

## PRESS RELEASE

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KADIRGAMAR INSTITUTE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### “The National Conference on the Role Education in Reconciliation”

The Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute for International Relations and Strategic Studies (LKIIRSS) in its series of events to promote reconciliation will convene the next national conference on the “Role of Education in Reconciliation” on Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2012 from 2:00-6:00 pm.

Reconciliation to promote a harmonious living is spearheaded by the Kadirgamar Institute through a series of conferences. Reconciliation as an ingredient in conflict prevention will significantly contribute at human development, human security, the elimination of poverty and peace-building. Asanga Abeygoonasekera, the Institute's Executive Director invited government authorities, primary and tertiary education officials, private sector, diplomatic community, international organizations, academia, media and eminent actors in the education field to participate in the reconciliation through education conference. The Kadirgamar Institute plays a pioneering role by acting as a catalyst in reviving the communication barrier taking feedback from different stakeholders thus promoting 'public participation', one of the key pillars of 'good governance'.

Education is a critical tool in Sri Lanka's path towards long term reconciliation. Education can be used to promote tolerance, co existence, and moderation. After a conflict interethnic, interracial, internal or external- education is a common and a vital call. Education offers the chance to shape minds, hearts, and behaviors of succeeding generations. **The focus of the third conference in the Series on National Reconciliation seeks to discuss how education can contribute in changing attitudes and perceptions among all segments in society, especially the future generation of Sri Lanka.** Educational responses express this hope: It is only if we educate the young people to respect others, to understand the costs of group hatred, to make friends, not stereotypes; to know tools for resolving disputes and skills to negotiate, to choose to stand up to demagogues, to be peacemakers, that we could hope to prevent future violence and future atrocities.

For education to be holistic, it needs to account for its various dimensions, i.e. culture of understanding, non-violence, tolerance, mutual respect and co-habitation, intercultural and interfaith understanding, linguistic diversity, peace and love. Promotion of such values, attitudes, and behaviour directs communities towards a harmonious and a more secure society. This transformation of values could aid in the process of healing and reconciliation thereby strengthening cooperation on a country's shared goals peace, prosperity and well being of all citizens.

**Education is an essential component for constructing peace in the minds of individuals. By hosting a national conference under the theme of 'Role of Education in Reconciliation' the Kadirgamar Institute drives the attention of important stakeholders and civil society in its quest for a harmonious Sri Lanka where diversity can be harnessed and motivated as a strength towards a common goal for every Sri Lankan.**

Asanga Abeyagoonasekera, the Executive Director of the Kadirgamar Institute invites those interested to participate in these events to contact the institute.

**Speakers at the conference will be:**

**Hon. Prof. G. L. Peiris,**

Chairman of the Kadirgamar Institute, Minister of External Affairs (Keynote Address)

**Prof. Rohan Gunaratna,**

Head, International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, Singapore.

**Hon. Mohan Lal Grero,**

Monitoring Minister of Education.

**Mr. Prashanthlal de Alwis,**

Visiting Lecturer, University of Colombo, Director, Kadirgamar Institute.

**Ms. Nirmalie Wickramasinghe,**

Principal, Ladies' College, Colombo.

**Mr. Sundaran Divakalala,**

Former Secretary North & East, Cultural Affairs & Sports, Ministry of Education.

**Mr. Rajasingham Narendran,**

Former Associate Professor, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia.

**Dr. Sunil Jayantha Nawaratna,**

Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education.

**Rev. Sister Canice Fernando,**

Holy Family Convent, Rajagiriya.

**Mr. Javid Yusuf,**

Former Principal, Zahira College, Colombo.

**Mr. Asanga Abeyagoonasekera,**

Executive Director, Kadirgamar Institute.

*For more information, please visit [www.kadirgamarinstitute.lk](http://www.kadirgamarinstitute.lk)*

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