

International Women's Day 2025

The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka commemorated International Women's Day on 07th March 2025, under the theme **"For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment."** at the, BMICH premises. The event was graced by distinguished presence of the Chief Guest, Mrs. Farzana Jameel, PC, and, Chairman of the HRCSL, Justice L.T.B Dehideniya, The Commissioners and the Secretary of the HRCSL together with hundreds of other participants representing a range of government and private institutions, Women Society Organizations, NGO's and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities etc. attended the event.

The event began with the lighting of the traditional oil lamp, followed by opening remarks delivered by Justice L. T. B. Dehideniya, Chairman of the HRCSL. In his address Justice Dehideniya emphasised that the Sri Lanka's legislative framework for women's rights is shaped by both national and international laws and yet there are significant gaps remain in the implementation of these laws, and as such there is a pressing need for legal reforms, particularly in addressing violence against women, improving economic and political participation, and ensuring equality in personal laws. In her key note address, the Chief Guest, Mrs. Farzana Jameel PC emphasized the urgent need for legal reforms concerning women's rights in Sri Lanka. She highlighted some of the outdated laws that failed to address current issues such as gender-based violence, workplace discrimination, and unequal property rights. Citing recent statistics and real-life cases, she also stressed that changes are essential to ensure justice, protection, and equal opportunities for women across the country.

The thrust of the event was the round table discussions with the presence of women's rights activists, legal experts, and policymakers who engaged in a deliberation on the current state of women's rights legislation in Sri Lanka. The conversations led by Prof. Farzana Haniffa, Commissioner of the HRCSL, was focused on identifying areas where reforms are needed, the role of advocacy in influencing policy, and how to overcome barriers for implementing gender-sensitive laws. The guest speakers who participated were, Ms. Ermiza Tegal, Ms. Sarla Emmanuel, Dr. Chulani Kodikara and Ms. Poojanee Galappaththi. They eloquently shared insights on the importance of legislative reform in fields of personal laws, labour and debt, Laws relating to Domestic Violence in Sri Lanka and Vagrants Ordinance No 04 of 1841, Sections 365 and 365(A) of the Penal Code respectively.

The roundtable discussion was followed by a question-and-answer session that provided the opportunity for the participants to exchange views freely. A Drama performance that was staged depicting the struggles and triumphs of women in Sri Lanka was a notable feature of the day. The play was a creative representation of the challenges women face in navigating legal and social systems and was showcased the transformative potential of legislative reforms. The event came to a close with the Secretary of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka delivering the Vote of Thanks.

Similar, programmes were also organized by the all Regional Offices and Sub offices of the HRCSL in Kandy, Matara, Badulla, Anuradhapura, Trincomalee, Vavuniya, Ampara, Jaffna, Batticaloa, and Kalmunai.



Lightning of the Oil Lamp



Chairman, Justice L.T.B. Dehideniya
delivering The Opening Remarks



Chief Guest, Ms. Farzana Jameel, PC



Ms. Ermiza Tegal



Ms. Sarla Emmanuel



Dr. Chulani Kodikara



Ms. Poojanee Galappaththi



Commissioner, Prof. Farzana Hanniffa



Chairman, Commissioners, secretary of the HRCSL with the Chief Guest.



Theoretical Performance



Theoretical Performance



Theoretical Performance



Vote of Thanks by Secretary, Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka



Stakeholders participating at the occasion



Stakeholders participating at the occasion



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