

# CURRICULUM VITAE

**Name:** Nirmala Paranavitana

**Office Address:**

Sri Lanka High Commission  
27 Kautilya Marg  
Chanakyapuri New Delhi 110021

**Tel:** +919650029463  
**Fax:** +911123793604  
**Email:** nirmala.paranavitana@mfa.gov.lk  
**Date of Birth :** 16th April 1976  
**Civil Status:** Married

**Educational Qualifications:**

- 1. Year 10 School Certificate - Randwick Girls' Technology High School, Sydney, Australia**
- 2. Advanced Level Examination, Visakha Vidyalaya, Colombo 5 – 1995**
- 3. B. A. (Hons.) Political Science & International Relations Miranda House College, University of Delhi, India (1996 – 1999)**
- 4. Postgraduate Diploma in International Affairs, Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies, Colombo (1999 – 2001)**

**Dissertation Topic:**

**Indo Pakistan Nuclear Policies and its implications on Regional Security**

- 5. Professional Development Course at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy New Issues on Security Policy (NISC), Geneva, Switzerland**

The NISC is a Professional Training Course addressing the main challenges facing global peace and security, and to search for effective responses to these challenges. This course aims to prepare participants for enhanced policy planning, decision making and practical implementation in a range of complex and interlinked peace and security situations. It also aims to deepen understanding of the salient and interlinked challenges of peace and security in today's complex environment, within a framework of human and

state security and develop participants' capacity and skills to respond more effectively, cooperatively and compassionately to these security challenges as policymakers and practitioners. I received a Switzerland Government Scholarship to undertake this study.

## **6. Multilateral Conference Diplomacy, United Nations Institute of Training and Research, Geneva, Switzerland**

The course includes four interactive training modules, defined as follows:

- Module 1: Introduction to the World of Multilateral Conferences
- Module 2: The Formal and Informal Processes of Conferences
- Module 3: Negotiation and Decision-making
- Module 4: Preparing for an International Conference

Course objectives were to identify how conferences unfold; Name the rules of procedure and their value in advancing delegate objectives; Explain the importance of informal consultations; Use appropriate language; Detect and incorporate other delegations' strategies.

## **7. Master of Philosophy – The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, Australia (2012 - 2014)**

The Masters of Philosophy award consisted one and two years of full-time research to complete. The major component of a research program was a substantial written work known as a thesis, which investigated a particular subject or issue. As a research student I worked with increased independence, under the direction of an academic supervisor or a supervisory panel of academic staff. This award was conducted in English and was delivered principally on the basis of a research thesis comprising of original written work of 60,000 words. (<http://www.anu.edu.au/study/study-options/master-of-philosophy-mphil>) The programme was undertaken with an Australia Government Scholarship (Ausaid) offered in 2011. In this programme I carried out a research project on the following topic;

**Thesis Topic –**

***Civilian Women and Female Ex-Combatants in Sri Lanka: Challenges of Transitional Justice***

**Abstract**

**Civilian Women and Female Ex-Combatants in Sri Lanka: Challenges of Transitional Justice**

With the end of the three decade long conflict between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Government Security Forces in 2009, the population of civilian women and female ex-combatants in the North and East which comprised the majority of the total Sri Lankan population were faced with post conflict issues that created obstacles to restoring their lives. The Panel of Experts appointed by the Secretary General of the United Nations for Sri Lanka asserted that the Government of Sri Lanka should implement a transitional justice program as part of post conflict peace-building. However, during the process of implementation, the idea and practice of transitional justice was challenged by the socio-cultural system in the North and East of Sri Lanka. This thesis examines the nature of tensions that arise between the main stakeholders of transitional justice, i.e. civilian women and female ex-combatants, and the sociocultural system that exists in North and East of Sri Lanka.

In this thesis, I argue that transitional justice for Sri Lanka should look into the socio-cultural norms that pose an obstacle to the implementation process. As much as the two concepts of restorative and retributive justice are in tension with each other, during the implementation process, transitional justice was further challenged by different post conflict contexts, and sociocultural systems within which civilian women and female ex-combatants live. Through employing selective comparison of transitional justice processes in others post conflict contexts, this thesis explores the feasibility of combining and sequencing transitional justice mechanisms in Sri Lanka to adopt a justice process which goes beyond retribution. It also assesses the possibility of combining Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Programmes (DDR) for ex-combatants with transitional justice mechanisms to ascertain the feasibility of such an approach for Sri Lanka. In order to cement my findings, data collected during fieldwork interviews with civilian women and female ex-combatants in the North and East of Sri Lanka in early 2013 are utilised to make a clear distinction between the transitional justice policy proposed by the United Nations and the Government approach. This study contributes to the transitional justice Scholarship as a critique of its application in the unique post conflict context of Sri Lanka, while also assessing the role of women within transitional justice mechanisms, while taking into account the civilian women and female ex-combatants.

**My MPhil Thesis is available at:**

**<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/118637>.**

## **8. Completed UNITAR Hiroshima Training Programme on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (30th May 2016 – 3rd June 2016)**

I have attended the UNITAR Hiroshima Training programme on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation held between 30 May – 3 June, 2016. The week-long workshop welcomed diplomats from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 5 different countries, including Bangladesh, Mongolia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, with 70% of the

participants were female. The participants examined the current state of the nuclear disarmament debate, while better understanding the structure and practice of negotiation at non-proliferation discourse events and further developing their negotiation and leadership skills. The workshop incorporated interactive lectures, real world simulation exercises, and group work, as well as several study tours including the Atomic-Bomb (genbaku) Dome, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, and the Radiations Effects Research Foundation. These study tours allowed participants to gain a deeper understanding of the experience of Hiroshima. In line with the objectives of the workshop, by the end of the training, participants were able to:

- Describe the current state of the global nuclear debate, including key challenges and opportunities;
- Outline the state of the nuclear debate in an Asian context;
- Discuss key negotiation approaches as utilised at international fora;
- Outline effective communication strategies;
- Compare differing personality profiles, including their own, for insight into personal leadership and communication strategies.

In addition, a Public Session was held on 1 June entitled "The UNITAR Hiroshima 88th Public Session: Towards a World without Nuclear Weapons". Featuring five of the Resource Persons and led by Ms. Mihoko Kumamoto, Head of UNITAR Hiroshima, through presentations and a panel discussion, the public session explored the current status of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation at the global and regional levels, as well as future perspectives. Over 100 members of the public attended, as well as several media outlets.

### **Professional Qualifications:**

#### **1. Research Assistant (Human Rights)– Social Scientists’ Association (SSA), Colombo (1999-2000)**

As a Research Assistant I was involved in the work of the publication “the Polity” which is the English language Journal of the SSA. Under the supervision of Prof. Jayadeva Uyangoda, Council Member of the SSA and Dr. Kumari Jayawardena, Secretary of the SSA. The journal is a platform for discussion and debate on democracy, human rights, devolution and peace, social and economic justice, gender equity and other current themes. I was also part of the “Pravada” magazine which is the Sinhala language journal of the SSA. I assisted the editors of Pravada i.e. Prof. Jayadeva Uyangoda, Dr. Kumari Jayawardena and Mr. Ranjith Perera. It provides a forum for discussion and debate on democracy, human rights, devolution and peace, social and economic justice, gender equity and other current themes. I was also assisting the editing of the Book on “No Bodies to Somebodies” written by Prof. Kumari Jayawardhane.

3. Coordinator for Anti LTTE Propaganda Programme, Policy Research & Information Unit, Presidential Secretariat, Colombo (2000 - 2001)
4. **Web Journalist – Official Website of the Government, Presidential Secretariat, Colombo (2000 - 2002)**

From the period 2000 – 2002 I was part of the Official website of the Government of Sri Lanka as writer of current affairs, development stories and defense stories and counter LTTE propaganda programme. I was also part of the editorial team that compiled the pamphlets to be sent to all Sri Lanka government organizations containing clear description of government policies. I also did content writing for the Official website and preparation of the Situation Report on a daily basis.

Further responsibilities included the following;

- Write and produce stories to deadline for both print and online platforms
- Source and create compelling content that is consumer relevant, drives subscriptions and serves our 'always be first' news agenda
- Deliver unique content, drive conversation and socially-engage our readers
- Manage media inquiries, proactively pitch stories, write and edit news releases and manage news events to achieve favourable and strategic media coverage.
- Negotiating and relationship building and communicating with diverse groups in the media sector
- Implementing media communication strategies
- Taking the lead and planning and executing communication, media relations and internal communications while performing strong communication and presentation skills along with a high level of creativity and accuracy
- Building professional relationships and partnerships through collaboration and consultation with internal and external stakeholders
- Attending Press Conferences, interviewing Ministers of the government to draw development stories

#### **4. Sri Lanka Foreign Service Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Colombo Sri Lanka (2003 - present)**

During my service I have worked as Assistant Director, Deputy Director for the South Asia & SAARC/ Middle East/ America/ West/United Nations, Human Rights & Conferences and Economic Affairs. Especially, monitoring Developments on the current situation in the countries concerned and providing a detailed report with observations and assessments on the political developments and its impact on the Sri Lanka foreign policy. These reports are submitted to the President, Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

#### **Foreign Postings:**

## **Second Secretary, Sri Lanka Embassy Tokyo (2004 - 2007)**

I was entrusted with the following areas i.e. Consular, Cultural, Information & Media, Education and Special Project of Sri Lanka promotion

### **Consular matters**

- Advise and assist Sri Lankan citizens - including but not limited to welfare and whereabouts cases, arrest and detention, deportation, hospitalisation, repatriation and death.
- Signing of consular documents once they are prepared by the Consular Officer.
- Attestation and authentication of certificates.
- Liaise with Colombo head office, local authorities and agencies in accordance with consular instructions.
- Visit Sri Lankan citizens incarcerated in Japanese prisons in accordance with consular instructions.
- Management of consular cases, including managing a database, in accordance with consular instructions.
- Execute notarial acts within Sri Lankan government requirements.
- Respond to general enquiries on a range of issues including Births, Deaths and Marriages and Australian State and Territory Driving Licenses.
- Respond to more complex enquiries relating to Consular matters.
- Assist with updating of travel advisories and consular contingency plans.
- Maintain the register of Sri Lankan citizens living in Japan.
- Process visa applications for tourist visas and journalist visas.
- Provide quarterly consular statistics.
- Act as Passports Officer in accordance with the Manual of Sri Lankan Passport Issue.

### **Cultural**

- As the focal point for Cultural Affairs I was entrusted with following responsibilities;
- Working towards increasing awareness of Sri Lankan culture with a view to promote tourism.
- Served as a Liaison between Sri Lanka and the Government of Japan or regional departments, the media, businesses, community agencies, artists and other entities and individuals who are important to the success of all of the Office of Cultural Affairs' programs.
- Assisting/coordinating Sri Lanka community organized events Sri Lanka - Related associations/NGOs & NPOs.

- Assisted the Sri Lanka Students Association and the Sri Lankan community living in Japan by organizing national cultural events to be celebrated in the foreign country and provide publicity through Japanese media.
- Making relevant arrangements to organise the Sri Lanka Cultural Heritage Exhibition in 2008.
- Organising, Coordinating the Cultural Programme of the Sri Lanka Festival 2005. 85 Japanese and Sri Lankan companies also participated at the event to promote Sri Lankan and Japanese products. Organising the Sri Lanka Festival 2005 in the areas of Cultural programme, Volunteer coordination, publicity material distribution other matter relating to logistical arrangements of the booth holders. During the Sri Lanka Festival. I have supervised 150 volunteers (Japanese University students) who assisted on the ground on the day of the event.
- In addition to the events mentioned above the Cultural Division supported events organised by other Sri Lanka /Japan Associations to promote Sri Lanka's culture in Japan research session organised by the Sri Lanka Students Association, and exhibitions and seminars organised by other Japan –Sri Lanka related associations.
- The Embassy regularly provides logistical support for such events and also provides display material, brochures to be distributed on such occasions. The Cultural Division also assisted several Sri Lankan Artists who are present in Japan to show their talents and Sri Lankan culture to Japanese people.
- Planned and implemented various programs and services of the Office of Cultural Affairs
  - Coordinate contracts with artists, installation and collections management
  - Liaise with other city or regional departments in order to ensure success in the coordination of art activities, in particular with the Sri Lanka festival in Tokyo
  - Assist with presentations and other outreach activities
  - Help to maintain records and lists of artists, arts organizations, community groups, funders and others to promote participation in and sponsoring of Office of Cultural Affairs programs

### **Information and media**

- Managing and maintaining databases, information catalogues and web resources
- For safe, secure and easily accessibility.
- Responsible for project managing the design, development and implementation of new information management systems from time to time, the website in particular.

- Main point of contact for other people who wish to access information. Responding to people's requests, picking out the right pieces of information for them, or training people how to use the organisation's internal databases and catalogues.
- Establishes, develops and maintains contact with media, professional and civic organizations and other special interest groups to promote agency programs.
- Prepares, edits, coordinates and distributes news releases.
- Prepares speeches, newsletters, brochures, web pages, broadcast scripts and other agency informational releases; coordinates major public relations or advertising campaigns for the Embassy.
- Develops special educational and promotional materials for presentation at exhibits, fairs, festivals, conferences and schools.
- Represents Sri Lanka at civic and professional groups.
- Collection of photographs of the important events to be covered by the Embassy
- Serves as project leader for special PR projects of an agency.
- Dissemination of General Information on Sri Lanka
- Dissemination of census and Statistic details on Sri Lanka to media organisations at their request.

## **Education**

- Advice and technical assistance in educational matters to Japanese nationals who wish to study in Sri Lanka
- Organizing seminars, briefings, meeting students relating to cultural, religious and educational matters.
- Attendance in Asian Ladies friendship Society meetings that works towards charity around the world.
- Making presentations on Sri Lankan culture and education, to High school visits
- Sri Lanka Forum which is an academic forum that was organized with the Sri Lankan academics living in Japan on topics that are relating to Japan Sri Lanka relations
- Assisting Sri Lankans to find placements at educational institutions in Japan.

## **Special projects**

- Representing Sri Lanka at functions/meetings and seminars organized by Japanese and other international institutions in Japan on the above fields.

## **First Secretary, Sri Lanka Embassy in Stockholm, Sweden (2008-2009)**

- Planning and organising publicity campaigns and communication strategies for Sri Lanka promotional activities
- Preparing and controlling the issue of news and press releases
- Collating public opinion from Swedish media on various political developments taking place in Sri Lanka, analysing the findings and planning public and political relations with Sweden
- Organising special events, seminars, entertainment, competitions and social functions to promote goodwill between Sri Lanka and Sweden
- Representing Government of Sri Lanka at various meetings, handling government delegations from Sri Lanka and arranging executive interviews with publicity media
- Attending social and other functions to promote the organisation
- Obtaining photographs and other illustrative material relating to tourism for country promotions and selecting the same for material to create favourable publicity
- Think tanks interactions, Culture, Education, Sri Lankan community activities, Sri Lankan children adoption matters, political affairs, and organising Sri Lanka promotional activities and all above media related work with all accredited countries to the Sri Lanka Embassy in Sweden i.e. Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia and Lithuania.

## **Charge d' Affaires a.i., Embassy of Sri Lanka Yangon, Burma (2010 – 2011)**

Heading the Mission promoting bilateral & trade relations handling 35 staff with issues on administration. Promoting Sri Lanka and Myanmar relations. Monitoring political developments in Myanmar and reporting the same to the GOSL on its strategic relevance to Sri Lanka. making statements on behalf of Sri Lanka, promoting Sri Lanka tourism, trade and investment. Representing Sri Lanka at various international fora. Attending to consular affairs and publicity matters.

## **Minister, Sri Lanka High Commission in New Delhi (at present)**

In charge of media, think tanks, Buddhist and cultural affairs, multilateral organizations, SAARC, BIMSTEC, IORA and other regional organizations, political affairs. In my capacity I am the Chief information Officer for the Sri Lanka High Commission representing the Government of Sri Lanka. I handle all media matters, queries, media

interviews for the visiting high level dignitaries such as the President Prime Minister and the Members of the parliament of Sri Lanka. I also organize Press Conferences for the visiting dignitaries after their official visits. I also update the twitter, facebook and the Official website and distribute press releases to the Media organisations in Sri Lanka. I also act as the Liaison officer for the Foreign Correspondents based in New Delhi. Among the many tasks I plan and organise publicity campaigns and communication strategies to promote Sri Lankan policies for economic development. I also advise executives on the public relations implications of their policies, programs and practices preparing and controlling the issue of news to the Indian media and Indian public. I also prepare press releases and organize special events within the tasks assigned to me especially culture, education, think tanks, conferences and the India Sri Lanka Foundation and the Kalinga Lanka foundation. Through such events I undertake image building for the government of Sri Lanka. I also undertake public opinion research, analyzing the findings and planning public relations and promotional campaigns organising special events, seminars, entertainment, competitions and social functions to promote goodwill and favourable publicity for Sri Lanka. I also arrange special interviews for the President and Prime Minister to be given to Indian media and coordinate all matters relating to the coverage. I also attend business, social and other functions to promote the organization. Furthermore I gather required photographs of all events that are organized to provide publicity in Indian media as well as Sri Lankan local media and international media when such high level visits take place.

### **Other Seminar & Conferences participated**

Represented Sri Lanka at the 10th Global Youth Exchange Programme, organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. The Symposium broadened the understanding of the general theme “World Peace in the 21st Century–Building Our Society through Synergy of Diversity” and, at the same time, the participants –built a dialogue and overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers. In addition, exchanges with local students and citizens enabled the participants to deepen their understanding of Japan. (2003)

- Participated at the Conference on “Rights, Rituals and Ritualism: The Universal Periodic Review”, Centre for International Governance and Justice, Regulatory Institutions Network, Australian National University which was held from 13-14 December 2012. This expert workshop assessed the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism of the UN Human Rights Council. The workshop considered the successes and limitations of the UPR process, as well as how it might be developed in the future

- Selected to present paper at the International Conference on Maneuvering the Maze: Understanding Justice in Conflicts, Center for Conflict Studies, Monterey Institute for

International Studies, California, and United States. In regard to this the Vice Chancellor Awards was provided to participate the Conference. (2013)

- Sri Lanka Representative at the **46<sup>th</sup> Programming Committee Meeting, SAARC Secretariat**, Kathmandu, Nepal (28th August–02nd September 2014)

#### **Annex I 4**

- Member of the Sri Lanka delegation, **Joint Working Group on Shipping**, Dhaka, Bangladesh (29th April-02nd May 2014)

- Sri Lanka Representative for the delegation, **8th SAFTA Ministerial Meeting** held in Thimpu, Bhutan. (July 2014)

- SAARC-ADB Workshop on **SAARC Study on Regional Economic Integration** (Second Phase) Thimphu, Bhutan on (21 July 2014).

- Participated at a Workshop on **International Humanitarian Law and Latest Developments**, organized by the ICRC, that was held at the BIDTI on 25th and 26th October 2014.

- Participated Workshop on “**Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation**”, organised by the UNITAR Hiroshima Office which was held from 30th May – 3rd June 2016.

#### **Awards/ Scholarships**

- The Indian Government Scholarship to undertake undergraduate studies (1996-1999)

- The Switzerland Government Scholarship to undertake Advanced Professional Training at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Geneva, Switzerland (2010)

- Australian Government Scholarship to undertake MPhil in International, Political and Strategic Studies at the Australian National University (2012-2014)

- **Vice Chancellor’s Travel Grant to attend the International Conference on Maneuvering the Maze: Understanding Justice in Conflicts**, Center for Conflict Studies, Monterey Institute for International Studies, California, United States. (2013)

#### **Research Paper Presentations**

1. Invited to presented a paper on “**SAARC Reforms and Observer Engagement: Possible SAARC- ASEAN Connectivity**” at the Fifth Republic of Korea-SAARC Partnership Seminar on “**New Cooperation for the Next Decade**” organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the ROK and the Korea Institute for International Economy

Policy (KIEP), Seoul, Korea December 8, 2014. Same lecture was carried out at the Bandaranaike Diplomatic Training Institute (BIDTI).

2. Paper presentation on ***“Transitional justice processes in South Asia: with special reference to Sri Lanka”*** at a Seminar organized by Dr. Cecilia Jacobs Lecturer, School of International, Political & Strategic Studies, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific, at the Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, Australia (25th September 2013).

3. Presentation on ***“Peacebuilding Process in Sri Lanka: achievements since 2009”*** at the ***“Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution” (ASIA1022) class for the Second Semester***, Undergraduate Students on 22nd August 2012. The Seminar was organized by the Dr Nicholas Farrelly, Course Convener, Research Fellow, School of International, Political and Strategic Studies, and Director, ANU-IU Pan Asia Institute, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific, The Australian National University.

4. Department of Political and Social Change Seminar on ***“Challenges of Implementing Transitional Justice for local contexts: Special reference to Sri Lanka”***, 4th December, 2012, PSC Reading Room, 4.27 Level 4 Hedley Bull Building, ANU on use of comparative analysis to assess the possibility of applying transitional justice to the Sri Lankan context while Attempting to counterbalance competing demands of different stakeholders when achieving gender justice.

5. Department of Political and Social Change Seminar (Post Fieldwork Seminar) on ***“Civilian women, female ex-combatants and the challenges of transitional justice in Sri Lanka”***, 18th October, 2013, PSC Reading Room, 4.27 Level 4 Hedley Bull Building, ANU on Localisation of transitional justice in the Sri Lankan context can bring productive solutions to the problems faced by civilian women and female ex-combatants on the ground. By using qualitative evidence gathered during fieldwork in Jaffna and Batticaloa this seminar will outline the challenges of applying transitional justice mechanisms with regards to women in Sri Lanka.

6. Presentation on ***“Factors that ramified Sri Lanka’s Foreign Policy: recent trends”*** with a special reference to the post conflict peacebuilding process in Sri Lanka and its impact on the ***Sri Lanka’s Foreign Policy for the*** annual Seminar for the Bangladesh Defence personal from the Bangladesh National Defence College held at the Republic Building, Ministry of External Affairs, Colombo on 12th September 2014.

7. Lecture delivered on ***“Regional Organisations and SAARC”***, Defence Services Command and Staff College, Sapugaskanda, Makola South.

8. Lecture delivered on “**Current Geo-Political realities and its impact on Sri Lanka’s Foreign Policy**” at the Officer Career Development Centre of the Sri Lanka Army in Buttala on 27th May 2016.

**Language ability** Japanese, Hindi