

Public Representations Committee on Constitutional Reforms

Media Release

14th February 2016

After conducting 5 days of public sittings in Colombo in January 2016, the Public Representations Committee (PRC) on Constitutional Reforms started holding public sittings in the other districts in February. So far, public sittings have been conducted in Gampaha, Matale, Kalutara, Kandy, Vavuniya, Killinocchi, Mullativu, Mannar, Galle, Matara and Hambantota. During the next two weeks Committee Members will be holding public sittings in the remaining districts as well(schedule attached).

The response from the public has been enthusiastic. In each district, the Committee has received a range of suggestions from the public on constitutional reforms as well as governance issues. The views expressed by the public are important since they provide the Committee with an opportunity to understand the key concerns of the general public especially on how they view the relationship between the State and the citizenry. The Committee provides an opportunity for different views to be expressed by the members of the public without constraints.

As the sittings are open to the public, many people including the media have also sat and observed the proceedings. We thank the public for their response, their patience, courtesy and political maturity while participating in these sittings. People have sometimes waited for hours to express their views and also to listen to what others have to say. In our view, this is a strong indication of the strength of the spirit of democracy in our people. As mandated to the Committee, our task is to listen and engage with what the public has to say and to provide a report to the Constitutional Drafting Cabinet Sub-Committee with our recommendations based on the submissions made by the public.

In addition to the oral submissions received during public sittings, the Committee has also been receiving written submissions in various forms including through social media. The last day for accepting written submissions is extended to 10th of March 2016. The Committee is also planning to conduct another round of public sittings in Colombo as well as in other selected districts in March due to the overwhelming response from the public so far. Therefore it has been decided to hold Public sittings for Colombo district on the 3rd, 4th and 5th of March 2016. During the month of March, the Committee will also meet with constitutional experts, political leaders, intellectuals, religious leaders and civil society members to obtain their views on constitutional reforms. The Committee has also started the process of classifying and analyzing the submissions that have been received up to now.

The Committee invites the public to participate actively in the sittings of the PRC in the remaining districts. The Committee wishes to thank the media for its unstinted support and co-operation during this process and also wishes to record its appreciation of the media that focus on the substance and content of the public submissions seriously. This is an opportunity for the citizenry of Sri Lanka to influence the supreme law of the country and the best use should be made of it.