

Pathways to Knowledge-based Development - September 2010

Thursday, 23 June 2011

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The Jaffna Open Forum, a joint venture between the Point Pedro Institute of Development (PPID – independent private social science research institution based in Point Pedro) and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES – social democratic political foundation of Germany working in Sri Lanka for 46 years), took off at the Jaffna Public Library auditorium on September 02, 2010. This was the first of a series of Jaffna Open Forums to be conducted in the peninsula jointly by PPID and FES.

The theme of the first Jaffna Open Forum was “Pathways to Knowledge-based Development” and was envisioned to address the following questions:

- What are the prerequisites to foster knowledge-based development in the North?
- How can the state and private sector (in partnership with the diaspora) take the lead in founding knowledge-based development in the North?
- What could be the specific ways and means by which the government, corporate sector, academia, and schools facilitate and promote knowledge-based development in the North, where natural resources are scarce?
- What are the policies and regulatory framework should the government put in place to create an enabling environment for the private sector (national, international, and diaspora) to undertake knowledge-based development in the North?
- What strategies should schools, universities, and other higher education institutions adopt to improve the learning outcomes of primary, secondary, and tertiary students in the North that could in turn generate nationally and globally competitive workforce?
- How could modern information and communication technologies contribute to enhancement of teaching quality and learning outcomes of students at schools, universities, and other tertiary educational institutions?

The overall objective of this public conclave was to present submissions and debate the ways and means and costs and benefits of transforming the traditional agrarian cum fisheries economy of Jaffna and the North into a modern knowledge-based economy.

The four key speakers representing the provincial government, corporate sector, academia, and schools were Mr. Selvaratnam (Additional Director of Education, Northern Province), Mr. Niranjan Nadarajah (Manager, Consumer Credit and Risk, Asia Pacific Risk, HSBC), Dr. P. Balasundarampillai (former Vice-Chancellor of the Jaffna University), and Mr. T. Mahasivam (General Secretary of the Ceylon Tamil Teachers’ Union - CTTU) respectively. Mr. S. Rangarajah (Advisor to the Governor of Northern Province and former Chief Secretary of the North East Provincial Council) deputised for the Governor of Northern Province, Mr. G. A. Chandrasiri, who was to represent the provincial government but could not attend due to unavoidable circumstances. Jaffna Open Forum - Sept 2010 English Ver. PDF
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Media Coverage of the Jaffna Open Forum – Sep 2010 http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=6600 <http://www.thebottomline.lk/2010/09/12/page9.html>
<http://www.sundaytimes.lk/100912/BusinessTimes/bt36.html> <http://www.thesundayleader.lk/2010/09/12/jaffna-open-forum-takes-off/> http://transcurrents.com/tc/2010/09/jaffna_open_forum_takes_off.html
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