



நோர்வே ஈழத்தமிழர் அவை
Landsrådet for Eelam Tamiler i Norge
Norwegian Council of Eelam Tamils

Oslo 04.02.2012.

1.0 Introduction:

The position of NCET in participating in the seminar titled “What can be done to strengthen integration in Norway? How Tamils in Norway could contribute to peace, reconciliation and development in Sri Lanka?”

The Norwegian Council of Eelam Tamils (NCET) participate in this seminar as democratically elected representatives of the Eelam Tamil community in Norway, mandated by our community to deal with such topics as those of this seminar.

We participate in the seminar to present issues, questions and suggestions from the point of view of the community we represent, and earnestly seek discussion and solutions, even though we reject the phrasing of the second part of the seminar topic, seeking Norwegian Tamils contributing within a Sri Lanka framework, which ideologically undermines the very basis of the aspirations of our community as well as our mandate.

The NCET has requested a meeting with the Norwegian Foreign Ministry and the Ministry for Children, Equality and Social Inclusion to discuss the affairs of our community in Norway and the affairs of our nation of Eelam Tamils in our home country, affected by a genocidal war and by an on-going structural genocide, carried out and being carried out **with ‘ethnic lenses’** for decades.

The Norwegian ministries have responded to our request by organising this seminar through Nansen Centre for Peace and Dialogue (NCPD), the focus and specialisation of which is in conducting such seminars to “open possibilities for institutional change, **where the situation is no longer seen through ethnic lenses**”.

Besides, the experience and expertise of the NCPD is related to Western Balkans where reconciliation became a topic after dealing with territorial issues, where as this NCPD seminar seeks ‘reconciliation’ without reference to resolving the territorial issue.

We are hopeful of a meaningful and productive discourse, while registering our differences in the outlook and in the organisational approach of the seminar.

2.0 What can be done to strengthen integration in Norway?

2.1 The perspective of the NCET is to work for integration with identity – the Eelam Tamil identity:

The integration of Eelam Tamils in Norway could be smooth, strengthened and appreciated by the community when Norway recognises the community in an identity in which the community wishes itself to be identified with. Norway insisting on ‘Sri Lankan’ identity will be counterproductive.

2.2 The interconnection between Norway’s approach to the national question in the island and integration of Eelam Tamils in Norway:

Eelam Tamils consider themselves as a nation deprived of state and Norway recognising it and approaching them appropriately will help and strengthen integration.

The very fact of clubbing the two topics together in the seminar shows that there is a problem.

2.3 Attending to psychological needs:

The entire nation of Eelam Tamils whether in the island or in the Diaspora, is traumatised by the genocide and by the on-going structural genocide. They are also traumatised by a phenomenon, which they consider international injustice shown to them. Norway’s politicians and diplomats should explore ways of avoiding acts maddening them further.

2.4 Attending to cultural needs:

Unlike several other identities, language is the criterion for the identity of Eelam Tamils, other than the homeland. Therefore, in Diaspora circumstances, the identity is lost if the language is lost. Norway should prioritise the language education in the case of Eelam Tamils by further support to existing institutions and by creating institutions up to the University level.

How Tamils in Norway could contribute to peace, reconciliation and development in Sri Lanka?

3.1. Peace:

Peace is absence of arms and violence. Peace in our current context begins only from demilitarisation of Sinhala Army occupying our homeland. To what extent Norway or Norway Tamils could facilitate for this?

Peace is absence of social and communal confrontations. In our current context, colonisation and land grab in our homeland escalates such confrontations. To what extent Norway or Norway Tamils could stop this.

3.2 Reconciliation:

Reconciliation comes only between peoples of parity. Attempts to bring in parity between the long-warring nations should precede the talk of 'reconciliation'. To what extent Norway or Norway Tamils could bring in parity between the nations?

Reconciliation comes when the delivery of justice is fare. To what extent Norway and Norway Tamils could contribute to this?

3.3 Development:

In our understanding and according to the paradigm 'culture and development' for which Norway awarded Nobel Prize for Economics, development comes when a people of a cultural identity of their choice get the ownership and feels the belongingness of their development. To what extent Norway or Norway Tamils could create the conditions for them to contribute to development?

3.4 The wide gap between the expectations of the topic and the capacity or outlook of Eelam Tamils in Norway:

Peace, Reconciliation and Development are projected and understood in different ways by different parties. The paradigm is means for 'counterinsurgency' for some. In their understanding peace is absence of opposition to strategic designs and reconciliation is an obligation of the oppressed towards their oppressors. 'Development' is whose development is an eternal question.

Eelam Tamils in Norway do not share the views of the 'counterinsurgency' paradigm of Peace...etc. In the meantime they don't have the capacity to create the necessary conditions of their choice. How to expect them to contribute?

Even though their means are small, the wish of Eelam Tamils in Norway is to contribute to the development of their nation in the island in an independent way of their choice. Norway could help if it wishes. That will be appreciated and will help in the process of understanding integration too.

3.5 Inner contradictions between Norway's stand and the expectations of the seminar topic:

We base our arguments on the findings of Norway's peace facilitation report, that just stops short of calling the massacre in the war resulting from long ethnic animosities as a genocide and accuses Norway for not withdrawing from the peace process to enlighten the world of the realities.

As such is the responsibility of Norway, to what extent it is justifiable for Norway to continue approaching peace....etc., without resolving the fundamentals.

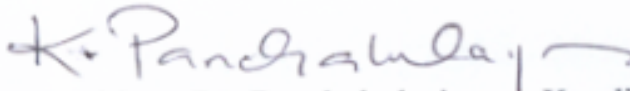
The Norway report findings disowning the responsibility by leaving the solutions to internal efforts is not acceptable to us. But at the same time the question comes, why in the Peace, Reconciliation and Development only Norway is interested in outside efforts, if the whole exercise is not one-sidededly favouring the position of the state and regime of Sri Lanka?

4. Some general observations

To what extent Norway can come out of the State paradigm in handling a crisis like that of the Eelam Tamils and similar nations deprived of State, in international peace facilitation? To what extent Norway could address and convince the international community in this regard?

The NCET comes out with these views as representatives democratically elected by the community in Norway to specifically deal with matters as such discussed in this seminar.

Norway on its part fielding fresh personalities with an attitudinal change would immensely help building credibility in peace facilitation.



President, Dr. Panchakulasingam Kandiah
Norwegian Council of Eelam Tamils