

Summary of Report

**Annual Women's
National Convention 2006**

9th – 11th January 2007,
Hotel Blue Waters, Wadduwa

The Women's National Convention was held in January 2007. Thirty one women activists hailing from a number of districts including Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Moneragala, Puttalam, Kegalle, Gampaha, Kurunegala, and Colombo. Some of the women activists who have now been engaged in the women's movement for over 25 years, and those who had participated at the first Women's Convention were present at this Convention.

After an initial round on introductions it was unanimously decided that the following issues would be discussed and analyzed through a feminist perspective over the next two days:

- Current Conflict Situation in Sri Lanka
- Class Divisions
- Nationalism and Racism
- The New Wave of Hostility towards NGOs
- Transitioning from a 'Peace' phase to a 'Conflict' phase
- Transgendered Identities

The participants also discussed issues related to Democracy and issues related to Conflict, by mapping out positive and negative aspects of both issues. Some participants felt it was better to address the larger picture since almost all human rights violations fall under the category of Democratic Rights Violations. However, it was also felt that this was too broad a spectrum to deal with and that it would be more effective to narrow one's scope and focus on a more specific issue such as the Conflict and its impact on women.

The newly gazetted Prevention of Terrorism Act was also discussed as being problematic in that many people were unaware of the implications of this Act. The MDDR took the lead and agreed to facilitate a lecture and discussion on this Act at a later date.

It was also decided that all those present would work as a network towards March 8th International Women's Day 2007, on the theme: "Let's Protect Our Right to Live", taking into account the escalating violence especially in the North and East. The IWD 2007 Demonstration and Picket was to be held in the afternoon outside the Fort Railway Station in Colombo. It was decided that the picket boards would have the following slogans:

Stop Abductions!
Provide Security in Public Transport
Reduce Cost of Living
Provide Food / Medicines for Jaffna
Feed the North!
Don't Plunder Our Rights
Protect the Right to Employment
Protect the Rights of Plantation Workers

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