

Strengthening Child Rights in Sri Lanka: Key Insights from the National Consultation on Advancing Child Rights

On March 25, 2025, the Child Rights Unit of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) hosted the National Consultation on Advancing Child Rights at Courtyard by Marriott, Colombo 02. The consultation aimed at evaluating the progress made in implementing the Concluding Observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Sri Lanka on child rights in Sri Lanka, identifying key challenges and best practices, and establishing mechanisms for continuous monitoring and accountability. The consultation was supported by the *Support to Justice Sector Project (JURE)*, funded by the European Union and jointly implemented by UNICEF and UNDP in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, aiming to strengthen the justice system to be more accessible, efficient, and inclusive.

The event was attended by Justice L.T.B. Dehideniya, Chairman of HRCSL, Commissioners Mr. Nimal G. Punchihewa, Prof. Thaiyammuttu Thanaraj, Prof. Farhana Haniffa, and Dr. Gehan Gunathilake. Panelists included representatives from key government institutions



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such as the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Department of Social Services, Bureau for Prevention of Child and Women Abuse, National Child Protection Authority, and Department of Probation & Child Care Services.

Secretary to the HRCSL, ministry secretaries and representatives, UN agency representatives, and civil society organizations also participated in the event.

Ms. Teona Aslanishvili, Chief of Child Protection from UNICEF Sri Lanka highlighted the importance of collective action and accountability in realizing child rights in Sri Lanka,



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commending the Human Rights Commission for convening stakeholders and reaffirming its commitment to supporting child rights monitoring and awareness through the JURE programme.

The consultation was structured into three key discussion areas: Policy Development, Strategic Planning, and

Legal Frameworks; Health, Education, Culture, and Social Protection; and Prevention, Response, and Rehabilitation for Violence and Abuse. Panel discussions explored the effectiveness of current policies and programs, highlighting successes and areas requiring further attention.



The final session facilitated an open dialogue on developing a national mechanism to monitor the implementation of child rights recommendations, ensuring a sustainable and coordinated approach.

The National Consultation on Advancing Child Rights provided a vital platform for dialogue and collaboration among key stakeholders, emphasizing the importance of continuous monitoring and collective efforts in advancing child rights in Sri Lanka. The discussions highlighted both progress made and challenges ahead, setting the stage for future actions to ensure the full implementation of the Committee's recommendations and the protection of children's rights across the country.



