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The Constitution of the Tamil Progressive Alliance

WHEREAS the Democratic People's Front, the Workers National Front and the Up-Country Peoples' Front have decided to function as a Political Alliance under the name of the Tamil Progressive Alliance;

AND WHEREAS these three parties now wish to solidify their alliance through the registration of the Tamil Progressive Alliance as a single political party;

AND WHEREAS this Constitution shall also constitute a solemn agreement underlying such alliance:

THE TAMIL PROGRESSIVE ALLIANCE gives itself this new Constitution.

1. Identity and Formation

- a. The name of the party shall be known as the "Tamil Progressive Alliance" (also TPA), in Tamil as and in Sinhalese as
- b. The annual foundation day of the TPA shall be the 3rd day of June;
- c. The relevant office bearers shall forthwith seek recognition of the TPA as a political party with the Elections Commission and are hereby authorized to do all such steps as are necessary in that pursuit.

2. Political Objectives and Direction

- a) The TPA will work to strengthen the multi ethnic and multicultural identity of Sri Lanka by adhering to and fostering Sri Lankan identity by considering ethnic, linguistic and religious diversities as our national strength.
- b) We will promote peace and harmony in the country.
- c) TPA will adhere to the constitution of the country and promote equality by respecting the distinctive language, culture and religion of the different communities.
- d) TPA is a secular front and respects the rights of individuals to follow their own religious without let or hindrance.

- e) National political unity encompassing the ideals of sharing of political power, devolution administrative power, territorial integrity of the country, equality between Sinhala and Tamil languages and acceptance of English as a link language.
- f) National socio-economic equality encompassing the ideals of social democracy with emphasise on the subjects of educational service, health service, public transport service, electricity service and water supply service.
- g) National social unity by ending the isolation and marginalization of any social segment from the national mainstream of the nation.
- h) Social justice by the implementation of affirmative action plan for under-developed and marginalised sections of the Sri Lankan society
- i) A true social and territorial democratic representative system doing away with over and under representation at all levels of governance
- j) A socio-economic system based on competitive market economy and nationalisation of natural resources.

3. Membership

- a. Individual Members: New members may be accepted provided they have no connection to another party other than the founder members of the TPA or unless otherwise decided by the Politbureau. Terms and conditions of acceptance of individual members will be decided by the Politbureau from time to time.
- b. Institutional Members: Any institution, political party, trade union, social or civil organization sharing the political objectives and direction of the TPA may obtain Institutional Membership upon application to and approval by the Central Committee with at least a two-thirds majority of all those present at the relevant meeting. No Institutional Member of the

TPA shall be a member of another political alliance while holding TPA membership, without the prior approval of the Central Committee with at least a two-thirds majority of all those present at the relevant meeting.

- c. Any person who in any way consents to be nominated by the TPA to contest any election or consents to be otherwise appointed to any elected body in Sri Lanka conducted by the Elections Commission and all those who accept nomination shall be deemed to be **individual members**.
- d. No individual expelled from another alliance party can be offered membership.
- e. Acceptance of other like minded parties
Acceptance of other like minded parties or individuals in to the Alliance may be considered by the Politbureau on the basis that :
 - (i) They subscribe to our policies
 - (ii) Individuals would become entitled to hold any office bearers positions only if agreed to by 2/3rds of the Politbureau.
 - (iii) They would subscribe to observe the rules and conditions of the party and strictly follow its Constitution.
 - (iv) The application of the member party is accepted by 2/3rds of the Central Committee who recommend the acceptance to the politbureau who must also accept the application by a 2/3rd majority.
 - (v) A suitable Memorandum Of Understanding to be drawn up with the applicant if accepted.

4. **Party Structure** :There shall be a Politbureau, Central Committee, Standing Sub Committees and a National Conference.

5. **Politbureau** : There shall be a Politbureau which shall be the ultimate decision and policy making body of the party. Its decisions shall be final within the party. All members and bodies within the TPA shall be bound by the decisions of the Politbureau in respect of party affairs, and the Politbureau and shall comprise the following:

- i. All those who are members of Parliament;
- ii. Four member appointed by the Leader;

- iii. Two members appointed by the leader of each constituent member of the Tamil Progressive Alliance;
- iv. Two members appointed at a General Meeting of the Central Committee;
- v. The Central Committee shall also when a vacancy arises appoint one member of the Politbureau as Leader of the Party, which person shall Chair the Politbureau;
- vi. The Central Committee shall also at each Annual General Meeting of the Central Committee appoint the following Office Bearers other than the Leader who shall be the Chairperson from among the members of the Politbureau for the following year:
 - i. Deputy Leaders who are for the time being leaders of the respective parties of the founder members, but if the Leader is from a founder member, then only two shall be appointed;
 - ii. A General Secretary;
 - iii. A National organiser;
 - iv. A Financial Secretary;
 - v. A Deputy General Secretary.
- vii. The Politbureau may, in writing, delegate any of its powers or functions to the General Secretary or any Standing Sub-Committee.
- viii. The quorum for all meetings shall be at least nine.

The General Secretary should not hold any membership in Parliament, Provincial or Local government.

6. Central Committee

- (i) There shall be a Central Committee comprising *ex officio* and appointed members as hereinafter provided;
 - a. The *ex officio* members shall be:
 - i. The Leader **who shall also chair the Central Committee;**
 - ii. All **other office bearers** of the **Politbureau;**
 - iii. All members of Parliament returned and/or otherwise appointed and/or nominated to Parliament by or under the Party;

- b. The appointed members shall be:
 - i. Ten Individual Members of the Party appointed by the Leader, three of whom shall be women, and three others of those ten appointed by the Leader, at least three of those appointed shall at the time of appointment be below the age of 35;
 - ii. Ten Individual Members of the Party appointed by the Politbureau, three of whom shall be women, at least three of these others who at the time of appointment shall be below the age of 35;
 - iii. Five Individual Members of the Party elected by the National Conference at an Annual Conference.
Provided that the Members of the first constituted Central Committee shall be appointed by way of consensus by the General Secretaries of the Democratic People's Front, the Workers National Front and the Up-Country Peoples' Front.
- c. The term of office of appointed members of the Central Committee shall be **for three years**).
- d. The Central Committee shall meet **at least** bi-monthly and the quorum for such meeting shall be twenty.
- e. The meeting scheduled for July of every year shall be the Annual General Meeting of the Central Committee at which the Committee shall appoint members to the Presidium in terms of Article 5(iii).
- f. The Central Committee shall have the power to remove any Member of the Politbureau including the Leader of the Party from leadership at a monthly meeting of the Central Committee provided such removal is approved by two-thirds of the membership of the Central Committee whether present or otherwise, following a motion being presented to that effect.

7. Sub Committees

- a. The Central Committee shall appoint individual members of the Party to the following sub-committees as and when vacancies occur. For avoidance of doubt, the Central Committee shall have full power and authority to change the composition and appoint and remove any person from any sub-committee without adducing reasons therefor in the course of the year. The Sub-Committees shall be:
 - a.1. Membership
 - a.2. Finance
 - a.3. Media Relations and Propaganda
 - a.4. Housing
 - a.5. Education

- a.6. Health
- a.7. Investment
- a.8. Political - interparty - relations
- a.9. Trade Union Liaison
- a.10. Fund Raising
- a.11. Communication
- a.12. Administration including responsibility for branch offices.

(b) Each sub committee shall have the following office bearers :

- i. Chairman appointed by Central Committee
- ii. Secretary appointed by the Sub Committee
- iii. Vice-Chairman appointed by the sub committee

provided that the Central Committee shall be at liberty to appoint such number of such committees as it deems fit for such purposes as they deem fit, and appoint any individual Member of the Party to such Sub-Committees.

c. Each Sub-Committee shall consist of a minimum of 10 members two of whom shall be appointed by the leaders of each founder member and a maximum of 15 members; (no individual other than the General Secretary or Assistant General Secretary **of the Party** shall serve on more than three sub-committees at any given time)

- ix. d. The Sub-Committees shall be empowered to recommend any measure to the Central Committee or Politbureau for consideration and implementation.
- x. E. Any office bearer, the Politbureau or the Central Committee may delegate any one or more of his and/or her and/or its functions to a Sub-Committee in writing, subject to the approval and ratification of the Central Committee.

b. National Conference

- i. There shall be a National Conference comprising all individual members and one representative of each institutional Member;
- ii. The National Convention shall be convened annually by the General Secretary in June of every year but not after the last Friday of such month and shall be chaired by the Leader of the Party;
- iii. Every Individual Member shall be entitled to be present and participate at the National Convention **and** shall be permitted to vote;

- iv. The National Conference shall elect members to the Central Committee from among names nominated by Institutional or Individual Members;
- v. Where a vacancy for an appointed member of the Central Committee arises, the General Secretary of the TPA shall inform all Institutional and Individual Members of the same and shall seek written nominations from all such Members

c. Election and Terms of Office

- i. A vacancy shall arise in the case of members of the Politbureau, Leader of the Party, other Office Bearer or Central Committee in the following circumstances:
 - i. The termination of the term of office, where specified;
 - ii. Death;
 - iii. Resignation;
 - iv. Expulsion from the Party;
 - v. A declaration by a competent court that such person is of unsound mind **or** found guilty of criminal actions/frauds by a competent court.

Disciplinary Proceedings

- ii. Each Individual Member shall be liable to be disciplined in the event such person:
 - i. Acts contrary to or in disobedience of the decisions of the Politbureau or Central Committee;
 - ii. Brings disrepute to the Party;
 - iii. Is disloyal to the Party;
 - iv. Engages in conduct unbecoming of the Party or conduct in any way inconsistent with the political objectives and direction of the Party;
 - v. Casts or fails to cast a vote in Parliament, a Provincial Council or Local Authority in a manner inconsistent with or contrary to the Party Whip and/or the directions of the person leading the Party delegation in such body;
 - vi. Is engaged in corrupt practices.

- iii. The Politbureau shall have the power to initiate disciplinary proceedings against any Individual Member upon its own motion or upon the written recommendation by the General Secretary;
- iv. The Politbureau shall where it has decided to initiate disciplinary proceedings against any Individual Member appoint a Disciplinary Committee of not less than three and not more than five persons to inquire into charges formulated against such person by the Presidium, provided that the Presidium may request the General Secretary to formulate such charges in writing after a formal decision to initiate disciplinary proceedings;
- v. The Politbureau or the General Secretary as the case may be shall forward a charge sheet to the members of the Disciplinary Committee;
- vi. The Disciplinary Committee shall, after due inquiry, but not more than one month after the forwarding of the charge sheet, cause a Report to be forwarded to the Politbureau with its findings and recommendations;
- vii. **The Politbureau shall have the full power and authority to take a final decision with respect to disciplinary sanctions, which sanctions may include suspension from the Party for a defined period, expulsion from the Party, a prohibition on being nominated by the Party for any period, or a prohibition from participating in any meetings of the Party for any period;**
- viii. The decision of the Politbureau shall be final.

11. Latitude to Leaders

As far as possible, the six members of the Parliament including Ministers would jointly make important decisions if it were not possible to call a meeting of the Politbureau when important decisions had to be taken. If such a meeting was not possible, the Leader and Deputy Leaders, if any, would participate in the decision making. If that too was not possible, and if an immediate decision was necessary, the Leader would take the decision, subject to the Leader ensuring that the decisions taken were conveyed to the General Secretary immediately. The nature of the decisions taken and the circumstances in which

such decisions were made would be conveyed, in order that the politbureau may be kept informed immediately of the situation.

12. Amendments to the Constitution

This Constitution may only be amended upon approval by the Central Committee upon recommendation of any such amendment to the Central Committee by the National Convention or in a Motion submitted containing not less than 30 signatures of Individual Members of the Party, **or by a majority of the Politbureau.**

Where any such Amendment is recommended in writing, such amendment shall be placed before the Central Committee as a Resolution, and may be passed with a two-thirds majority of the Central Committee present and voting, **in order to take effect.**

13. Funds

- a. The Funds of the Party shall be deposited in a Bank nominated by the Central Committee;
- b. The Finance Secretary shall be responsible for the maintenance of all books of accounts and for preparing the statements of accounts of the Auditors and submission of such accounts to the Central Committee.

Approved at
Politbureau
meeting
17 March
2019.
C. Smith
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