



Announcing an
International Conference
on

**“CONCERTED COMMUNITY ACTION
FOR
A SUSTAINABLE LIFE ON EARTH FAIR TO ALL”**

organized by

Sarvodaya

as part of its
50th Anniversary Celebrations

from 04th to 06th December, 2008
at

Sarvodaya Head Quarters
Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

1. Introduction

The Lanka Jatika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya, better known as “Sarvodaya” started its characteristic community development work in Sri Lanka in a rural village community ostracized by the then society amidst which it existed. This was in 1958. The year 2008 marks the fiftieth year of its participatory development work in urban and rural communities. Today (2008 January) there are around 15 000 communities in Sri Lanka and many communities around the world which attempt to follow the development path indicated by Sarvodaya.

Approaching the 50th year of its work with mostly deprived and remote communities, Sarvodaya believes that its development philosophy accompanied by a self- initiated and self-sustained approach to their own development by the communities in question is of very considerable relevance to the future of this world. It is firmly of the belief that a “SUSTAINABLE LIFE ON EARTH” is possible if and only if “COMMUNITIES” all over the world take the initiative to support such a goal. While Sarvodaya does not decry and under-estimate the significant roles which need to be played by nation states, international agencies, national, international and global business enterprises, judging by what has taken place so far, it believes that they alone cannot lead to a “SUSTAINABLE LIFE ON EARTH FAIR TO ALL”. To attain the latter, communities all over the world should take part in the effort.

Sarvodaya is also aware that apart from the communities associated with it, there are communities all over the world which work along similar lines. The International Conference to be organized by Sarvodaya aims to call all these communities into action, to support each other and be encouraged by each others efforts and work in unison to influence national, international and global policies which affect life on Earth.

2. Goals of the Conference

- i. To identify the lessons which may be learnt from Sarvodaya development work in local communities over the last five decades which would be relevant for communities all over the world.
- ii. To recognize the full-potential of local communities to contribute to, “A Sustainable Life on Earth Fair to ALL” and identify obstacles to realizing the potential

3. Conference Theme and Sub-Themes

Theme

“CONCERTED COMMUNITY ACTION FOR A SUSTAINABLE LIFE ON EARTH
FAIR TO ALL”

Sub - Themes

Five decades of Sarvodaya participatory development work in local communities - lessons for the future

The critical features of a modern state which permits / facilitates / limits the full self-development of communities comprising the state.

- Limits of state action
- Limits of community action

Realization of the full-potential of local communities to contribute to, “A Sustainable Life on Earth Fair to ALL”.

4. Outline of Conference Activities

In keeping with its practices over nearly five decades, the “Conference Activities” will focus on the village communities, will involve community participants and will also take place in community settings, with a significant amount of time being spent in them.

Participants will have ample opportunities of interacting with the communities. It is hoped that this will include the discussion of problems faced by the respective communities in developing their communities in accordance with the Sarvodaya philosophy. Sarvodaya does not believe and has never claimed that it has solved all the problems of the communities it is associated with. It has pointed out a path of development to local communities guided by a philosophy deeply embedded in their psyche. The International Conference will provide an opportunity for members of the local communities to interact with learned people from other parts of the world and vice versa. Sarvodaya believes that such interactions should be of mutual benefit.

Preceding and following these visits to selected communities there will be presentations and discussions held at the Sarvodaya Headquarters and other Sarvodaya centers. Discussions will be in plenary as well as in groups. An independent evaluation of Sarvodaya development work is being commissioned and it is expected that it will be presented at the initial stages of the Conference. Leading personnel both local and foreign will be invited to speak on aspects relevant to the Goals listed above.

In particular the role of the state as it affects community development will be a major item of discussion.

5. Detailed Daily Schedule of the Conference

Foreign participants are expected to arrive in the country at least the day before the Conference is scheduled to start, namely on or before 26.10.2008.

04.12.2008 - Day One

09.00 - 09.30	Registration of participants
09.30 - 10.30	Plenary Session 1: Opening ceremony Lighting of the Oil Lamp Welcome Address and Objectives of the Conference by Dr.Vinya S.Ariyaratne, Executive Director, LJSSS Adoption of the Conference Daily Schedule Election of Office Bearers of the Conference Chairperson Rapporteur
10.30 - 11.00	Tea
11.00 - 12.30	Plenary Session 2: "Concerted Community Action For A Sustainable Life On Earth Fair To All" Address by Dr.A.T.Ariyaratne President, Lanka Jathika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya Discussion
12.30 - 13.30	Lunch
13.30 - 14.30	Plenary Session 3: An Evaluation of Sarvodaya Development Work in Selected Communities Presentation by Prof. A.J.Weeramunda Director, Centre for Applied Research, Badulla, Sri Lanka Discussion
14.30 - 15.00	Tea

- 15.00 - 16.00 **Group Work Session 1:** Detailed consideration of Evaluation Report from selected perspectives with Goal 1 in mind
- Group A: Social empowerment of communities in the context of economic and technological development
Group B: Economic empowerment of communities in the context of social and technological development
Group C: Technological empowerment of communities in the context of economic and social development
Group D: Towards Grama Swaraj ("self-rule by communities")
Group E: Education of the communities
- Each Group will elect its own Chairperson and Rapporteur
- 16.00 - 17.00 **Plenary Session 4:** Briefing on Field Visits to selected communities on 28.10.2008
- Overall objectives of field visits
General programme for the day
Traditional customs which need to be observed
Composition of Groups for field visits (Sub-divisions of Groups A to A to E)
Itinerary for each Group with information about the community to be visited
Travelling arrangements

05.12.2008 - Day Two

As per the specific itineraries and programmes provided to each Field Visit Group
Group Work Session 2 will be in the field. (Each team visiting a community will elect its own Chairperson and Rapporteur.)

06.12.2008 - Day Three

09.00 - 10.30 **Plenary Session 5:** Lessons from Sarvodaya development work in communities

Presentation and discussion of Field Visit Reports /
Group discussions on Day One

10.30 - 11.00 Tea

11.00 - 12.30 **Plenary Session 6:** Limits of State Action and Limits of Community Action for a Sustainable Life on Earth Fair to All
Discussion

12.30 - 13.30 Lunch

13.30 - 14.30 **Group Work Session 3:** The potential of and limitations to empowerment of communities for concerted action for "A Sustainable Life on Earth Fair to All" in the context of defined "State Action".

The composition of the Groups will remain the same as earlier.

Group A : The potential of and limitations to empowerment of communities for concerted action for "A Sustainable Life on Earth Fair to All" in the social domain in the context of defined "State Action".

Group B: The potential of and limitations to empowerment of communities for concerted action for "A Sustainable Life on Earth Fair to All" in the economic domain in the context of defined "State Action".

Group C: The potential of and limitations to empowerment of communities for concerted action for "A Sustainable Life on Earth Fair to All" in the technology domain in the context of defined "State Action".

Group D: The potential of and limitations to empowerment of communities for concerted action for "A Sustainable Life on Earth Fair to All" in the "political" domain in the context of defined "State Action".

Group E : The potential of and limitations to empowerment of communities for concerted action for “A Sustainable Life on Earth Fair to All” in the education domain in the context of defined “State Action”.

- 14.30 - 15.00 Tea
- 15.00 - 16.30 **Plenary Session 7:** Presentation and discussion of Group Work Session 3 Reports
- 16.30 - 17.00 **Plenary Session 8:** Concluding Session

6. Conference Venue

The main venue will be the Headquarters of Sarvodaya at Moratuwa, a suburban town about 15 Km. South of Colombo. (Address given below) The planned field visits to communities will be within relatively short distances from Moratuwa to enable the participants to operate from Moratuwa.

7. Conference Languages

The proceedings will be in English except the planned community-level discussions, which will be in the languages spoken by the respective communities with translation into English and vice versa.

8. Participation in the Conference

The Conference is open to both foreign and local participants. Those interested are kindly requested to communicate with the Conference Secretariat (address given below) giving their names and addresses (including e-mail address/es) and a brief description of their current work and interests on or before 15.11.2008

9. Conference Secretariat

Further information about the Conference will be provided by the Conference Secretariat,

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