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SRI LANKA SUPPORTING REGIONAL GOVERNANCE PROGRAM (SuRG)

APRIL–JUNE 2009 QUARTERLY REPORT

AUGUST 2009

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APS	Annual Program Statement
BPA	Business for Peace Alliance
CEaT	Community Empowerment and Transformation
CLG	Commissioner for Local Government
COP	Chief of Party
CORE	Connecting Regional Economies Program
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka
HRD	Human Rights Defender
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
LA	Local Authority
MPA	Muslim Peace Assembly
MSI	Management Systems International
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OLD	Official Language Department
PSM	Peace Secretariat for Muslims
RDA	Rural Development Authority
SLPI	Sri Lanka Press Institute
SL. R	Sri Lankan Rupee
SSA	Social Science Association
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
SuRG	Supporting Regional Governance Program
TA	Technical Assistance
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WRDS	Women's Rural Development Society

INTRODUCTION

In March 2008, ARD, Inc. was awarded Contract No. 383-C-00-08-000501-00 to implement the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Sri Lanka Supporting Regional Governance Program (SuRG). The three-to-five-year initiative was designed to build on USAID/Sri Lanka's democracy and governance efforts to address development needs resulting from the ongoing conflict. The program supports regional governance in the Eastern province and Polonnaruwa District by focusing on four program components (social equity, local governance, community empowerment and transformation, and open dialogue) with intertwining activities that reinforce governance improvements around the betterment of human and community security.

This report covers the period from April 1–June 30, 2009, and details progress on contract implementation activities and management and administration. Highlights for the quarter include:

- A grant for SL Rs. 5,512,685 awarded for legal assistance.
- A grant for SL Rs. 9,540,568 awarded to for the “Ananagu Women with Mysterious Powers” project.
- Ninety-one concept papers from organizations based in the Eastern province or Polonnaruwa were submitted and reviewed in response to an Annual Program Statement (APS) distributed last quarter.
- Representatives from 17 organizations which submitted concept papers in response to the APS participated in 1 of 2 proposal development workshops.
- SuRG working groups were formed in each of the 11 SuRG partner Local Authorities (LAs) to coordinate and lead SuRG activities in the LA.
- The Peace Secretariat for Muslims set up Youth and Women's Forums in each of their five regional Muslim Peace Assemblies (MPAs).

I.0 CONTRACT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

I.1 ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT

SuRG activities in this quarter were largely focused on review of concept notes submitted in response to the Annual Program Statement (APS) disseminated last quarter. The APS targeted NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), professional or trade associations, Chambers of Commerce, trade unions, religious institutions, cooperative societies, and other civil society organizations (CSOs) with headquarters in the Eastern or North Central provinces to implement programs that advance SuRG objectives and complement SuRG activities. Grants of between SL Rs. 500,000 and 3,500,000 will be awarded for projects of up to one year in duration.

Ninety-one concept notes were received from NGOs, Chambers of Commerce, private companies, and government organizations. Two proposals from government organizations and one from a Colombo-based organization were deemed ineligible and not reviewed. Concepts were submitted in Tamil, Sinhala, and English and reviewed in the language submitted. The SuRG technical review team recommended 24 concept notes be invited to submit full proposals, including seven organizations that had submitted concept notes earlier and attended a SuRG proposal development workshop.

The table below shows the number of concept papers reviewed and recommended by district.

Concept Papers Received and Recommended by District		
District	Number Received	Number Recommended
Ampara	22	6
Batticaloa	25	5
Trincomalee	29	7
Polonnaruwa	15	6
Total	91	24

Representatives from organizations that submitted concept papers recommended to proceed in the grants cycle were invited to participate in a proposal development workshop held two weeks prior to the deadline for submission of a full proposal. Two five-day residential workshops were held in the quarter, one in Sinhala and one in Tamil. Both workshops were tailor-made and delivered for SuRG by MDF South Asia. SuRG technical staff participated in both workshops to ensure that the content addressed SuRG, ARD, and USAID priorities, policies, and requirements. Workshops covered the full project cycle, including problem statements, logframe analysis, developing and designing activities, monitoring and evaluation, and finance and budgeting.

Following the workshops, SuRG received 24 proposals. The proposals were submitted in the language of choice of the applicant. All Sinhala and Tamil proposals were then translated into English. SuRG senior technical staff and the Chief of Party (COP) reviewed all 24 proposals. They were reviewed in the language written by those staff who read that language and in translation by the remaining staff. All proposals from Trincomalee and Polonnaruwa were reviewed by technical staff from the Trincomalee office. All proposals

from Batticaloa and Ampara were reviewed by technical staff from the Ampara office. The review committee will meet the first week of the next quarter. The table below shows proposals received by SuRG component and district.

Proposals Received and Recommended by SuRG Component and District	
SuRG Component	Number Received
Social Equity	2
Community Empowerment & Transformation	15
Local Governance	3
Open Dialogue	4
Total	24
District	Number Received
Ampara	6
Batticaloa	5
Trincomalee	7
Polonnaruwa	6
Total	24

I.2 SOCIAL EQUITY

The SuRG Social Equity team focused its efforts this quarter on selection, development and monitoring of grant (through the APS and outside) activities.

I.2.1 Grants and Subcontracts

Awards were made for the following social equity activities this quarter:

- ARD005 – Legal Assistance Programme

In May, a grant was awarded for SL Rs. 5,512,685 to support legal assistance. Since the program started, the partner completed six Fundamental Rights cases and continues to appear before the high and magistrate courts to manage its ongoing caseload.

SuRG’s partner continued its work on the “Analysis of the Judicial/Prosecutorial System Regarding the Right to Life/Liberty in Sri Lanka” project and submitted an interim report analyzing 53 unreported judgments of the Supreme Court in respect to the right to be free from arbitrary arrest and detention (Article 13(1) and (2)) delivered by the Court from 2000-2007. The report also examines a further 19 reported judgments in order to present a comprehensive picture of the Court’s response to the protections of life and liberty during this period. Fifty-three judgments (reported and unreported) of the Supreme Court have been analyzed in respect to the constitutional right to liberty. Where habeas corpus is concerned, more than 182 judgments/bench orders have been analyzed. In addition, 24 briefs/interim inquiry orders of the Provincial High Court of Jaffna have been examined. The rest of the High Courts in the North and East will be left for the Final Report. The partner has been granted a no-cost extension until the end of December to complete its research, analysis, peer review, and advocacy plan.

Another SuRG partner continued its “Support for War-Affected Widows and Human Rights Education in Trincomalee District” program that provides assistance to 30 women, including monthly support meetings and livelihood assistance.

The partner’s Human Rights Education component concluded one semester of the training. This quarter’s sessions covered Sri Lankan Constitution and Court System; Personal Laws in Sri Lanka with a Human

Rights Perspective; Convention on Disappearances; Women Rights; Internally Displaced Person (IDP) Rights; Arrest, Detention, and Torture and the Torture Convention; and Religious Freedom.

Throughout the quarter, the Social Equity team continued to explore relationships and potential support for a range of organizations in the Eastern province as well as national human rights programs.

I.3 COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATION

I.3.1 Grants

In June, a grant of SL Rs. 9,540,568 was awarded for the “Anangu Women with Mysterious Powers” program. The program promotes women’s participation in local development and governance and seeks to bring women together to define and advocate for their issues collectively. Through the project, the partner will provide technical assistance, training and support for 110 WRDSs based in Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Jaffna, and Puttalam districts. These 110 membership groups include approximately 20,000 women from all three ethnic groups. Anangu will empower WRDS members by focusing on their capacity to manage and administer the WRDS in accordance with government stipulations and standards and to understand and identify, advocate for and address key issues of concern to them and their community. In essence, implementation will include training, facilitating study circles on gender and other priority issues and as local action groups, conducting legal awareness-raising sessions, organizing film screenings and discussion sessions, organizing special commemorative events, bringing together district WRDSs under one umbrella, and organizing exchange visits between WRDSs. The partner will also increase WRDS member knowledge of local government and how it works, and will support the engagement of target WRDSs with four LAs in Batticaloa.

The SuRG Community Empowerment and Transformation (CEaT) team continued throughout the quarter to work closely with potential partners from the East to help them develop activities and concept notes for community empowerment and reconciliation programming. The CEaT team worked closely with MDF on the development and delivery of the Proposal Development Workshops conducted for representatives of the organizations invited to submit a proposal under the APS (see Section 1.1 above for details).

The CEaT team continued to work with Colombo-based organizations as well, providing ongoing technical assistance to the BPA and support to the Social Scientist Association. CEaT has been helping both organizations to develop a small grant proposal. As part of the process, both organizations were invited to participate in the SuRG Proposal Development Workshop organized for potential APS partners. After the workshop, both organizations resubmitted their proposals for funding in the next quarter.

I.3.2 Peace Secretariat for Muslims

SuRG supported an orientation workshop for the PSM MPA members, regional staff members, and head office staff. The three-day residential program provided the PSM and MPAs an opportunity to review the plans for the PSM’s SuRG-sponsored “Building Muslim Consensus” program, assess the current working context, and prepare action plans to address issues in light of the Government of Sri Lanka’s (GOSL) recent military victory over the LTTE. In addition, the participants developed an implementation plan for youth, women, and inter-community forums; agreed on a common quarterly report format; and a detailed meeting schedule for the upcoming quarter.

The PSM held 13 monthly MPA meetings this quarter. Each MPA appointed subcommittees and identified members for youth, women, and inter-ethnic forums. Youth and women's forums were formed in all five regional MPAs. Local advocacy issues were identified and actions initiated.

I.4 LOCAL GOVERNANCE

SuRG continued work with its 11 LA partners this quarter, including setting up working groups in each LA as coordinating bodies for SuRG activities, organizing language training for elected officials and staff, and developing training, at the request of the Chief Secretary and the Commissioner of Local Government (CLG) of the Eastern Provincial Council, in participatory planning and budgeting for staff and elected officials of all 36 Pradeshiya Sabhas in the Eastern Province.

I.4.1 Partner Working Groups

Working groups of up to 15 members, including key staff and elected members from each SuRG partner LA, were formed this quarter. These working groups will be the primary coordinating body for all SuRG activities. They will meet with SuRG representatives each month to discuss ongoing activities and plans for upcoming events, opportunities, and challenges. These working groups will also lead outreach for SuRG activities.

I.4.2 Language Training

The SuRG local government team worked with the Official Language Department (OLD) this quarter to set up a Sinhala and Tamil language training program for key staff and elected officials in each of SuRG's 11 partner LAs. The 108-hour official OLD program will be conducted by teachers approved and trained by the department and selected from within, where possible, the LA. The course will be held twice a week for two hours per session. Participants will be eligible for OLD exams that will then qualify the government officers for benefits.

Early next quarter, SuRG will work with partner working groups to select candidates for teachers who will be interviewed and selected by the OLD. A training of trainers course will be held to certify the selected teachers, and training will begin next quarter.

I.4.3 Participatory Planning and Budgeting Training

The CLG and Chief Secretary of the Eastern Province requested SuRG organize training on medium-term participatory planning and budgeting for representatives of all 37 Pradeshiya Sabhas in the province. The request was to help prepare LAs for an upcoming World Bank project that will provide significant funds for Pradeshiya Sabhas in the North and East. Qualifying criteria for the World Bank funds include participatory planning and a development plan in place. After meeting with the World Bank representative in charge of this program and identifying technical trainers, SuRG agreed to host the training. Two four-day residential training sessions conducted by EML Consultants and based on the Participatory Planning and Budgeting for Local Authorities module developed under the USAID-funded Transparent Accountable Local Governance Program are scheduled to take place in August.

I.5 OPEN DIALOGUE

The 17 SuRG scholarship recipients attending the Sri Lanka College of Journalism Diploma Programme 2009 are all on track to complete the classroom portion of their program and will begin internships with print, radio, and television in the coming quarter.

I.7 WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY

During this quarter, SuRG initiated development of programs in the North. The emphasis and priority for donors in the North is the humanitarian crisis around the care and well-being of the almost 300,000 new IDPs. Beyond basic needs, documentation (including birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates, and National Identity Cards) for the people of the North is critical. Without these papers, people lose their right to citizenship and to claim their rights, property, and compensation for loss of property and life. Attempts are currently underway by a small number of NGOs to support efforts at documentation but are nowhere near the level needed to address the problem. This is a problem of both access and space to operate, and of resources (human and financial). SuRG has had preliminary discussions with Sarvodaya regarding support for their efforts to provide documentation to IDPs in Menik Farm and with NRC regarding support for their efforts to provide documentation to resettled IDPs in Mannar and Vavuniya.

Local elections for the Jaffna Municipal Council and the Vavuniya Urban Council are scheduled to be held on August 8. SuRG initiated discussions to support monitoring of these elections with the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence, the Centre for Free and Fair Elections, and People's Action for Free and Fair Elections.

2.0 MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

In June, USAID sent ARD a modification of Section C and F of the project contract and requested ARD submit a budget realignment to address the proposed changes in activities and operations. ARD submitted its proposed budget, suggestions for adjustments in Section C, and a candidate for Deputy Chief of Party as indicated in the modified Section F at the end of June. Changes in activities will be implemented once the modifications and realignment are signed into the contract.

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