

## Why the Youth Dialogue?

With its experience over the past one year of work with a wide range of Overseas Sri Lankans spread across a number of host countries, the Office for Overseas Sri Lankan Affairs (OOSLA) noted that many of the adult generation of OSLs continue to maintain some form of regular contact with their country of origin, and the nostalgic memories are alive despite the circumstances that led for them to migrate. The link with their descendants or those youth belong to Y & Z Generations are a largely unexplored human resource that Sri Lanka needs to get connected, engaged with if it perceives a future that is inclusive, sustainable and truly empowered.

The Youth Dialogue 2024 is the first episode to be hosted by OOSLA, to provide an open, dynamic and trusted platform for both the OSL youth and their local counterparts to share experiences, understand challenges, and jointly explore the multifaceted narratives of the socio-cultural and ethno-religious diversity. OOSLA hopes that such connectivity shaped by youth for Youth ( #Youth4Youth) will enrich better understanding among communities, find out pathways for exchanging knowledge, and establish win-win partnerships that raise hope for a better and smarter Sri Lanka.

## What is the Main Focus?

As Sri Lanka is recovering from a difficult path of economic and financial downfall, its future prospective for economic growth and sustainable peace lies much on the collective efforts and shared responsibility across the Government mechanisms, as well as on all citizens. In this process, keeping phase with the rapidly changing digitalized world and understanding its dynamics is vital. Also, making the development process inclusive at all stages, particularly providing an opportunity for the Youth to be partners, letting their voices heard are the prime focus of the dialogue. Also, it envisages building connectivity and a trusted and transparent channel for the OSL Youth to connect with their country of inheritance/origin. The capacities and capabilities of the Y-Z generations need to be leveraged to catalyze Sri Lanka's path to become a smarter country in economic progress, in governance, and as a society.

## How does it happen?

**Theme: “Click to Progress: Youth for a Smarter Sri Lanka”**

### **Three Parallel Round Table sessions:**

1. **Smart in Economic Progress:** Encourage the participation and contribution of overseas Sri Lankan youth in supporting the development efforts of their country of heritage/origin, especially by applying digital solutions in areas such as investments, knowledge sharing, volunteerism and philanthropic work, economic empowerment of local youth through leadership /mentorship initiatives; ( Local youth in the age of 15-19 are encouraged to join here)

2. **Smart in Governing:** Facilitate an open exchange of views and understanding on root causes for current governance deficiencies, diversity, and its inherent challenges in Sri Lankan context. Ways to ameliorate the associated negative experiences to ensure non-recurrence and sharing views, actions to ensure transparency, through digital pathways that can support building a smart government;
3. **Smart Societies:** Strengthen the collaboration and partnership between, the youth within the 23 Government Stakeholders of OOSLA, the civil society organizations working on Youth, young academics in universities & higher education institutions, and other private sector youth actors, the UN country teams working on youth, and OSL youth in advancing a sustainable dialogue for peace, coexistence, empathy and solidarity that leads to a reconciled and smartly connected society.
4. **TED talks to inspire at the Opening Plenary, Round Table Outcomes commented by the Closing Plenary participants.**

## How to Participate?

Participants in the age cohort of 15-40 are invited to register online via OOSLA web ([www.oosla.lk](http://www.oosla.lk)). It will be a paperless event held in Hybrid mode. Conducted in English ( with Tamil/Sinhala interpretation).

Inclusivity in participation (youth from Government, Non-Govt, Academia, civil society working on youth, UN, etc.)

Participating OSL Youth will be contacted for special offers for accommodation and local transport.

## What is the outcome?

1. Develop a platform for sharing experiences of OSL Youth to guide and support local youth to develop leadership and entrepreneurial skills, and to contribute to development using smart digital pathways.
2. Open an opportunity for dialogue among youth on making governance transparent, and accountable, and identifying ways to contribute to develop national policies based on digital solutions that transform decision making and implementation practices.
3. Help build robust networking bridging the OSL and Local youth, for better understanding for inclusive, just and peaceful societies for sustainable development.
4. Gather inputs from youth for developing the ‘OSL engagement policy’ of OOSLA,
5. Develop an Action Plan for 2025-2030 to implement the outcomes of the Dialogue.