



CPA Statement on the Release of the Interim Report of the Steering Committee to the Constitutional Assembly

26th September 2017, Colombo, Sri Lanka: The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) welcomes the presentation of the Interim Report of the Steering Committee to the Constitutional Assembly on 21st September 2017. CPA now calls on the government to firmly commit to the next steps of the constitutional reform process, including by providing clear dates on when the next debates of the Constitutional Assembly will occur; when the Final Report accompanied by the Draft Constitutional Proposal will be released; and when the consideration and approval of the Draft Constitutional Proposal is scheduled. CPA also calls for clarity on if further public consultation on either the Interim Report or the Final Report and Draft Constitutional Proposal is planned.

A clear roadmap and commitment to the remaining stages of the constitutional reform process is essential. CPA notes with concern, as it has [repeatedly done](#), the lack of clarity, insufficient prioritisation and accordingly, immediacy, with regard to the process, particularly over the course of this year. The Interim Report was initially promised in December 2016, and therefore comes after substantial delay. The lack of information and direction about the process, even by members of the Constitutional Assembly themselves, has seemed endemic. The absence of clarity, focus and speed has substantially blunted the momentum behind the constitutional reform process after a promising start in 2015 and over 2016. It has also allowed for a number of anti-reform forces to group and organise, and for anti-reform narratives to firmly take root. These narratives threaten not only the constitutional reform process but the government's wider reform agenda.

The promise of the present historic moment of inclusive constitutional reform must not be squandered. Previous major constitutional reform efforts throughout Sri Lanka's history have failed precisely due to a lack of clarity, direction and immediacy. A clear commitment to the constitutional reform process with a detailed articulation of the next steps is the only way to avoid this and to ensure that the process succeeds.