

# Policy Development for Sustainable Recovery and Inclusive Post-crisis Development: The Role of Social Sciences



## Preamble

A speedy recovery from the present, debilitating economic crisis remains the biggest task that Sri Lanka is faced with today. Given the fact that the crisis itself is not a sudden development but has been the culmination of certain socio-economic trends in the recent past, recovery from the crisis is likely to take some time unless a range of effective national policy measures are developed and implemented as early as possible to bring about a sustainable recovery from the crisis and create conditions that are necessary for inclusive post-crisis development in the country.

As is well known, most of the social and economic issues that have contributed to the present crisis come under the purview of social sciences. It is, therefore incumbent upon the Social Scientists in the country to examine various aspects of the emergent crisis and come up with constructive ideas and appropriate policy measures to ensure inclusive and sustainable development in post-crisis Sri Lanka.

It is against the above backdrop that the Social Science Committee of the National Science Foundation has taken the initiative to conduct a high-level level consultation with a cross section of the Social Scientists in the country with the possible participation of competent resource persons from the Asia-Pacific region with experience in managing socio-economic issues of the magnitude that we are faced with in Sri Lanka today. In this regard it would be useful to seek the participation of several members of regional social science associations such as AASSREC, and ICSSR as resource persons. The purpose of this consultation is to deliberate on the key economic, social and other relevant aspects of the crisis and come up with appropriate policy proposals that could be considered by the policy makers and relevant national institutions in Sri Lanka. Given the enormity of the issues that are involved in the present crisis, the proposed deliberation should naturally go beyond an academic exercise and should involve the active engagement of relevant national and international level stakeholders. In this regard the National Science Foundation wishes to explore the possibility of collaborating with relevant international and national level partners such as development assistance agencies and critically important national level sectoral institutions such as the NPD, CBSL, NISD, Social Security Board, National Education Commission, National Health Council, National Transport Commission, Ministry of Higher Education, SLCARP, and State Universities. It is very much hoped that the wide-ranging collaboration would result in some tangible outputs by way of concrete policy proposals dealing with specific issues that could then be acted upon by the relevant national institutions. It is in view of this that we presume that it is incumbent upon the above national level institutions to take an active interest in this nationally important initiative by demonstrating a high level of collaboration and ownership on their part.

The resource persons and participants for the proposed event to be held in Colombo will be drawn from the universities and other relevant national institutions. We very much hope that the social science community in the country as well as higher officials in the institutions mentioned above, recognize the enormous moral responsibility that they have towards addressing some of the most critical social and economic issues at a time when the wider public is under enormous pressure arising out of the present crisis.

## Objectives

1. To conduct a comprehensive analysis from a social science perspective to identify root causes and socio-economic trends that have contributed to the current crisis in the country.
2. To promote dynamic engagement among stakeholders through experience sharing, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the prevailing crisis and to explore diverse avenues for sustainable recovery.
3. To collaboratively formulate well-informed policy recommendations aimed at achieving inclusive and sustainable recovery.

## Output

1. A comprehensive report on the root causes of the crisis and a set of policy recommendations for inclusive and sustainable recovery.
2. Strengthened network that comprises of social scientists, regional associations, and national institutions for future collaboration.
3. A newsletter that would enable the network members to remain connected in order to share information and exchange ideas.

## Format of the Programme

The full day program intends to begin with a round of briefing sessions from key stakeholders and subject experts after which a group work session is to be conducted on following themes to develop policy proposals.

- Economic development
- Social development and social protection
- Health
- Education
- Transportation
- Agriculture and food security

These groups will then be invited to present their policy proposals in the plenary session that follows group work, enabling wider adoption by the participating stakeholder institutions.

## Beneficiaries and Impacts

1. Policymakers and government institutions involved in planning and development,
2. Researchers, academics, and professionals in the field of social sciences,
3. International and Regional Partners, and
4. General Public, will also be key beneficiaries of this exercise.

In addition, this event and its outputs will,

- Contribute towards the expansion of knowledge regarding root causes of the present crisis and inclusive and sustainable recovery pathways for the country.
- Facilitate informed decision making through wider stakeholder engagement.

- Increase awareness of the role and policy relevance of social sciences in developing inclusive and sustainable policies.
- Enhance collaboration between social scientists, regional associations, and national institutions.

**Human Resources:** Members of the Working Committee of Social Sciences

Staff of the Science & Technology Policy Research Division (STPRD)

Invited resource persons