

OPA proposal on revival from current crisis

The Organisation of Professional Associations of Sri Lanka “OPA”, established in 1975, is the umbrella body for 52 Professional Associations representing 32 professions in Sri Lanka. As the Apex Body of Professional Associations, OPA is deeply concerned about the farfetched national catastrophe caused by multitude of reasons including errors in decision-making leading, anarchy and indecisiveness. We are equally concerned about the very realistic possibility of this situation escalating into social and humanitarian crisis. OPA considers duty bound to assist the executive and the legislature with proposals to overcome the current situation.

Sri Lanka is in an economic catastrophe and People are demanding the President and all 225 MPs to step down. While this may be the ultimate solution, from practical standpoint, even if the President and 225 MPs step down today, it will take at least 6 months for the country to have fresh elections and elect their new leaders. Besides that, there are roadblocks in the constitution preventing Sri Lanka from having early Presidential and Parliamentary elections. As a nation, we cannot afford to wait that long to handle the current economic crisis and it need to be handled immediately.

To stabilize the economy and the administrative system in the country, the OPA hereby proposes solution to address multifaceted issues faced by the country. OPA is of the view, that the Executive and Legislature encompassing all political parties’ wholehearted support is inevitable, if we are to reap maximum benefit of this proposal.

As the general public is rejecting the existing administrative system altogether with the incumbent Cabinet and Members of Parliament (“MPs”), fresh appointments are suggested comprising of people with subject matter knowledge based on meritocracy. This Cabinet should be outside of the current MPs and should consist of Subject Matter Experts. e.g. Ministry of Power should be handled by an expert in Power Sector and Ministry of Finance should be handled by an expert in Finance Sector.

The Constitution does not permit appointing non-MPs as Cabinet Ministers, therefore, first, we need to get such Subject Matter Experts into the Parliament. **OPA proposes that all political parties get their current National List MPs to resign and mutually agreed Subject Matter Experts to be appointed as new National List MPs. This would pave way for Subject Matter Experts to take up appointments as the New Cabinet.**

The President should allow the Subject Matter Experts to take independent decisions in the best interest of the country. Such decisions should not be subjected to revision by the President through his executive power and such decisions of Subject Matter Experts should be upheld.

As a matter of urgency, the new Cabinet should negotiate with all Multilateral Financial Institutions on debt restructuring and actively get involved in administering day-to-day affairs. While the discussions are ongoing with Multilateral Financial Institutions similar process should be followed in restructuring of bilateral borrowings.

Parliamentary and Presidential Elections shall be held at the earliest possible time according to the constitution, fulfilling peoples' desire of having a new Parliament and a New President. National lists to be reserved for Subject Matter Experts in the new Parliament as well.

OPA is currently developing a set of proposals that will assist in resolving multifaceted issues including Foreign Exchange crisis faced by the country. We intend to submit these proposals to the New Cabinet in due course and provide necessary assistance in execution/implementation assistance for proposals of Subject Matter Experts.