are:

- Has this been as a result of weakening spirituality?
- How can this be addressed?

Guiding Principle 3: Building Trust

There is distrust and mistrust among communities and different faith groups. Distrust and mistrust amongst people come from an element of ignorance and lack of understanding of each other. In particular distrust exists from unemployed and disenfranchised youth who feel let down by the state systems. The questions to be asked, when addressing this guiding principle are:

- To what extent has this been due to political manipulations?
- What needs to be done to promote dialogue to bring about understanding and shared beliefs?

Guiding Principles 4: Holistic Policies

Material and spiritual development have been kept wide apart. Policies are more focused on material development. For sustainability of humanity material and spiritual development should go side by side. One cannot succeed without the other. The questions to be asked, when addressing this guiding principle are:

- Has weakening of spirituality contributed to wanton destruction of natural resources and material development?
- Or has indiscriminate material development caused the weakening of spirituality?

Guiding Principles 5: More Accountability

There has not been accountability of actions taken on behalf of the people – be it political, corporate or public sectors. The questions to be asked, when addressing this guiding principle are:

- What should be the role of religious leaders in encouraging self accountability and collective accountability at the family, community and private and public enterprises levels?
- What role the clergy could and should play in holding moral authority and accountability?
- How could this institutionalized?

Guiding Principle 6: Maintaining Traditional Family Values

People have become individualistic and traditional family values and safety nets are fast eroding. The questions to be asked, when addressing this guiding principle are:

- What measures can be taken to help societal cohesion so that people can claim ownership and participate in nation building?

Appendix B



Group Discussion



Delegates



Silent Religious Reflections



Group Discussion



Delegates



Closed Session Discussion

Appendix C

Over 250 persons participated the conference including representatives of the following organizations.

1. Social Research & Development Organization (SRDO) - Trincomalee
2. All University Muslim Students Association (AUMSA) - National
3. Peace Community Norwood
4. Young Muslim Men's Association (YMMMA) - Colombo
5. NAFSO - Gampaha
6. National Peace Council (NPC) - Gampaha, Matara, Galle, Ratnapura, Hambantota
7. Centre for Peace Building & Reconciliation - National
8. FORUPP SL - Badulla
9. Volunteer Organization of Social development (VOSD) - Vanni
10. Peace & Community Action Sri Lanka (PCA – SL) - National
11. Peoples Forum - Badulla
12. CBE
13. Gintota Mosque
14. Women's Rural Development Society (WRDS) - Trincomalee
15. Muslim Aid Sri Lanka - Colombo
16. Congress of Religions - Colombo
17. Islamic Women's Association for Research & Empowerment (IWARE) - Batticaloa
18. Methodist Church of Sri Lanka
19. Samadhi Foundation - Badulla
20. NAFSO - Gampaha
21. Deepalanka Development for Donation - South
22. Cultural & Environmental Society - National
23. Methodist Church HQ - Colombo
24. Swarajya Foundation - National
25. People Accelerating Towards Human Synergy (PATHS) - National
26. SEEDS - National
27. Women and Children Development Forum - Matale
28. Roman Catholic Church - Jaffna
29. UMCOR Sri Lanka - Colombo
30. Mahatma Gandhi Centre - Colombo
31. Peoples Secretariat - Jaffna
32. Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process (SCOPP) - Colombo
33. Moratuwa University - Colombo
34. British High Commission - Colombo
35. Dharul Hasanath Foundation - Colombo
36. All Ceylon Jamyathul Ulama (ACJU) - Colombo
37. Meeran Jummah Mosque - Colombo
38. People Forum - Badulla
39. Fahmiya Arabic College - Badulla
40. Islamic Guidance Centre - Kahatagasdigiliya
41. LEADS – Mannar
42. Red R - Colombo
43. Kantha Sanvidhanaya - Kantale
44. Uva Farmers Development Foundation (UFDF) - Badulla
45. Christian Workers Fellowship - National
46. Roman Catholic Church - Jaffna

- 47. St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church - Kandana
- 48. Peoples Council for Peace & Goodwill - Jaffna
- 49. EUWO - Kantale
- 50. CRPC - Monaragala
- 51. Sama Sevaya - Talawa
- 52. NCA - Uva
- 53. Kathiravan Art Club - Batticaloa
- 54. Bodhiraja Viharaya - Habaraaduwa
- 55. Hindu Organization
- 56. RDF - Puttalam
- 57. Rural Economic Cultural Development Organization (RECDO) - Kantale
- 58. Islamic Fine arts Cultural Education Centre - Batticaloa
- 59. Center for Human Rights - Kinniya
- 60. ORDER - Puttalam
- 61. Center for Development & Rehabilitation (CDR) - Batticaloa
- 62. Human Vision - Batticaloa
- 63. Youth Parliament - Trincomalee
- 64. AEC - Mannar
- 65. Peoples Forum - Matara
- 66. Interfaith Forum - Trincomalee
- 67. Inter Faith Forum - Monaragala
- 68. Islamic Guidance Center - Anuradhapura
- 69. Sri Lanka Young Men's Hindu Association - Trincomalee
- 70. KAVYA - Women Development Organization - Batticaloa
- 71. Visura Development Institution - Matara
- 72. Social Development & Research Organization – Trincomalee

Conference Speakers

Ven. Hayashi Masaihito – Head of Rinkoji Temple, Japan
 Right Rev. Dr. Z. Kameeta – Presiding Bishop - Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Republic of Namibia
 Dr. A.R. Kohli – Former Governor of the State of Mizoram, India
 Dr. Kiyoko Miyamoto - Research Fellow, Conflict Analysis Research Centre, University of Kent, UK
 Dr. Husna Ahmed – CEO, Faith Regen Foundation, UK
 Dr. Seyed Zafar Mahmood – Chairperson, Interfaith Coalition for Peace, India
 Mr. Ifet Mustafic - Interreligious Relations, Islamic Community in Bosnia - Herzegovina
 Mr. Andrew Firmin - Programme Manager – Culture and Diversity, Commonwealth Foundation, UK