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PART I : SECTION (I) — GENERAL

Government Notifications

NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY

CABINET Paper No. 07/1862/354/020 of 31st October, 2007, to publish the National Cultural Policy and to implement it as the National Cultural Policy of Sri Lanka.

MAHINDA YAPA ABEYWARDANA,
Minister of Cultural Affairs.

Part 1

- 1.0 *Vision.*— Being a proud Sri Lankan nation blessed with national heritages to go forward with the other countries of the world as a country with a unique culture that promotes development.
- 2.0 *Mission.*— To assist in building Sri Lanka as a proud nation with a unique Sri Lankan identity by facilitating the emergence of a culture that would develop all communities of the country while in the process protecting and preserving Sri Lankan national heritages.
- 3.0 *Objectives.*— The objectives have been identified in the belief that the culture of a country is the primary mechanism that helps in accomplishing most productively all programmes being introduced for the well being of the people of that country.
 1. to build a positive cultural environment that would help direct the people on their own in a manner that would successfully accomplish the general national development policy of the country ;
 2. to promote cultural diversity and thereby to prevent harm caused to positive cultural characteristics through various forces ;
 3. to pave the way to organize the cultural life of the people of the country through preservation, maintenance and utilization of cultural heritages ;
 4. to motivate the people to identify positive cultural characteristics and thereby to promote a culture with distinct Sri Lankan identity ;

5. to help the people in identifying themselves the external and internal factors causing cultural downfall and in exterminating these factors.

6. to pave the way to inculcate in the society the fact that culture is an energetic, challenging and free force.

4.0 *Foundation.*— The programme that is commonly approved by the general people from time to time is the foundation of the cultural policy of the government that is endeavouring in the mission of building a culture beneficial to the Sri Lankans with a view to providing all sections of the community a cultural life that could be experienced freely, in the belief that it is the way of life of the people.

5.0 *Authority.*— All cultural activities within Sri Lanka will be implemented in accordance with the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and all Acts and Regulations approved by the Parliament.

In its capacity as the principal institution implementing the people's power in respect of all subjects relevant to the culture, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs will intervene and also represent in all matters pertaining to that subject. Accordingly, action would be take to intervene in all matters leading to managing their cultural life in a manner that would make their communal life easy. In this endeavour the views of all the relevant sectors would be taken into consideration.

Part II

1.0 *National Identity.*— It will be a national responsibility to take steps to ensure that the proud Sri Lankan identity maintained through various arts and crafts, visible and invisible national heritages, languages and literature and folk life promoting national unity and cooperation is maintained as the country's cultural and national identity and to eliminate factors causing the decline or disruption of that Sri Lankan identity.

2.0 *Cultural Heritages.*— All programmes would be implemented on the belief that it is a national responsibility to protect, restore, promote and extend every form of Sri Lankan national heritages and to maintain them for the sake of the future generation.

Action would also be taken to prevent every activity that would cause destruction and harm to national heritages.

All sorts of arts including language and literature and the subjects such as technology, history, archaeology, museums, archives would be made use of as mechanisms stimulating national pride by highlighting the Sri Lankan heritages. The Cultural diversity would be developed thereby as the final outcome of all these activities that needed to promote the culture as an energetic, challenging and free force would be set in place.

When necessary, action would be taken to keep the national as well as the international community aware of all sorts of visible and invisible cultural heritages required for the advancement and maintenance of Sri Lankan identity.

It would be essential to take steps to display and advertise cultural heritages without causing any harm and to utilize the profits earned thereby for the economic and social development of the country.

3.0 *Various Arts and Crafts.*— Action would be taken to protect and develop all sorts of traditional and hereditary arts and crafts and to advertise them nationally and internationally in a manner that would highlight their value. All sectors would take action to formulate and implement programmes that would boost highlighting of the market value of all arts and crafts besides developing and advertising them and thereby helping to get economic and social benefits to artists who are engaged in such arts and crafts.

4.0 *Folk Life.*— Having accepted the fact that culture is a series of activities that could be freely experienced and participated by all the citizens, action would be taken to direct all sorts of cultural activities so as to enable the management of the cultural life of the common people in such a way that their life style is made easy and that benefits of all national and other development projects are accrued to them.

All cultural activities of the public would be directed in a manner that they would depict the Sri Lankan identity while at the same time preserving its excellence. Action would also be taken to prevent any damages caused to such aspects.

Action would be taken to promote a people friendly atmosphere and to encourage formation of cultural organizations at the national, district, regional and rural levels where participation is freely open to all sections of the community so as to enable them to interfere freely in various artistic, literary and cultural activities that affect their folk life.

All activities would be directed through the network of all formal and informal institutions so as to enable all the sections of the community to absorb to their folk life, the cultural values that would help maintain their folk life in a much more productive manner. Collectively as well as personally the people would be directed towards a behavioural pattern that would emphasize the development of self-esteem, belief in self-esteem and minimize dependence on outsiders or external organizations.

- 5.0 *Language and Literature.*— Action will be taken to protect the spirit of Sinhala and Tamil Languages, to preserve and develop their inherent expressiveness, to initiate steps to ensure correct usage of the language among the people while preventing incorrect usage.

The people would be encouraged to use the English Language in addition to Sinhala and Tamil while giving further incentives for multilingualism. Incentives would also be given for the study of traditional languages such as Pali and Sanskrit and using them for literary pursuits as well. Considering the fact that literature is a vital ingredient of the culture of the people, necessary steps would be taken to use and promote Sinhala and Tamil literature giving them their due place locally, while at the same time taking steps to eliminate factors that could impede their progress.

Action would be taken to make use of languages including English for literary pursuits. Steps would also be taken to promote a reading public in the country.

Incentives would be given to the formation of state sector, private sector as well as independent organizations in respect of language and literature. These organizations would be allowed to carry out their activities freely without any state intervention. However, in the event of any cultural harm being caused through them to the life of the community steps would be taken to prevent such harm. Necessary steps would be taken for the well being of creative activities and artists. The uninhibited access to all forms of arts and crafts enjoyed by the people would be further strengthened.

- 6.0 *International Relations.*— Sri Lanka maintains relations with other countries of the world through international treaties accepted by the Government of Sri Lanka from time to time making use of indigenous cultural aspects when necessary, in order to display the ancient glory of Sri Lanka and thereby to build up Sri Lanka's image.

These activities will be handled so that culturally, the common people would get the benefits of international relations without causing any harm to the culture.

- 7.0 *Creative Cultural Development.*— With a view to ensuring the progress of all cultural activities such as arts and crafts in various sectors such as literature, music, drama, dancing, drawing, cinema, Tele drama and handicrafts all the artists would be induced to produce new creations in the relevant fields. In this regard all the citizens would be ensured free access. Action would be taken to use creative cultural development accrued thereby as a mechanism to promote the wisdom of the common people.

- 8.0 *Institutional Assistance.*—The institutional structures at different levels such as Pradeshiya Sabha, Urban Council, Municipal Council and Provincial Council would be used to ensure trickling down of the benefits of programmes for cultural promotion to the ordinary people. At the same time, all organized systems such as the school system would be used to ensure the continuous flow of cultural values to the life of the community.

9.0 *Evaluation.*— The programmes forwarded by individuals or institutions as their special contribution in respect of cultural matters affecting the community life would be evaluated at national, provincial or district levels.

10.0 *Responsibility of the people.*— The protection and presentation of all visible and invisible cultural heritages would be a personal as well as collective responsibility of the people. While steps would be taken to ensure that the development of a much more productive cultural environment for the people is a self motivated individualistic course of action, all cultural operations would be directed on that behalf. Finally, having accepted the multicultural nature of Sri Lanka, programmes would be set in motion so as to make cultural activities a friendship bridge between various communities. Views of intellectuals having experience in various fields would be sought in respect of all sorts of cultural activities.

11.0 In the event of certain legislation being needed in respect of matters coming under the purview of the subject of culture, action will be taken periodically to formulate suitable legislation including Bills necessary for a people friendly culture that would ensure a positive cultural life based on views of the relevant institutions and the people.