



**Keynote Address of Hon. Governor, Northern Province
Major General GA Chandrasiri
at the Second Session on 11th November 2013
of First Council Assembly of the
Northern Provincial Council**



**Northern Provincial Council
Jaffna**



**Keynote Address of Hon. Governor, Northern Province
Major General GA Chandrasiri
at the Second Session on 11th November 2013
of First Council Assembly of the
Northern Provincial Council**



**Northern Provincial Council
Jaffna**

Hon. Chairman of the Northern Provincial Council

Hon. Chief Minister

Hon. Ministers

Hon. Members of the Northern Provincial Council

Ladies and Gentlemen

Vanakkam, Ayubowan, Assalamu Alaikum

I consider it is privilege and honour to address the second session of the first Provincial Council assembly today.

First of all let me profess my sincere appreciation to the Hon. Chairman for convening the Provincial Council for the ceremonial session.

On behalf of the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa and his Government, I take this opportunity to congratulate all the elected representatives on their election to the Northern Provincial Council and wish them success in the fulfillment of their duties as members of the Council. I am confident that the elected representatives will perform their duties to the best of their ability for the betterment of all Sri Lankans in the Northern Province and actively participate in the development of the Northern Province of Sri Lanka and cooperate in good faith with the Central Government to achieve the development goals envisaged for this Region.

From the time of granting universal franchise to the people of Sri Lanka, the voters of Northern Province have always valued democracy and began to exercise their franchise and elected their choice of representatives. It was sadly disturbed during the conflict period .During this period the people of the Northern Province were denied the right to exercise their vote. Nevertheless there were a few that braved such ordeals and cast their vote under strain and stress. With that dark period finally over the people of the North were given their opportunity to cast their vote freely and you elected ladies and gentlemen are true inheritors of that democratic bounty. In fact you stand in this chamber as the

popularly elected representatives of the northern provincial council and carry a huge responsibility as their nominees.

However it is my duty to recall at this special event and pay tribute, to the leadership of His Excellency the President Mahinda Rajapaksa and to the bravery and courage of our heroic Security Forces and the Police, who brought peace to our country and in particular to this region which we are experiencing today. If not for His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa's exemplary leadership and for the great sacrifices made by the security forces there would not have been an opportunity to have this occasion today especially at a place like Kaithady in Jaffna. I also would like to give my tribute to the people who sacrificed their life to bring peace to our mother land.

The people who lived for a long period under fear and suspicion, are now blessed with freedom to live, to engage in their livelihood and trade, without any interference from outside forces in a safe environment. The younger generations have the opportunity of having a good education and pursuing their dreams and goals without fear and without obstacles. Most importantly they have the freedom to live happy and contented lives in a secure and stable environment.

The transformation and unprecedented development that has taken place in Jaffna and the entire Northern Province during the last four years is admirable. Thanks to His Excellency the President, within a period of four years after shorting out of conflict in the country, we see a vast development in the Province, a very peaceful environment and finally the establishment of the Northern Provincial Council that has taken over the provincial governance after an impartial and peaceful election.

Now, it is the duty of the Northern Provincial Council to move forward in the development process outlined for this Province and fulfill the aspirations of the people of the Northern Province within the framework of the Provincial Council System.

Administration

The Northern Provincial Council consists of 05 Provincial Ministries with 17 Departments to deliver the services to the people. Another 8 institutions are functioning under the supervision of the Chief Secretary under the guidance of Hon. Chief Minister. The executive power extending to the matters with respect to which a Provincial Council has power to make statutes shall be exercised by the Governor either directly or through Ministers of Board of Ministers or through officers subordinate to him in accordance with Article 154F of the Constitution. Appointment of officers, transfers and disciplinary control of the Provincial Public Service are exercised by the Hon. Governor through the Provincial Public Service Commission, over and above other constitutional functions and responsibilities given to the Governor through the 13th amendment to the Constitution and from the Provincial Council Act.

The Northern Province consists of five administrative districts; namely Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya and includes 34 Divisional Secretary Divisions and there are 921 Grama Niladari divisions. The identified development programmes in the Districts are carried out by the Central Government through the District Secretariats. The District Coordinating Committees are responsible for the development activities and financial allocations of the respective districts in the province which is co-chaired by the Hon. Cabinet Minister of the respective electoral district and the Hon. Chief Minister of the province.

Hon. Chairman

Establishment of Provincial Council System

On this historic occasion, let us take a moment to recall the turbulent past of the Northern Provincial Council. The provincial council system was introduced and established as a fundamental political solution to bring an end to conflicts, in the Northern and Eastern Provinces in 1987. The North East Provincial council which was established as a result, was dissolved in 1991 after having functioned for a brief period of two years.

In view of the judgment of the Supreme Court on the 16th October 2006, the North East Province was demerged into two separate administrative units as Northern and Eastern Provinces. However, the functioning of the Northern Provincial Council was not possible due to the instability of the Region as conducting a free and fair election was not possible at the time. The present Northern Provincial council was established upon the 1st Provincial Council elections held on 21st September 2013 and started functioning from 25th of October 2013 and I have the confidence that the present Northern Provincial Council will have a successful tenure and fulfill the true objectives of the establishment of a Provincial Council.

The 13th Amendment to the Constitution specifies the sectors in which the Provincial Councils can exercise their legislative, executive, and financial authority. Similarly, the subject contents and responsibilities of the Provincial Councils and Central Government have been expressly classified in the said Act. The matters to be attended by the Provincial Councils with the consent of the Central Government are also clearly stated under the concurrent list in the 13th Amendment of the Constitution.

The Constitution has demarcated the boundaries, administrative and financial power of the Provincial Council. In order to carry out your responsibilities to the people who have elected you, it is necessary to study, understand and abide by the 13th amendment to the Constitution and the provincial council Act of 1987 and also appreciate the current requirements and necessities of the Region and the Country in implementing the provisions therein.

The Constitution of our country provides for the provincial councils to fulfill their objectives for the Region with the assistance and concurrence of the central government. In fact, co-operation and consensus with the Central Government is essential for the Provincial Council to function. For example, funds required for the function of the provincial council each year need to be appropriated from the national budget. Likewise any foreign funds provided for any development or social project within the province can be channeled only through the Central Government.

Similarly, the Management Service Department of the Central Government decides on the carders of the Provincial Public Service and the provincial councils are required to consult the central government or the Parliament when making statutes for the subjects coming under the concurrent list of the Constitution. Therefore, I recommend to the board of ministers and the members of the provincial council to liaise with the relevant Line Ministries and District Secretariats with regard to their devolved subjects and reap more benefits to the people through proper liaison and cooperation with the relevant central government institutions.

Hon. Chairman,

Socio Economic Condition

The Northern Province covers about 13.2% of the land mass of Sri Lanka. Its total extent, around 8,846.83 sq. km consists of five districts namely Jaffna and its isles, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya have an estimated population of 1.207 mn in mid of 2013. It is still pre- dominantly an agricultural region having crops, livestock & fisheries as pivot sub sectors. The province nearly has 1/3 of the coastal sea and around 250,000 ha. of cultivable land, most of these resources are now accessible to the people to engage in economic activities. However, the contributions to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by agriculture sector have declined during the conflict period. Contribution of these sectors has been gradually increasing from the year 2010 and this trend continues to grow.

It is an acknowledged fact that the Northern Province received unprecedented development under the “Vadakkinn Vasantham” programme, a concept of His Excellency the President.

It gives me great pleasure to state that the fund allocated by His Excellency the President Mahinda Rajapaksa for the development of Northern Province during the period from May 2009 till the end of the 2013 is much more than the fund allocated to this Region during the entire period since independence. Over Rs 100,000 mn has been spent for

development activities of the north under the direction of HE the President for the last four years.

According to the HE the President's direction, essential infrastructure, health, education, local government including rehabilitation and reconstruction and social welfare have been provided and improved for the northern people.

Prior to the conflict, i.e. in 1980s, the contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by the Northern Province was around 7%. Later this suffered a negative trend. However, reflecting the rapid expansion in construction and infrastructure development, expansion of banking services, increase in transport services, enlarging paddy cultivation and significant improvement in fishing income in the Province, the Gross Domestic Product(GDP) growth rate was highest in the province at 25.9 % in 2012 compared to the other provinces and it's share of 4.0 % to the national Gross Domestic Product(GDP) and there is an improvement when compared to 3.7% recorded in 2011. This shows that there are potentials in the Northern Province and more should be gained by proper planning and execution. According to the Central Bank report, the growth rate has now reached a slight positive phenomena resulting in a per capita Income of Rs 288,000 in 2012 although it was Rs 202,000 in 2011.

Resettlements of IDPs from the Welfare Centers have been completed in all 5 Districts in the Province. Total numbers of displaced people were estimated at about 353,272 and all of them have been resettled. As much as possible facilities for the people to commence their livelihood have been given by the government as well as by other institutions.

In terms of productivity, the agriculture sector, including fisheries and animal husbandry which is the mainstay of the economy has shown positive growth after 2009. In paddy sector, Northern Province in the year 2011 and 2012 had recorded highest yield in the country. The government continues to provide proper support for the development of agriculture sector in the Northern Province, the production of the crop, fisheries and livestock also have been gradually increasing and the market for agriculture products has been expanded. Therefore, according to the Central Bank Report, the agricultural sector

contributed 19.6 % of Gross Domestic Product composition to the provincial economy in 2012.

Whereas, the industrial sector in the Northern Province has shown tremendous improvement compared to the past records. It shows in 2012 as 23.5 % contribution to the provincial Gross Domestic Product due to massive investments that had taken place in apparel industries, tourism and construction. It is noted that, the industrial sector contributed higher than agriculture to the provincial GDP in 2012 in the Northern Province. Further, establishment of Public Private Partnership programmes, establishment of business centers, empowering the people to carry out for more business ventures further development of industrial zones will be required in the future.

The government has taken very serious note on the development of the health sector and education sector of the Northern Province. Accordingly vast improvements have taken place in these areas. However, more attention needs to be given for future maintenance of these services through proper planning and execution.

Hon. Chairman,

Sectoral Development

It is necessary to analysis the sectoral developments and achievements for the year 2013 and to discuss service requirement for the future needs. It is also prudent to discuss the sectoral priorities incorporated to the national policy objectives articulated into provincial objectives and priorities into provincial development framework.

Agriculture

According to the “Mahinda Chintana” policy statement, “Sri Lankan agriculture will be diversified in conformity with the modern age by introducing new technology to agriculture and by providing encouragement to agriculture related products”. Agriculture is the predominant productive and livelihood sector in the Northern Province. Nearly 60%

of the people are actively involved in farming as their main economy and livelihood in the province. As a result of the rapid development of the agriculture sector in the Northern Province; paddy harvesting reached the level of 233,317 mt in 2013 and the Province was able to supply its surplus to other parts of the country. 67,726 ha highlands brought under annual crops, perennial crops and homesteads cultivation. The vegetables productions reached the level of 122,494 mt. in 2013. Fruit crops especially banana and grapes are cultivated in commercial scale in the province. As a result of new market opportunities, the farmers who are engaged in this cultivation can market their products in other parts of the country and their income has also increased through the cooperative system and Public Private Partnership programmes. It is recommended that the sector will have to continue to focus on production enhancement, reduce pre and post harvesting losses and institutional resource development activities in 2014 as its priority areas. It may also be prudent to increase the cultivable land in the province and also to bring new technology for the farmers in line with the modern world. The cooperative system should be further utilized for the marketing of agriculture produce and those concerned should be persuaded to explore the possibilities to get the support from the central government institution for the marketing of the agriculture produce. It will play a vital role to enhance the value of the agriculture produce.

In order to enhance the agriculture sector the government has taken many steps to deliver machineries, equipment, fertilizer, seeds and paddy stores to the farmers under the “Vadakkinn Vasantham” programme and I have confidence that this programme with the co-operation of the newly elected Northern Provincial Council, will go from strength to strength.

Fisheries

Inland Fisheries is another key livelihood sector in the Province. It has been integrated with irrigation and agriculture. A remarkable collaboration construction project implemented with the support of National Aquaculture Development Authority (NAQDA) in Muthaiyankaddu Tank in Mullaitivu District to improve the inland fishing

and the establishment of the Regional Aquaculture Extension office in Kilinochchi in 2013 are to boost up the inland fishing in the province. There are two projects on fresh water fish fry rearing systems which are being implemented by the National Aquaculture Development Authority of Sri Lanka (NAQDA) in Kilinochchi District. As per the joint working mechanism with NAQDA, it is a good opportunity to bring lots of investment in the inland fishing sector through various programmes in the Northern Province. There will be more collaborative works with irrigation department to ensure sustainable water source in the tanks to develop the freshwater fishing in the Northern Province. Capacity development to the fishermen and fishermen's cooperative societies and promotion of inland fisheries should be continued in 2014. Freshwater fish processing and marketing opportunities also should be developed in 2014. Training and extension services for Inland Fisheries need to be further improved for empowering the Inland Fish farmers engaged in Inland Fishing in the Northern Province. It is recommended that further enhancement of the inland fishing sector is essential for the active inland fishermen through Public Private Partnership programmes and also through organization like NAQDA. In this direction, Iranaimadhu tank, Giant's tank, Akkarayankulam and Muththaiyankaddu kulam have to be taken into due consideration.

1/3 of the coastal area is belonging to the Northern Province. During the last four years production has been increased by 100%. As an example, in 2009 entire production was 21,900 Mt and the production has increased to 59,340 Mt in 2012. Number of multiday boats, trawlers and out board motors have increased within the four year period. It is recommended to improve the marine fishing industry in liaison with the Line Ministry's assistance and support in future. It is also recommended that the Northern Provincial Council extends its fullest support to the Central Government in its endeavor to overcome the current problems faced by the Fishing Industry due to poaching in territorial waters of Sri Lanka.

Irrigation

Irrigation sector is one of inter related sector to the agriculture and inland fishing. Therefore, hundred thousands of people in the province are dependent on irrigation for their livelihood activities. “Mahinda Chintana” vision clearly defined that “By 2020, the irrigation sector will become a key driving force in agriculture development with the supply of water in adequate, equitable and reliable quantities and in a sustainable, efficient and eco-friendly manner”. So, this sector takes a vital role in the Province. 45 medium irrigation schemes and 9 major irrigation schemes come under the Provincial Irrigation sector. There are 2,066 tanks and ponds also under minor irrigation. Nearly 70,181 acres irrigable areas come under irrigation facilities in 2013. Focus for the year 2014 should be; introduce appropriate water saving technologies and improve the drainage and flood control system in the Northern Province. The sector further should focus on productivity improvement, improvement of physical assets, developing and managing groundwater potential, empower the farming community for sustainable management of irrigation schemes, Improving human and Institutional resources for service delivery in the near future. In this direction the government has taken steps to develop mega Iranaimadhu scheme to the people of the Northern Province.

Livestock

The “Mahinda Chintana” policy statement says that, “Only 15% of the domestic demand for milk is met by local production. We have to change this unfortunate situation. Instead of enriching multinational companies by granting subsidies on imported milk powder, every effort will be made to ensure self sufficiency in milk production”. The livestock industry is becoming an important field for entrepreneurs in the Northern Province. This sector is considered as an additional source of income for the farming society in the region. Several stakeholders i.e. government sector, private sector, cooperative sector and NGO are involved to strengthen the sector through their various projects and programmes. It has increased the production of breeding stock through establishment of breeder farms and strengthening of private goat farms in the Province in the past. Infrastructure facilities

also have been improved to provide better veterinary service in the province. By the government's intervention, average milk production per day has been increased from 77,000 liters to 90,000 liters per day in 2013. Poultry meat production has been increased to 75% in 2013 and also increased the level in egg production in the province. Main focus to the sector in 2014 are; increase of the milk production as 100,000 liters per day, increase the poultry meat and egg production to the self sufficiency level. However, programmes need to be conducted to encourage the local dairy products consumption at all level in the province. To enhance the sector, major developmental thrust areas in future are food for life at household level, productivity enhancement in livestock and poultry technical transfer, maintaining healthy livestock population, strengthening market facilities, institutional capacity enhancement and improvement of livestock feed resources. To enhance the livestock production, cooperative societies, farmers' organizations and rural development societies should play a major role in future.

Education

The Education sector looks forward for significant changes at all levels to bring Sri Lanka as a Knowledge hub. The Northern Province should take this opportunity to accomplish the national goal according to the "Mahinda Chintana". The numbers of functional schools have been increased to 983 out of 1,066 by the government's intervention to improve the education in the North. National programmes such as 1,000 schools and 5,000 feeder primary school programmes are being successfully implemented in the Province. Child friendly approach has been introduced in 500 schools. "Mahindodaya Lab" facilities have been provided to 90 schools in the Province. Infrastructure facilities are also continuously provided wherever the requirements are identified through various sources. Thereby, the adult literacy rate has increased to 88% and the survival rate has also increased to 73% in 2013. As a result of this the dropout rate has been reduced. Within the last four year period, the Northern Provincial Council with the assistance of the Government has taken steps to recruit 1,764 teachers for the enhancement of the standard of education.

Sports and cultural affairs also are included as sub sectors. In 2014, the focus will be on developing full-fledged secondary schools and their related feeder primary schools, rehabilitation and reconstruction of resettled schools and promoting social cohesion among various communities across the province and the country. Improvement of sports and cultural activities in more pragmatic manner also should be a priority for future. Providing non – formal education opportunities to children who cannot cope up with the formal system is another focal area to be developed in 2014. Ensuring high quality service delivery of education, developing capacity of teachers and improving health promotion in schools are the other important key areas to be focused in the near future. The pre-school educational system should be further improved and regularized with the proper support of the Line Ministry in 2014.

Health

Health is the wealth of our society; therefore, the health sector takes prominent role in the province. The vision of the “Mahinda Chintana” for the Health Sector focus to “Strengthen this service by enhancing the physical and technical infrastructure of the health service, upgrading its human resources and bringing about positive attitudinal changes in order to provide a still better service to the general public”. The sector serves through western medicine and eastern medicine to the people in the Province. Primary, Secondary health care institutions, curative as well as preventive institutions are mainly managed by the Provincial Health Department. Under the “Vadakkinn Vasantham” programme 06 base hospitals, 45 divisional hospitals and 52 Gramodhaya Health Centers have been reconstructed for the people of the Northern Province.

Northern Province has achieved a commendable progress in providing healthcare in 2013 and it will continue in future too. Access to Public Health Services has been extended to most of the resettled areas with the appointment of public health staff. Maternal and child health care services have been further extended to the peripheral areas and human resource capacities also strengthened in the province. As a result, the main health indicators such as mortality rates and nutritional indicators have been in good stead. The

year 2013 has been declared by the Ministry of Health as the “Year for Prevention of Non Communicable Diseases”. In this connection, measures have been taken to screen the people of over 35 years of age for non-communicable diseases through Healthy Lifestyle Centers in each MOH area. Dengue eradication programme and local level nutrition intervention programmes also have been continuing in 2013. For the year 2014, preventing non communicable diseases and providing of residential facilities to health staff in resettled areas should be focused. Health system improvement , improved maternal and child health services, prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases (CD & NCD), comprehensive curative care delivery, improve emergency treatment and accident services, nutrition and health of the vulnerable community are the important areas to be covered in the health sector for the year 2014.

Local Government

The “Mahinda Chintana” is willing to ensure the fulfillment of basic needs of the public for their “comfort, convenience and satisfactory lifestyle”. This sector takes vital role to maintain the public amenities such as market places, rural roads, public parks, slaughter houses, cemeteries, community centers and so forth. Resettlement areas have been more focused in 2013 to improve the basic facilities of the resettled people. Rural road renovation, sanitation and water supply facilities and rural electrification have been provided to the resettled areas through a versatile programme called “Pura Neguma” with the peoples’ participation by the local government institutions. Construction of markets, community halls, community centers, libraries, public play ground and slaughter houses have been implemented during the year to improve the public facilities in the Northern Province. Technical transformation has been introduced in solid waste management and organic fertilizer composing. Public participation in local governance and decision making is continuously improved by the sector through 34 Local Authorities in the province. The sector focus is to continue to provide access on improving the public utility services and public amenities, further ensure good governance at all levels and improve the human capital for better service delivery in the resettled areas as well as other areas of the

province in 2014. However, in 2014 also some important areas are to be covered in the Local Government sector such as, quality rural road networks, public utility services, local authority services and waste management, access of alternative energy to non national grid areas. Focus of these main areas should be facilitated to the people of the Northern Province especially for resettlers.

Roads

The “Mahinda Chintana” is ensuring to provide a satisfactory transport service to the people of our country. Northern Province has about 1,960 Km Provincial Roads and 7,600 Km of Rural Roads. Road Development Department, Northern Province is responsible for the construction and maintenance of 1,960 Km C & D class roads. Out of this 1,115 Km C & D class roads were metal laid and balance were gravel roads. Nearly 350 Km roads are being reconstructed under the Ministry of Economic Development projects and 842 km Provincial Roads and 1,282 km rural roads have been rehabilitated. The sector should be focused in 2014 on maintenance and operation of a quality road network in the province, road safety improvements for safe transportation, minimizing adverse environmental impacts and enhancing institutional capacities to improve the performance of the road sector.

Tourism

Tourism is also one of the growing sectors in this Province. The province attracts domestic as well as foreign tourists. The sector provides direct and indirect benefits to the Province. The Government also emphasizes the development of the tourism sector in several ways. There are potential places to invest in tourism in the Province. Improving the access to the tourist destinations, developing recreation areas with Children’s Park and publication of tourist information material are the key activities in 2013. The sector should be focused on diversification and development of tourists’ attraction and marketable products, marketing and promotion of tourism and ensuring the income generation for the local community through tourism promotion. I recommend that these efforts be made through

proper planning and organization for the development of tourism in consultation with the central government. This sector is an important industry for the future generation.

Hon. Chairman

Hon. Chief Minister

Hon. Ministers

Hon. Members of the Northern Provincial Council

In conclusion, I believe that the council will inject fresh ideas to continue the “Vadakkinn Vasantham” concept of His Excellency the President Mahinda Rajapaksa in the Northern Province within the national development policy framework and will work tirelessly, genuinely and responsibly to complete the development policy formulated for the region and exceed expectations of the people of this Region for a better and brighter future. I sincerely hope that my key note address today will guide the council to formulate strategic planning to achieve the provincial goals and it will lead to accomplish the national goals whilst safeguarding the unity and sovereignty of Sri Lanka. The provincial achievements will support our motherland becoming as “Wonder of Asia” in the near future. It is my wish that the council formulates such strategic planning to accelerate the growth, development and satisfactory life style for the people in the Province.

Thank you!

