

Sri Lanka: Aid effectiveness

A scoping of development partner perceptions for DFID-SEA

Simon Harris

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Aid effectiveness as defined under the Paris Declaration is not the subject of specific debate amongst donors in Sri Lanka. There is no dedicated forum through which aid effectiveness issues are explored. The understanding of and commitments to aid effective are inconsistent both within and between different stakeholders.
- 1.2 A lack of will and bureaucratic, weak governance with a plethora of often overlapping ministries, informed by a pervading political culture that is power focused, short term and non-reformist is seen as one of the major obstacles to enhancing aid effectiveness. The GoSL tendency to prefer bi-lateral rather than harmonised arrangement with donors is seen as corollary to the context. There is little bi-partisan, cross party consensus on development objectives and strategies. Aid assistance is dominated by Japanese funds and by the major banks. The GoSL does not view the bi-lateral donors as that significant in comparison.
- 1.3 The post-tsunami proliferation and congestion of humanitarian space has complicated the enhancement of aid effectiveness by introducing a new set of assistance motives that mitigate against harmonisation. The tsunami response has also been characterised by a lack of appreciation of the overarching conflict context.
- 1.4 Donors, particularly bi-lateral donors, tend to have been overly optimistic regarding their impact on peace and development. Larger multi nationals and Japan are more important to GoSL. Politically, India is more probably more influential than other donors because of its regional power, whilst China is become influential as trade partner. Donors have also tended to focus on like-minded partners to enhance aid effectiveness rather than engage with less like-minded who may actually be more important in effecting change.
- 1.5 Key recommendations focus around the need to create a local identity around which aid effectiveness in Sri Lanka could mobilise.
- 1.6 These include: developing a better marketing strategy; targeting different levels amongst multiple stakeholders; establishing a specific aid effectiveness working group; rationalising and harmonising existing donor coordination forums; enhancing sector wide approaches; identifying more inclusive ways of working on aid effectiveness and engaging with the LTTE, local civil society and INGO's; building upon strengths, especially regarding peace related harmonisation and attempting to find strategies for promoting bi-partisan commitments to long-term development and poverty reduction plans. Build relationships with non-like minded groups and focus on Asian donors such as China, Japan, India and the ADB to influence aid effectiveness.
- 1.7 Further research is also recommended to support these areas. This includes: comparative studies of existing peace related small grants funds; an assessment of the Japanese model of bi-lateral engagement and opportunities for closer strategic collaboration on aid effectiveness; the potential of bottom-up approaches to enhancing aid effectiveness; and the impact of bi-lateral agency personnel placement strategies.

2. Introduction and Methodology

- 2.1 This report was commissioned by the UK Government's Department for International Development - South East Asia (DFIDSEA) as part of their regional scoping initiative on aid effectiveness. It examines the perspectives of in-country partners towards the incentives and disincentives, opportunities and constraints of enhancing aid effectiveness in line with the targets and commitments on ownership, harmonisation, alignment, results and mutual accountability development as part of the OECD-DAC High Level Forum meetings in Rome and in Paris 2005¹.
- 2.2 The report is based upon a desk review of Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and donor documents pertaining to aid effectiveness, together with a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with 36 respondents from bi-lateral donors, multi-lateral donors and implementing agencies conducted in Colombo, Sri Lanka over 6 days during August 2005.²
- 2.3 This report does not attempt to provide a comprehensive or definitive view of perspectives on the challenges and commitments towards enhancing an aid effectiveness agenda in Sri Lanka. It does however provide a synthesis of a range of perspectives on each of the four cornerstones of aid effectiveness (ownership, harmonisation, alignment and results / mutual accountability) together with the Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States.³

3. The Aid Environment in Context

- 3.1 Sri Lanka is regarded as making reasonable progress towards, and is expected to achieve, most of the Millennium Development Goals although substantial pockets of poverty exist in the rural south, plantation sector, urban slums and the conflict affected north and east. It has the second highest human development indicators in South Asia (after the Maldives) and is widely regarded as a middle income country (per capita GDP US\$ 1,030 est.). It has an annual growth of just under 6% and with its record of sustaining growth at around 5% during the past decade of the conflict, it is often cited as an economy which challenges correlation between war and under-development.
- 3.2 It is widely believed that without 20+ years of conflict the country would have developed on par with countries like Thailand or Malaysia. The much retold anecdote of Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew's visit to Sri Lanka in the 1950's highlights the sense of lost opportunity that is felt by many in the country as well as outside observers. Lee Kwan Yew had apparently commented at the time that he viewed Ceylon (Sri Lanka's former name) as a role model for what he hoped Singapore would become. Sri Lanka is regarded by donors as a country that could have done better.
- 3.3 The key areas of donor focus are peace, poverty alleviation, equity and growth. An end to the conflict is regarded as the critical factor in securing sustainable development. The way in which donors have approached the conflict has evolved during the past fifteen years from working "around" conflict, to working "in" conflict affected areas and during the past five years or so working "on" transforming conflict. Not all donors prioritise peace or approach working "on" conflict in the same way which affects the capacity for effective harmonisation on this issue (see below).

¹ *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: Ownership Harmonisation, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability*, High Level Forum. Paris: 2005.

² In terms of timing August was a particularly difficult month for undertaking research in Sri Lanka with the senior personnel from many missions being absent on leave for their summer vacations.

³ *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States*, Senior Level Forum on Development Effectiveness in Fragile States. London: January 2005.

- 3.4 “Do no harm” has, however, been a significant debate amongst the donor community in Sri Lanka since the late 1990’s with conflict sensitive engagement being especially promoted by DFID. However, awareness of and commitment to the principles of do not harm appear to have diminished during the first six months of the tsunami response and is only now starting to re-emerge as an area that *“should have been given more consideration in the initial disaster response.”* Yet another example of what Jonathan Goodhand has described as lessons spurned rather than lessons learned, pointing to the perennial humanitarian agency and donor habit of failing to learn from past mistakes (due to lack institutional memory, change-over of key personnel, lack of capacity for self-criticism or sharing own failings with others).
- 3.5 A number of donors (for example DANIDA), have, post-Tokyo, attempted to engage in quick impact or short-medium term engagement over issues of peace building, promoting good-governance and strengthening civil society engagement in Sri Lanka. These have been generally donors with little prior substantive experience of working in or on Sri Lanka. Their current engagement has been predicated upon “not enough ground work” with little understanding of the political culture. Their motivation for engagement related to Foreign Ministry pressure for post-Tokyo, and latterly post-tsunami visibility. A number of peers commented on the political limitations and agendas imposed on many bi-lateral donors whose overseas development aid was a division of their foreign ministries rather than a separate entity.
- 3.6 There is also widespread recognition that there also needs to be substantive progress towards good governance in order to achieve peace and development. Access to, and quality of services in the conflict affected north and east is far less than in the western province, making equity another key issue for international donors.
- 3.7 Unlike other many other conflict affected countries, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa, Sri Lanka is neither a weak or fragile state. Nor is totally aid dependent boasting a vibrant tourist industry, primary export crops (particularly tea) and large foreign exchange earnings in the form of remittance payments from overseas domestic and semi-skilled migrant workers in the Middle East.
- 3.8 According to the GoSL’s External Resources Department, approximately US\$ 1 billion is channelled in the form of bilateral or multi-lateral aid each year. Japan is the single largest donor accounting for approximately 50% of all aid. The Japanese are the only bi-lateral donor to have their own desk within the External Resources Department / Ministry of Finance which affords them constant high-level GoSL access and the capacity for very close collaboration. The Japanese and banks may provide one of the most important avenues for promoting aid effectiveness. The ADB is the country’s second largest donor providing approximately a quarter of the aid followed by the World Bank. The other bi-laterals donors combined account for less than about 15% of Sri Lanka’s total aid and are relatively minor actors, especially in the eyes of the GoSL.
- 3.9 A number of bi-lateral donors believed that their contribution to Sri Lanka was important, if not in financial terms, at least in their capacity to influence GoSL policies and reforms. However, other bi-laterals felt that this group of donors tended to believe that they were more influential than they actually were and could point to little evidence of substantive impact. Some commented that bi-laterals needed to be “smarter” concerning the manner in which they engaged with the donors that really could make a difference (JBIC, ADB and World Bank) in order to have greater influence on aid effectiveness. It was recognised that Asian donors (Japan, China and India) may have more influence than Western donors due to the percentage of their aid (Japan particularly), their domination of regional politics (India) and size of economy / markets (China).

- 3.10 The tsunami has added an additional US\$ 1 billion in pledges and has seen the emergence of INGO's becoming increasingly significant actors often mobilising aid budgets larger than many bi-laterals.
- 3.11 The integration of an aid effectiveness agenda in Sri Lanka is informed by four critical and closely interrelated determinants. These are firstly, the nature of Sri Lankan politics; secondly, the structure of the governments' administration; thirdly, the issue of peace and; fourthly, the recent confounding variable of the tsunami.
- 3.12 The Sri Lankan political environment could be described as a feudal democracy in which the cult of personality and notions of traditional individual authority are mobilised by elites in their perpetual quest to attain and retain power at any price. Political patronage, election related violence, coalition building and unlikely alliances, together with the mobilisation of ethno-nationalism, have been some of the main characteristics of Sri Lanka's political culture during the past twenty-five years. Political insecurities and the fear of falling from power seem to frequently translate into short-term populist policies designed to attract votes, whilst the medium and longer-term reforms necessary for development often receive little more than lip service.
- 3.13 The past five years have witnessed the rapid destabilisation of political space in Sri Lanka. As a result of Sri Lanka's two tier Presidential and Parliamentary terms, from 2001 to 2004 the President was in opposition to the Government. In 2001, following almost twenty years of protracted conflict which culminated in an assault by the Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) militant Tamil separatist movement which crippled the country's only international airport, the United National Party (UNP) was elected on platform of peace. This election resulted in the country's President (Peoples' Alliance / Sri Lanka Freedom Party leader Chandrika Kumaratunga Bandaranaike) being in opposition to the Government.
- 3.14 After brokering a Ceasefire Agreement with the LTTE, steering the economy towards sustained growth, a foreign reserve surplus and negotiating billions of dollars in international pledges at the Tokyo Donor Conference in 2003 through what was widely regarded as a visionary development strategy "*Regaining Sri Lanka*", the UNP was ousted in 2004 by a coalition of the People's Alliance (PA) and a number of Sinhalese nationalist parties.
- 3.15 The call for early elections resulted from a constitutional coup by the President in which she forcibly took over key government ministries whilst the Prime Minister was overseas, claiming that UNP peace proposals aiming to establish an Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA) in the north and east risked ceding sovereignty to the LTTE and compromised the integrity and unity of the nation.
- 3.16 The new coalition was a fragile alliance held in place by a culture of political patronage that saw the extension of an already over-wielding public bureaucracy burgeon into 62 different line ministries and a Government in which nearly every member became either a minister or deputy minister.
- 3.17 By December 2004 differences in the coalition had rendered government virtually ineffective. Aid absorption rates stood at approximately 14% per annum whilst the Government had failed to produce an acceptable development strategy around which international donors could align. Interest rates and inflation had soared, attempts to establish a mechanism to channel reconstruction assistance into the LTTE areas had failed and the Ceasefire Agreement looked close to collapse. According to a number of respondents from within the donor community, a number of bi-laterals were reconsidering their pledges of assistance over frustration with the lack of progress towards peace. Others felt that the prioritisation of Sri Lanka for aid was increasingly difficult to justify in the absence of open conflict

and the presence of MIC indicators. The tsunami has changed this perspective, at least for the short to medium term in relation to reconstruction assistance.

- 3.18 The tsunami disaster provided the donors with an excuse to remain committed to Sri Lanka backed by an unprecedented outpouring of international philanthropy. The disaster provided the Government with the opportunity to attempt to establish a new mechanism for engagement with the LTTE over the disbursement of humanitarian aid. This possibility and the creation of a '*Post-Tsunami Operational Mechanism*' (P-TOMS) precipitated the virtual collapse of the coalition with the departure of the Sinhalese nationalist elements in protest.
- 3.19A plethora of new tsunami related administrative departments, coordinating bodies and forums arose to manage the task of relief and reconstruction. The number of international bi-lateral donors with an interest in Sri Lanka proliferated. For example, Italy, who had a long established presence in Sri Lanka, increased its capacity by opening new development cooperation offices to help mobilise bilateral tsunami funds and provide coordination support for the twenty-two new Italian NGO's that had arrived (there were three Italian NGO's pre-tsunami). Others, such as Austria and Hungary who previously had little connection with Sri Lanka and operated their diplomatic missions from New Delhi, sent humanitarian field missions. Humanitarian space in Sri Lanka became rapidly congested with hundreds of new aid agencies (the United Nations – OCHA and UNDAC – and international humanitarian aid agencies with emergency relief, health, psycho-social, construction etc orientations) establishing a country presence.
- 3.20Pre tsunami UN involvement in Sri Lanka seems characterized by fairly autonomous divisions (UNICEF, UNDP and UNHCR being the largest), poor interagency coordination with rivalries and frictions over funding, power/influence with GoSL, sectors / geography, mandates and who should take the lead in which areas. In my experience of the humanitarian environment in Sri Lanka the UN is often regarded by others as adopting a rather imperialist superior stance in relationships with other humanitarian agencies, the GoSL and LTTE. Before the tsunami there was recognition within the UN family that greater coordination and internal harmonisation was necessary. There was some policy discussion towards the harmonization of UN objectives but little substantive progress.
- 3.21The tsunami exposed need for better coordination and highlighted the UN's pre-tsunami lack of capacity in this area. UNDAC and OCHA arrived to provide this capacity (there was initial resentment over lack of control and authority by other members of UN family – some of this may still linger). The UN believe that they have provided a strong role supporting Centre for National Operations and later TAFREN's capacity. This is largely accurate but the GoSL and UN view the UN contribution differently which raises concerns for UN position on ownership. UN believe they were in the driving seat regarding enhancing capacities post-tsunami coordination and response. However, they cede nominal ownership to the GoSL as political sensitivities dictate. Not surprisingly GoSL see things differently ie that they established the structures, recognized the needs and invited UN / or UN invited themselves to provide capacity support. This highlights the need for improved AE education within the UN, particularly in how to engage with GoSL and how to improve PR re ownership⁴.
- 3.22As the trajectories of reconstruction have progressed, conflicts and tensions emerged at both local and national levels over issues of coordination, positioning, accessing and control. Violent conflict has increased between the LTTE, the LTTE splinter group known as the Karuna faction⁵ and

⁴ Further analysis on the UN's aid effectiveness commitments and practices would be useful.

⁵ The Karuna Faction is based in the east of Sri Lanka. Col. Karuna, the LTTE's former military commander in the East split from the Tamil Tigers in April 2004 over frustration at the hegemony of the Jaffna and Wannai Tamil's within the LTTE. It is widely believed that the GoSL are supporting the Karuna Faction in their struggle against the LTTE.

Government forces. Many now believe that once again the Ceasefire Agreement may be close to collapse⁶. The P-TOM's was rendered ineffective before it even had a chance to be operationalised with its legality is being challenged in the courts. Elections are due in late 2005.

3.23 Post-conflict insecurity and political uncertainty together with a post-tsunami congestion of humanitarian space is the context in which aid effectiveness in Sri Lanka is being considered.

4. Aid Effectiveness Debate

4.1 The general level of debate on enhancing aid effectiveness, either amongst donors, or between donors and the GoSL, was not regarded by respondents as particularly focused or advanced. Whilst certain bilateral donors, particularly DFID and to a lesser extent the Royal Netherlands Embassy and the Swedish Development Agency (SIDA), were identified as being especially supportive of the aid effectiveness agenda, all the agencies interviewed expressed a broad commitment to the concept. However, not all were familiar with the terms of the Paris Declaration and even amongst those who were, interpretations and terminology varied. One respondent commented that, "*aid effectiveness is not a language that is much used in Sri Lanka.*" Another described discussion on aid effectiveness as a "*decade behind other countries*". The level of debate with Government was reported to be particularly low. Many respondents noted that the Government was neither reformist, nor open to criticism. Bilateral and informal discussions were preferred by the GoSL to joint open forums and critical debate.

4.2 Although there appeared to be no single distinct forum dedicated to aid effectiveness issues, some aspect of this subject was reported to permeate elements of each of the many discussion and coordination forums that existed.

4.3 The architecture of coordination in Sri Lanka is convoluted and complex⁷. Many respondents noted that the number of coordination meetings had proliferated since the tsunami. However, lack of effective coordination either amongst donors, or between donors and the GoSL was repeatedly cited as an obstacle to aid effectiveness. A large number of respondents complained that there was too much attempted coordination and that this reflected post-tsunami pressure amongst individual donors and other stakeholders to establish individual visibility and leverage. Rivalries within the UN family were frequently cited as an example of this. Rivalries over visibility? More about the UN's role at the beginning of this section would be useful.

4.4 A number of respondents viewed the apparent excess of coordination forums and meetings as multiple opportunities through which the donors could promote reform with different levels of

⁶ This possibility increased dramatically at the time of researching this paper with assassination of Sri Lanka Foreign Minister Kakshman Kadrigamar, allegedly by the LTTE.

⁷ In order to illustrate the complexity and profusion of coordinating mechanisms currently operating in Sri Lanka it is useful to briefly summarise the main components of the coordination architecture: the principle government led structure is which was in place prior to the tsunami is the Donor Assistance Coordinating Committee (DACC). Senior representatives of donors and the GoSL meet quarterly in this forum. The DACC also has three sub-committees. These focus on a) Economic Reform, b) Access to Essential Services and c) Peace. Aside from this structure there is also the post-Tokyo Donor Working Group, a post-tsunami bi-lateral donor group, a number of sector specific joint bi-lateral, multi-lateral and GoSL discussion groups. There is a fortnightly steering group meeting focusing on post-tsunami reconstruction which includes the Asia Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank (WB) and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) meeting in consultation with the governments' Task Force for Rebuilding the Nation (TAFREN), together with rotational representation from two bi-lateral donors.

Government. They felt that a sustained multi-level approach to advocacy of this nature was necessary because the GoSL did not like to be challenged openly. However, bilateral discussions, small informal groups or cocktail party conversations were regarded by most as more effective and safer spaces for engaging with Government on issues of policy and practice change.

- 4.5 During the course of interviews with members of the donor community the issue of translation within the aid effectiveness discourse became apparent. The way in which concepts such as “harmonisation” and “alignment” have slightly different definitions and meanings when translated into national languages has a bearing on how the core meanings of the Paris Declaration are filtered or revised in the production of donor and partner country development strategies and aid effectiveness policies⁸. The production of a common glossary and definition of meanings may be useful.⁹
- 4.6 A further potential filtration process was also noted. As the concepts of the Paris Declaration pass from Ministerial levels to overseas development assistance departments and on to country level cooperation partners and missions there will be an inevitable amount of dilution as the principles are “made to fit” with pre-existing policies, practices and objectives. For example, a number of respondents noted that ‘other’ donors were doing little new towards implementing the Paris Declaration, but were merely rearticulated existing programmes to emphasise the aid effectiveness angle.
- 4.7 The inability of many donors and the incapacity of the GoSL to effectively engage with the LTTE was noted as constraint to advancing aid effectiveness (see Ownership section).
- 4.8 The role of personalities emerged as extremely important in advancing aid effectiveness issues. It was noted that where there was charisma and drive and good working relationships, creative and synergic relationships were possible between stakeholders. However, it was lamented that often these personalities were only in post for a couple of years or less and that when they moved the momentum often faltered as individual priorities changed.
- 4.9 A number of bi-lateral donors, especially DFID have placed staff on secondments within key Ministries and multi-lateral organisations. This was regarded very positively by other bi-laterals and multi-laterals but the impact on aid effectiveness needs to be evaluated (see under Ownership and Harmonisation).

5. Ownership

- 5.1 The Paris Declaration defines ‘ownership’ as “*partner countries exercise effective leadership over their development policies, and strategies and co-ordinate development actions*”. The indicator for ownership is the partner country’s operational development strategy. Do they have one, and if so, to what extent does it have “*clear strategic priorities linked to a medium term expenditure framework and reflected in annual budgets*”? This section asks whether the Government sets and leads the agenda for development in Sri Lanka?

⁸ The variable use of the term co-funding, co-financing, basket funds and pool-funds were often used interchangeably by different donors to describe the same mechanism although each terms taken separately can mean different things to different donors.

⁹ As a minimum this should be in English, Sinhala, Tamil, Japanese, Chinese Mandarin, German, French, plus (?)

- 5.2 In terms of the Paris indicators the GoSL's main policy framework advancing the Millennium Development Goals is set out in the "*Sri Lanka New Development Strategy: Framework for Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction*"¹⁰ which was presented at the Sri Lanka Development Forum in Kandy, May 2005. This was introduced as an interim document and part of the Kandy Forums' consultative process to finalise the Governments' "Medium Term National Poverty and Growth Strategy".
- 5.3 Most respondents regarded this document as a useful starting point towards developing a national Poverty Reduction Strategy but cautioned that the final product would need to be much more substantive. Many donors unfavourably compared this *New Development Strategy* to the previous Governments' development framework, "*Regaining Sri Lanka: Vision and Strategy for Accelerated Development*"¹¹ which they regarded as far more robust.
- 5.4 Indeed, some of the multi-lateral and bi-lateral donors assistance programmes remain more aligned to the principles and goals of *Regaining Sri Lanka* than they do to the present Governments' proposals. In part, this is a reflection of the close collaboration that existed between the GoSL under Ranil Wickramasinghe and the donors, particularly the World Bank, in developing *Regaining Sri Lanka*.
- 5.5 However, donor nostalgia for *Regaining Sri Lanka* raises two important issues related to the question of ownership and alignment. Firstly, it suggests that the level of donor commitment to alignment is to some degree directly proportional to the extent of their input into the development of the Governments' policy framework. This, in turn can lead to a questioning of the donors' commitment to the principle of ownership. Secondly, it reveals that a fundamental weakness of the Sri Lankan state is the incapacity or unwillingness of successive Governments' to adopt bi-partisan approaches to development.
- 5.6 Donor opinions were divided on the issue of ownership. A number of respondents believed that the concept of ownership was "*not in the heads of the GoSL*". There was a sense amongst many donors that the GoSL would prefer the international community to take responsibility for Sri Lanka's humanitarian assistance and development.
- 5.7 Other respondents believed that the GoSL ownership was strong. However, it was noted that strong ownership did not necessarily translate into effective or even appropriate ownership. As one bi-lateral donor representative commented, "*the Government is firmly in the driving seat, but not necessarily in the car that we would want them to drive.*" Once again, such comments highlight the donor's struggle over the concept of ownership. This also questions the meaningfulness and relevance of the term 'ownership' for the GoSL, especially if donors are the one's empowered to define its criteria.
- 5.8 Aid effectiveness in Sri Lanka is complicated by the presence of a non-state actor with territorial control. The LTTE have control of areas in the north and east. This renders Poverty Reduction Strategies and notions of ownership and alignment problematic. How do donors account for / engage with the LTTE on issues of aid effectiveness.

¹⁰ Sri Lanka New Development Strategy: Framework for Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction, Ministry of Finance and Planning / National Council for Economic Development. May 2005. <http://www.erd.gov.lk/devforum/NPD/SLNDS.pdf>

¹¹ *Regaining Sri Lanka: Vision and Strategy for Accelerated Development*, Government of Sri Lanka. December 2002. http://povlibrary.worldbank.org/files/Sri_Lanka_PRSP.pdf

- 5.9 The LTTE is an authoritarian, militaristic and hierarchal entity. Dissenters within the organization and critics outside the organization are generally eliminated. There is little meaningful local civil society engagement within the LTTE controlled areas, no democracy, continuing human rights abuses (recruitment of child combatants being the most high profile), acts of terror and violence are still occurring, there is little accountability to other stakeholders and poor transparency.
- 5.10 Despite this, the LTTE cannot be ignored if aid effectiveness is to succeed because they are a central stakeholder in the north and east.
- 5.11 The LTTE has adopted a number of strategies (partly in response to international pressure) that could be used to help facilitate their inclusion on AE issues. a) They have given access to the UN and INGO's in their areas. Donors provide funding through these agencies. LTTE needs to maintain that presence for rehabilitation, maintaining the confidence and support of its populace and in order to promote international recognition and legitimacy. This affords some degree of leverage for advancing an AE agenda. b) The LTTE have established mechanisms for planning and development (Peace Secretariat, Planning and Development Secretariat). The TRO have attempted to distance themselves from the LTTE by having somewhat of a make-over. The LTTE has both helped establish joint structures with the GoSL (SIHRN, Sub Committee on Gender Needs, P-TOMS) as well as having devised proposals (ISGA) and commented on GoSL proposals (P-TOMS and Regaining Sri Lanka). These initiatives indicate that the LTTE are serious about attracting aid and development and provide openings for aid effectiveness. c) Post-tsunami the LTTE has raised the issue of standards in humanitarian assistance (transitional housing) and modalities for the delivery of aid (P-TOMS). These are points through which aid effectiveness can be introduced.
- 5.12 The donor community has a number of strategies for engaging indirectly with the LTTE. a) Through UN and INGO's as mentioned. b) through multi-lateral consultations for large rehabilitation projects in the North/East – NECORD (ADB) and NEIAP (WB). Other bilaterals such as Norway, Ireland, Netherlands and Switzerland have either been open to or actively encouraged LTTE delegations to visit and meet with govt. and civil society in their countries. These are opportunities for opening up the aid effectiveness debate with the LTTE.
- 5.13 Despite 20 years of conflict the GoSL also has a number of avenues for engagement with the LTTE which can be used to promote aid effectiveness. a) GoSL local government administrative structures have been maintained in LTTE controlled areas throughout the conflict period. Often GoSL and LTTE structures work in parallel and consultation at a district level eg. health, education, roads. b) Food and medical supplies have been provided from the south throughout the conflict period, banking and state pension systems have been maintained. Borders have generally stayed open albeit with restrictions for many. All of these are confidence building measures that contribute to the connectors for peace that can be deployed in advancing aid effectiveness. c) GoSL engagement in SIHRN, P-TOMs, NEIAP, NECORD etc.
- 5.14 The main problems however are:
- Lack of LTTE representation in Colombo high level meetings. This is problematic from the GoSL perspective because it risks conferring legitimacy on the LTTE.
 - Southern political and popular sensitivities concerning any sense of national sovereignty being ceded in part to the LTTE (this issue has been part responsible for an insurrection in the South – JVP 1989 – and the fall of 2 governments – SLFP 2001; UNP 2004 and possibly a third this year).

- Proscription of LTTE by western states.
- Lack of a workable joint mechanism (P-TOMS has yet to be implemented)
- Lack of LTTE accountability and transparency as noted above.

5.15 More investigation on strategies to promote LTTE inclusion within aid effectiveness debate needed.

5.16 The GoSL was not entirely happy about ownership. It was reported that they often feel coerced to pick up low national priority projects because simply they are attractive to donors. There is also very little sense of ownership when it comes to technical assistance projects as these were regarded as often reflecting donor and consultant priorities rather than GoSL ones. The strategy of international donor secondments to GoSL needs to be considered in this context. Are such placements merely being suffered by the GoSL as part of aid packages or do they really add value to the institution and its development (eg. Who writes the terms of reference or selects the candidates?)

5.17 The GoSL was also worried about pressure to take unsolicited projects from individual countries which frequently entailed costly financing arrangements. Co-financing was generally viewed by the GoSL as more popular with smaller bi-laterals seeking more impact and influence. Those with larger sums were seen as less inclined towards co-financing, wanting to retain independence, ownership and visibility.

5.18 It was noted that some line ministries are adverse to ownership of particular projects (especially if it is likely to outlast the life of the current Govt. and entail more costs than perceived benefits; or is perceived as an unsolicited donor priority).

6. Alignment

6.1 'Alignment' is defined under the Paris Declaration as "*donors base their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures*". The indicators for alignment focus on the donors' use of reliable country systems, the development of coordinated systems for effective aid flows and the avoidance of parallel implementation systems. This section examines perspectives regarding the concept of alignment in Sri Lanka.

6.2 All donor respondents viewed the achievement of a sustainable peace as the key to Sri Lanka's development. Most felt that the GoSL was unable to formulate concrete strategies in this area because 'peace' remained a highly contentious, politicised and divisive issue. A number of respondents believed that unless the GoSL was able to take a decisive lead on progress towards peace, donors should harmonise in aligning amongst themselves around the theme of 'peace' irrespective of the Government's position on the subject. GoSL respondents recognised these donor priorities and at a civil servant level, shared the opinion that substantive progress towards poverty alleviation and development was contingent on first resolving the conflict.

6.3 There was a broad consensus amongst respondents that it was difficult for donors to align with Sri Lanka's national development strategies. The primary obstacles were regarded as the GoSL's weak or fragmented administrative system, the absence of a bi-partisan consensus or consistency between successive governments, and the lack of comprehensive development policies, especially the failure to develop coherent peace proposals that are integrated into development objectives.

6.4 Most respondents placed the prospects of substantive progress towards alignment on a spectrum between problematic and impossible without wide ranging administrative sector rationalisation and reform. The fractionalisation of government with its 62 different line ministries was viewed as the major obstacle to effectively coordinated policy formulation and implementation. Where policies did

exist they were frequently regarded as “*superficial, essentially cosmetic and lacking in substance*”. It was however widely recognised that the current political environment was probably not conducive to supporting either improved Government coordination or promoting an agenda for reform.

- 6.5 Respondents repeatedly compared the present Government to the previous one. Whereas the current Government was often perceived as “anti-reformist” or “non-reformist”, the Wickramasinghe Government was viewed as having had a positive reformist political culture that was more supportive of aid effectiveness instruments such as Sector Wide Approaches (SWAP’s) and Trust Funds’. Some respondents regarded the current Bandaranaike-Rajapaske Government as fairly “benign”. One commented that the Government “*won’t stop you doing anything, they won’t challenge you, but they won’t listen to anything you say either!*”
- 6.6 The absence of a bi-partisan consensus on development goals in a political context with the potential for frequent reversals of power was widely lamented as a major obstacle to alignment. Donor enthusiasm for *Regaining Sri Lanka* in the post Ceasefire Agreement and Tokyo Donor Conference period was undermined by a change of Government whose policies, if they could be defined at all, were dictated by the divergent interests of coalition politics, which often seemed to pander to reactionary and ethno-nationalistic minority parties such as the JVP and Hela Urumaya.
- 6.7 The contested sovereignty of the Sri Lankan State was also noted as an obstacle to the concept of both ownership and alignment. The LTTE administration of a de facto state in the north and east, and the lack of an effective mechanism for including them in defining development strategies, calls into question the extent to which GoSL policies can be regarded as representative. Whilst most donors recognised the limitations on effective aid posed by the presence of a dual-state system, many were legally and diplomatically constrained to working exclusively with the ‘legitimate’ State.
- 6.8 A number of donors, notably CIDA and USAID, had made a conscious decision not to work either through, or with the GoSL¹² in preference to supporting civil society (albeit CIDA is currently exploring the modalities for re-engagement). For them the concept of alignment is circumstantial. Although their policies are cognisant of GoSL priorities, where they coincide is a result of independently occurring congruence rather than purposeful alignment.
- 6.9 A number of donors were recognising the need to strengthen the linkages between their political, security and development interests in Sri Lanka. The British Government for example is looking towards greater alignment of its different sections with the scaling down of its DFID presence in Sri Lanka whilst merging it with the political and security sections at the High Commission.¹³
- 6.10 The GoSL respondents noted a lack of common procurement procedures, either harmonized amongst donors, or aligned with GoSL. They identified this as a major bottleneck responsible for slow distribution / absorption of aid. Many donors, particularly bi-laterals, were regarded by the GoSL as keen to co-finance as they believed this would reduce the transactional costs involved. However, many such donors also still insist on own procurement, tendering and financial reporting procedures which negates reduction of transactional costs at GoSL end. (eg. Colombo to Matara Highway / Southern Development different aspects financed by JBIC and ADB – each donor has own set of procedures).

¹² Due to the GoSL’s human rights record during the conflict period, perceived poor governance and lack of capacity.

¹³ Further examination of different donor approaches to addressing the development-political-security nexus would be useful.

- 6.11 Lack of alignment between donor and GoSL financial calendars was noted as an impediment to aid effectiveness. The GoSL runs on a January to December financial year, whereas many donors operate an April to March schedule. This has implications for GoSL budget planning, resource allocation and reporting.
- 6.12 The GoSL would like to see more streamlined system for handling aid. National Procurement Agency has been formed to standardise procurement systems across all GoSL institutions but is still not effective and needs more capacity strengthening. Common bidding documents were proposed as a useful step which would increase flexibility in agreements.
- 6.13 The speed of donor responses to alignment opportunities could be an area of concern. For example, whilst many donors are supportive of the principle of P-TOM's, few have actually commitment funding to support it – even if it does eventually materialise. There is a tendency for donors to be cautious, preferring to wait until all the necessary transparency and accountability components are in place and working before financial commitments are made. However, by doing so donors may be missing out on providing the very catalyst necessary to give life and meaning to mechanisms such as P-TOMS and SIHRN.
- 6.14 The issue of timing was also identified in the development of pool-funds such as FLICT. Whilst most donors felt that peace related pool funds were of value, even if they did not, or could not, contribute to them, a few questioned whether the protracted process of harmonisation necessary to establish them reduced bi-lateral capacities to act swiftly in response to a distinct identified opportunity.

7. Harmonisation

- 7.1 The Paris Declaration defines '*harmonisation*' as "*donors' actions are more harmonised, transparent and collectively effective.*" The indicators for harmonisation are use of common arrangements or procedures and participation in shared analysis.
- 7.2 Most respondents commented that the successes and strengths of donor harmonisation efforts in Sri Lanka lay in their broad commitment to centralising peace as the overarching development objective. Many noted that post-Tokyo there had been a donor shift to harmonise around peace and adopt a more strategic and programmatic approach rather than investing in ad hoc projects. There is a forum, the Sri Lanka Donor Working Group, through which like-minded donors interact on peace related issues.
- 7.3 The impact of donor attempts to harmonise around this issue have tended to focus more on the principle of prioritising peace rather than the practice of how to work together to enhance impact. The practical dimensions of peace related harmonisation have met with mixed success. Whilst a number of post-Cease Fire Agreement mechanisms were established to aid coordination between donors, the GoSL and the LTTE over developing and financing reconstruction in the north and east (Sub-committee on Immediate Humanitarian Needs for the North and East – SIHRN; North East Reconstruction Fund – NERF; and more recently the Post-Tsunami Operational Mechanism – PTOMS) these have failed due to the conflicting parties inability to agree on issues of control, oversight, accountability and transparency. The GoSL also being constrained by popular Sinhala nationalist sentiments in the south and the veto of coalition politics.
- 7.4 However, the donor community can claim some evidence of peace related impact in the fact that structures such as PTOMS, NERF, SIHRN, ISGA, have even been attempted. Further, both the GoSL and LTTE have created new institutions to deal with peace and development issues. The GoSL's Ministry of Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation (Triple R), National Council for Economic

Development (NCED), Task Force for Rebuilding the Nation (TAFREN) and Secretariat for Coordination the Peace Process (SCOPP) and Donor Assistance Coordinating Committee (DACC), together with the LTTE's own Peace Secretariat and Planning and Development Secretariat, are all part of the architecture of aid effectiveness that has, in part, arisen in response to donors' prioritisation of peace. That much as become inactive or failed to develop does not detract from the impact. Each has contributed to the learning that stems from setbacks and which is a necessary part of any process towards peace.

- 7.5 Two peace related donor "pool" or "basket" funds, *Facilitating Local Initiatives for Conflict Transformation* (FLICT) and the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies Peace Fund were highlighted as progressive examples of how donors can make a transition from working in isolation to working in harmony¹⁴.
- 7.6 Both of these pool funds are reported to have lowered the transactional costs of fund management for the bi-lateral donors involved. They are also regarded as having enhanced local civil society participation and ownership over peace related initiatives. However, the development of two similar small grants funds, and the presence of other UNDP, UNHCR and World Bank peace related small grants initiatives over the past three years suggests that donors are not yet collaborating sufficiently to avoid establishing parallel structures.
- 7.7 Other positive examples include the "Working on Conflict in Sri Lanka – Joint Donor Mission to Washington DC" in November 2004 undertaken to raise awareness and debate on peace issues.¹⁵ This initiative is regarded as having enhanced relationships between USAID and the European like-minded donors and may have contributed to informing US overseas reconstruction perspectives.
- 7.8 Bi-lateral donor secondments to multi-lateral agencies (eg DFID provision of ADB conflict advisor, World Bank education / conflict advisor, triple-R advisor to Prime Ministers' Office etc) was regarded a valuable contribution towards enhancing harmonisation and overall aid effectiveness (for instance building peace and conflict sensitive analysis for projects within the ADB). It was also regarded as a way in which smaller bi-laterals could differentiate their impact by influencing the aid effectiveness agenda using non-aid / financial strategies.
- 7.9 Some donors have demonstrated a commitment to harmonise on developing a shared analysis. The pre-Tokyo and post-tsunami needs assessments are examples of this (see also Managing for Results).
- 7.10 It was recognised that harmonisation was difficult when the GoSL itself lacked internal harmonisation as a result of divergent political interests in Government and presence of so many line-ministries. The need to rationalize number of GoSL agencies involved to improve capacity and effectiveness was noted as a necessary prerequisite to aid effectiveness.

¹⁴ FLICT is a pool fund established by DFID and GTZ. DANIDA has subsequently contributed funds and AUSAID are likely to. The CHA peace fund was initially established as an initiative of the Netherlands Embassy with subsequent support from SIDA and AUSAID. There was initially some tension between the two pools regarding possible duplication of effort. To some extent this has been remedied by reciprocal invitations to sit on each others boards.

¹⁵ Delegation included members of World Bank, Asia Development Bank, DFID, Netherlands Embassy, Norwegian Embassy and USAID.

8. Managing for Results

- 8.1 This is defined as “*managing resources and improving decision-making for results*”. It is evidenced by the use of results based performance assessment frameworks for both national development strategies and sector programmes.
- 8.2 The production of transparent and non-politicised assessments of progress have been problematic in Sri Lanka. Reports that are critical of specific actors or the GoSL have frequently been sanitised prior to publication (eg. the original draft of World Bank / GoSL Triple R Needs Assessment) due to political sensitivities of both the donor authors and the GoSL.
- 8.3 The UK Government conducted a Strategic Conflict Assessment in 2000 and 2005. The 2005 assessment, which is yet to be published, was a joint undertaking that included the MOD, DFID and FCO under the Global Conflict Prevention Pool fund from the UK side, the Swedish, Netherlands, World Bank and Asia Foundation. Other potential stakeholders such as the United Nations and GoSL were not included as co-owners or participants in the assessment mission as it was felt that the internal political constraints of these actors do so would limit the opportunity for transparent and frank critical appraisal.
- 8.4 Many respondents linked subsidiarity with results. Those donors frustrated with the GoSL’s bureaucracy and disinclination to reform felt that the most effective way of achieving development results was to by-pass central structures and work directly with the lowest levels of government in the districts.¹⁶ The efficacy of a bottom-up approach to enhancing aid effectiveness would make a useful further study.
- 8.5 The new Donor Assistance Database (DAD) developed within TAFREN is being heralded as valuable tool to track donor commitments, monitor project progress and identify gaps – links to coordination and GoSL ownership. It is in public domain which aids transparency and public accountability. It is however too early to assess extent of buy-in and impact – although it would be useful to evaluate progress in 6 months. Although primarily for tsunami aid it would be useful to extend the DAD to all donor aid – bilateral, multilateral and INGO etc.

9. Mutual Accountability

- 9.1 Mutual accountability strives to hold both donors and partners “accountable for development results”. The Paris Declaration indicator for this objective is the undertaking of mutual assessments on the other commitments.
- 9.2 Whilst working at the Centre for National Operations (CNO) during the initial post-tsunami disaster response in January 2005, I had occasion to ask a number of people, from both the UN and the GoSL, how they intended to evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the CNO. I was repeatedly told that ‘you don’t evaluate the President’ (the CNO having being established by, and under direct control of the President of Sri Lanka). This reveals that one of the key challenges for mutual accountability in Sri Lanka is the political personalisation of projects (ownership extending beyond institutions and into the domain of the individual) in which independent criticism or review risks undermining personal power and credibility.

¹⁶ GA or GS Level (District and Government Agent) and DS level (sub-district divisional secretariat).

- 9.3 In terms of the mutual assessment of aid effectiveness commitments there first has to be a shared understanding of the goals and objectives, and as yet this appears to be largely absent.
- 9.4 Oxfam recognized post-tsunami issue of transparency and accountability amongst INGO's / Civil Society flush with large budgets. They have initiated attempt to stimulate development of locally owned independent watch-dog for aid. Difficult to assess impact as yet as still in formulative stage. First meeting suffered from language barriers and no GoSL attendance. Useful to watch developments and possible vehicle to promote for increasing civil society advocacy and lobbying towards GoSL and Donors and INGO's on AE.
- 9.5 Constraints for local and international civil society playing this role include competitive environment and chronic lack of harmonisation / alignment within / between these groups on policy objectives or modalities of implementation.
- 9.6 Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies could play a stronger role in promoting AE with all stakeholders.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 Establish a local identity for aid effectiveness in Sri Lanka: As yet the aid effectiveness debate in Sri Lanka does not have a distinct character, meaning, focus or informed and consistent constituency. It needs to acquire local relevance, definition and ownership. It needs a short, medium and long term marketing strategy that takes into account the realities, limitation and possibilities of the local context. The following recommendations are aimed at creating starting points towards the establishment of such an identity.
- 10.2 Increase awareness of the aid effectiveness debate amongst and between government and donors: Donor and GoSL's understanding of purpose and content of the aid effectiveness debate needs to be enhanced, harmonised and aligned at different levels. A process of aid effectiveness education is necessary in order for a culture of commitment to become inculcated within and across the stakeholders involved. The following suggests number of basic initial steps for promoting the aid effectiveness debate in Sri Lanka:
- Translation of key aid effectiveness documentation into Sinhala and Tamil and dissemination at all levels of GoSL, donor and civil society representation.
 - Undertake an official "launch" of aid effectiveness in Sri Lanka. This could entail a public debate in the form of an international conference, coupled with the release of a tri-lingual summarisation of the Paris Declaration together with official pledges of commitment from the GoSL, donors and civil society.¹⁷
 - Establish a joint donor-GoSL aid effectiveness knowledge promotion unit tasked with conducting training at various levels ranging from the Wilton Park type High Level meetings to district level workshops (this could loosely be the role of aid effectiveness focal points).
- 10.3 Aid effectiveness focal points: The establishment of senior aid effectiveness focal points amongst donors, GoSL, civil society and the LTTE would help provide the necessary resources to establish

¹⁷ A similar process was orchestrated by CHA around the promotion of the Sphere Principles in 1999. At that time the President of Sri Lanka and certain Ministers publicly endorsed the principles and a translated locally owned version of Sphere was released.

local goals for aid effectiveness, introduce AE into existing forums more purposefully and provide a structure for accountability and the measurement of results.

- 10.4 Rationalise and harmonise existing donor coordination forums: The integration of a more targeted and focused aid effectiveness agenda into existing coordination mechanisms would be most usefully served by the rationalisation and harmonisation of such meetings. Most respondents felt that there were too many coordination meetings involving overlapping circles of membership. A narrower, more operational focused approach to sectors would help overcome some of the inertia of the DAC sub-committees.
- 10.5 Enhanced Sector Wide Approaches: Where sector wide approaches do exist or are emerging (such as Education), GoSL should be encouraged to mobilise donors collectively rather than bi-laterally. Education sector seems to be an area in which donors and GoSL could promote as a test case for enhancing aid effectiveness, drawing out lessons learned. Education may also be a less contentious sector for LTTE engagement.
- 10.6 Engage the LTTE: There appears to be little or no involvement of the LTTE in the promotion of aid effectiveness. P-Toms would likely serve as the platform for engagement should it materialise as a viable operational mechanism. The personnel placement strategy might be a useful vehicle to work within the LTTE. The challenge would be finding a politically appropriate way of supporting this (although the existing financial and administrative mechanisms for the N/E do provide a basis for this. A focal point for aid effectiveness within the LTTE would be useful. It is also necessary for donors not to expect a quick fix and to recognise that peace processes take a long time to develop and may ultimately have little to do with international input. Also greater recognition of areas where LTTE is already being included albeit not overtly (there should be caution over making this too explicit as to do so might have a negative impact on peace process).
- 10.7 Engage civil society: In the post-tsunami context many INGO's have operational budgets equal to, or in excess of many bi-lateral donors. This phenomenon has the potential to be either an asset or a barrier to enhancing aid effectiveness. INGO's need to become partners in the aid effectiveness debate. Local civil society also needs to become engaged as advocates of aid effectiveness instruments and reforms.
- 10.8 Complimentarity in Peace Process Harmonisation: It is important for donors to be realistic about the extent and impact of their harmonisation around peace. Although increasing donor harmonisation around the peace process is widely regarded as one of the main successes to date, there is more conceptual harmonisation around the goal of peace rather than tangible harmonisation of approaches to peace. Donors need to recognise that they are not the most important or influential actors in Sri Lanka and may in fact have little impact and diverse approaches - but should nevertheless strive towards complimentary in their approaches towards peace.
- 10.9 Widening scope of engagement: Part of the problem for impact on development, peace etc, is that donors are often focused on other like-minded actors and fail to engage with the non-like-minded who may be more important change agents in Sri Lankan society (eg. Buddhist clergy, JVP, trades unions, Moslem clergy and political parties, business community). It is recommended that donors become more focused and proactive in engaging with these types of actors.
- 10.10 Promoting Bi-Partisan commitments: The GoSL and donor community need to find ways of promoting bi-partisan commitments to development strategies in order for long-term aid effectiveness agenda's to be sustainable.

10.11 Further research: Further in-depth studies of the following different approaches to donor engagement in Sri Lanka would provide valuable insights for enhancing aid effectiveness strategies:

- A comparative study of small grants peace related funds (FLICT, CHA +). How effective are they? How have they engaged with each other? What value is added their individuality? Would this have been enhanced or diminished by closer harmonisation?
- An assessment of the Japanese model of bi-lateral engagement and opportunities for closer strategic collaboration on furthering aid effectiveness. As the single largest donor in Sri Lanka (more than 50% of all loans and assistance) the Japanese matter more to the GoSL than any other donor or group of donors. Influencing the approaches of, or working through Japanese aid structures may ultimately prove to be the most productive avenue for enhancing aid effectiveness in Sri Lanka.
- The potential of bottom-up approaches to enhancing aid effectiveness should be explored. For a number of donors working through GS and DS district and divisional mechanisms are the only forms of Government with whom they engage. How effective is this subsidiarity approach? What evidence is there of its capacity to influence macro level policy? Could this capacity be enhanced?
- The aid effectiveness opportunities and impact of donor / GoSL / multi-lateral) placement strategies (such as operated by DFID) in seconding personnel to key positions in ministries and other institutions needs to be examined.

Appendix 1: List of Respondents

- ADB: Brian Smith
- Australian Embassy (AUSAID): Alex Knox, Development Programme Specialist
- Canadian Embassy: Jonathan Wheatcroft, Head of Aid
- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA): Sharmala
- Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA): Jeevan Thiagarajah, Executive Director)
- British High Commission / DFID: Anthea Mulakala, Reconciliation and Development Advisor
- British High Commission / DFID: Mandeep Kaur-Grewal, Head DFID Sri Lanka and 1st Secretary Development
- British High Commission: Steve Ainsworth, 1st Secretary , Political Section.
- DANIDA: Jeanne Samuel, Programme Officer
- EU/ECHO: David Verboom, Head of Office, Sri Lanka and Maldives
- FLICT: Stephanie Schell-Faucon, Senior Advisor
- GoSL/Secretariat for Coordinating Peace Process (SCOPP): Himali Jinadasa – Deputy Director
- GoSL/SCOPP: Seneka Abeyratne – Director (Economic Affairs)
- GoSL/SCOPP: Dr Rajith Lakshman – Deputy Director (Economic Affairs)
- GoSL/Department of External Resources, Ministry of Planning and Finance: Sujatha Cooray – Director General
- GoSL/Task Force for Rebuilding the Nation (TAFREN): Rachel Perera – Director Donor/NGO/Civil Society Coordination
- GTZ: Dr Roland Steurer, Director
- GTZ: Evelyn Stockle, Temporary Director - Sri Lanka / Policy Director for Asia – HQ
- GTZ: Niloufer Lebbe, Executive Secretary
- Italian Embassy: Mr Massimo, Charge d’ Affairs
- Italian Embassy: Dr Paolo Bononi, Coordinator (Italian Cooperation)
- Japanese Embassy: Mr Onishi , 1st Secretary Cooperation
- Netherlands Embassy: Jan Heusken, 1st Secretary
- OXFAM GB: Rene de Vries – Humanitarian Programme Manager
- OXFAM INTERNATIONAL: Cherian Mathews – Policy and Advocacy Manager
- Swedish Embassy: Anne-Marie, Charge d’ Affairs
- Swedish Embassy: Lisa Hedin, 1st Secretary Development (SIDA)
- Swedish Embassy: Sheila Richards, Programme Officer (SIDA)
- USAID / Office of Transitional Initiatives (OTI): Rachel Wax
- UDAID / Office of Transitional Initiatives (OTI): Mark Silva, Democracy and Governance Programme Officer
- USAID: Richard Byess, Special Advisor
- USAID / Office of Transitional Initiatives: Mike de Sisti
- UN/UNHCR: Masti Notz – Deputy Representative
- UN/OCHA: Valentin Gatzinski – Head of Office
- World Bank: Rocio Castro, Lead Economist – South Asia Region
- World Bank: Amali Rajapakse, Infrastructure Specialist