

To
His Excellency Mahinda Rajapakse
President of the Democratic
Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Memorandum of Recommendations
of the Official Languages Commission –
for the Implementation of the Official Languages
Policy - 2006

INTRODUCTION

The Official Languages Commission in its Recommendations presented to the President last year (2005) highlighted the problem of the dearth of competent translators and interpreters who could render from one Official Language to the other and from one Official Language to the Link Language (English) and vice versa. In its Recommendations it identified what steps need be taken to train translators and interpreters in the Official Languages and the Link Language (English) for the future. The Commission also pointed out that the remuneration paid to these categories should be raised to a more attractive level so as to attract competent persons to these professions and to continue to retain them in service.

1. PROPOSAL FOR THE CREATION OF A NEW INSTITUTION
FOR TRANSLATIONS AND INTERPRETATION

The Official Languages Commission having studied the problems relating to the provision of translations and interpretations further is of the

opinion that a new institution should be established to provide translation and interpretation services having regard to two objectives: to wit.

- (a) to make rational use of the available professionals in the field of translations and interpretations ;
- (b) to enable such professionals to serve the state to meet its needs in a rational manner without attaching such professional to a particular ministry or a department or some other state institution.

In making this recommendation the Official Languages Commission has taken into consideration the existence of modern technologies which enable services of this nature being carried out from a single centre (location) to a number of locations (ministries , departments etc.) thus making possible the rational use of the limited number of professionals available in these fields.

The Commission states further :

- (a) that provision of translation and interpretation services could be extended to cover those from foreign languages to the Official Languages or to the Link Language (English) and vice versa depending on the availability of competent professionals in the relevant languages ; and
- (b) that the services of the proposed institution could be made available to private persons and non-governmental entities depending on the capacity of the proposed institution to handle work outside that of the government.

The proposed institution for translations and interpretations may be modeled on the Bureau of Translations in Canada which provides services in translations, interpretations and terminology.

2. OBJECTS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE INSTITUTION

- I To provide the service of translation of documents ;
 - (a) from one official / national language to the other official / national language
 - (b) from one official /national language to the link language (English)
 - (c) from one foreign language to one or the other of the official / national languages or the link language / English and vice versa

- II To provide the service of interpretation;
 - (a) from one official / national language to the other official / national language
 - (b) from one official /national language to the link language (English)
 - (c) from one foreign language to one or the other of the official / national languages or the link language / English and vice versa

- III To compile and /or update glossaries and develop terminologies in the official / national languages relating to different branches of knowledge.

- IV To develop a database comprising words and terms useful for translations from one official / national language to the other and the link language .

- V To engage in any other work that may be helpful in the provision

of translations and interpretations and promotion of translation and interpretation services.

3. THE STRUCTURE OF THE INSTITUTION

- I. There shall be a Board of Directors not exceeding seven members, one of whom shall be nominated by the relevant minister (the relevant minister to whom the subject of the proposed institution is assigned) as the Director General of the institution .
- II Five directors may be appointed by the relevant minister from among persons who are academically or other wise qualified to engage in the supervision of translations and interpretation from one language to another mentioned in the objects and functions.
- III. One Director shall be appointed by the minister who is responsible for the subject of public administration from among senior public servants holding office in that ministry.
- IV. One Director shall be appointed by the relevant minister from among senior public servants holding office in the relevant ministry.
- V. There shall be a Secretary appointed by the Board selected from among persons qualified and experienced in the field of management . The Secretary shall be in charge of the administration of the institution .
- VI. The Board shall have power :
 - (a) to appoint and employ necessary officials and staff for carrying out the functions and work of the institution ;

- (b) to decide on matters pertaining to office equipment, furniture, buildings and infrastructure of the institution ; and
- (c) to purchase, sell, hire and mortgage movable as well as immovable property and to enter into agreements and to execute necessary documents in carrying out its functions.
- (d) to set up divisions and branches of the institution according to its needs.

VII. The Board may set up panels of translators and interpreters qualified in the languages mentioned in the objects and functions. The criteria for selection of translators and interpreters for the panels shall be decided by the Board. The Board shall also determine the rates of payment for translations and interpretations made by the translators and interpreters respectively in the different panels. The translators included in the panels shall be regarded as engaging in their work on a freelance basis for payment computed at the rates determined by the Board .

VIII Initially this institution may be set up as a unit of the Department of Official Languages which presently carries out some of the functions mentioned in the objects.

4. THE NAME OF THE INSTITUTION

It is suggested that the proposed institution bears the following names in English, Sinhala and Tamil respectively.

NATIONAL TRANSLATION CENTRE	(English)
ජාතික භාෂා පරිවර්තන මධ්‍යස්ථානය	(සිංහල)
தேசிய மொழிபெயர்ப்பு நிலையம்	(தமிழ்)

5. THE BASIS ON WHICH RECOMMENDATIONS ARE MADE

These Recommendations are made in terms of section 6 (a) of the Official Languages Commission Act No. 18 of 1991.

Sgd / (Raja Collure)

Chairman

Sgd/ (Prof. A. V. Suraweera)

Member

Sgd/ (Prof. S. Thillainathan)

Member

Sgd/ (Prof. J. B. Dissanayake)

Member

Sgd/ (Prof. Somarathne Balasooriya)

Member

Sgd/ (N. P. M Saifdeen)

Member

Sgd/ (Senarath Gunasena)

Secretary

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES COMMISSION

29th September, 2006.