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Official Languages Commission

Vision

To be the organization empowered to ensure implementation of the Official Languages Policy by all organizations providing services to the public.

Mission

To provide for the bilingual needs of the public through reviewing, monitoring, educating and advising on implementation of the Official Languages Policy.

Chairman's Message

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PART I

Annual Report for the year 2019

The Official Languages Commission (OLC) is a statutory institution established in compliance to the provisions contained in the Official Languages Act. No. 18 of 1991

01. Objectives

The general objective of Commission are as follows.

- (a) Recommend principles of policy, relating to the use of the Official Languages, and to monitor and supervise compliance with the provisions contained in Chapter IV of the Constitution ;
- (b) Take all such actions and measures as are necessary to ensure the use of the languages referred to in Article 18 of the Constitution (hereinafter referred to as “the relevant language”), in accordance with the spirit and intent of Chapter IV of the Constitution ;
- (c) Promote the appreciation of the Official Languages and the acceptance, maintenance, and continuance of their status, equality and right of use ; and
Conduct investigations, both on its own initiatives, and in response to any complaints received, and to take remedial action as provided for, by the provisions of the Act.

02. Key Tasks

Four key tasks are done by the Commission to fulfill above objectives.

- 1. Compilation of principals of policy
 - Consultation
- 2. Whether provisions contained in the constitution with regard to use of Official Languages are properly followed up by the state mechanism
 - Monitoring
- 3. With regard to status or use of the relevant languages
 - Education
- 4. Complaints with regard to violation of the language rights contained in the Constitution
 - Investigation

03. Organizational Structure

(a) The Official Languages Commission is appointed by His Excellency the President which consists with six members. One member is named as Chairman of the Commission. Chairman is the Chief Executive Officer of the Commission.

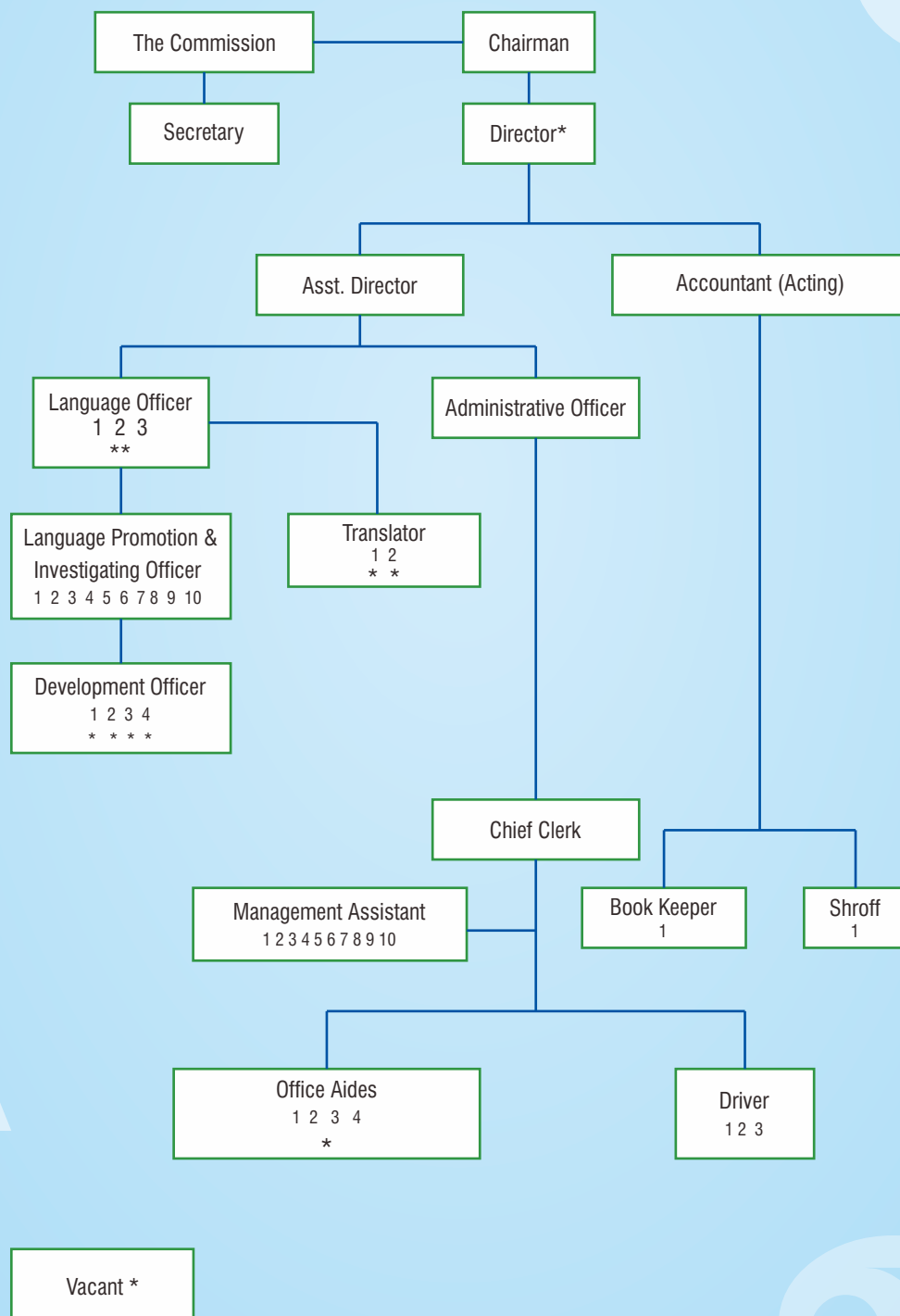
The Commission appointed on 04.04.2018 was consisted with following members.

1. Prof. Somasundaram Sandarasegaram	Chairman	From	01.01.2019 to 31.12.2019
2. Ven. Dr. Akuretiya Nanda Nayaka Thero	Member	From	01.01.2019 to 31.12.2019
3. Mr. Jeevan Thiyagarajah	Member	From	01.01.2019 to 31.12.2019
4. Mrs. Nanthini Vijayarathnam	Member	From	01.01.2019 to 31.12.2019
5. Mr. L. B. Kumudulal	Member	From	01.01.2019 to 31.12.2019
6. Mr. S. Mohideen	Member	From	01.01.2019 to 31.12.2019

Mr. W.A. Jayawickrama (Attorney-at-Law) was the Secretary (ex-officio) – Class I in Sri Lanka Administrative Service, for this period.

(b) The organizational structure as at 31.12.2019

The Commission





(b) The Staff

The Commission Staff as at 31.12.2019

Table No 1

Serial No.	Designation	Approved Cadre	Actual Cadre	Remark
1	Director	01	-	01 Vacant
2	Assistant Director	01	01	
3	Language Officer	03	01	02 Vacant
4	Administrative Officer	01	01	
5	Financial Officer	01	-	01 Vacant
6	Chief Clerk	01	01	
7	Language Promotion and Investigating Officer	10	06	04 Vacant
8	Development Officer	04	-	04 Vacant
9	Management Assistant	10	08	02 Vacant
10	Translator (Tamil/English)	01	-	01 Vacant
11	Translator (Sinhala/English)	01	-	01 Vacant
12	Translator (Sinhala/Tamil)	01	-	01 Vacant
13	Driver	03	02	01 Vacant
14	Office Aids	04	03	01 Vacant
	Total	42	23	19 Vacant

PART II

01. Language Audits

Language Audits is an activity related to the supervision task of the Commission. The Commission directly investigates with regard to implementation of the Official Languages Policy in Government institutions and issues recommendations in respect of the circumstances of non-compliance to the Official Languages Policy and, follows the implementation of said recommendations.

The Commission's language audit team consists with about six persons to which includes the Asst. Director or Language Officer, three Language Promotion & Investigating Officers, one Management Assistant and one Office Aids.

The team audits the relevant institution according to the dates scheduled. A questionnaire is used by the Commission to collect the data relating to the Official Languages Policy. The audit is conducted considering the information given through the questionnaire, according to the following criterions.

1. All name boards displayed for public within the office premises (name boards, information boards, instruction boards).
2. All documents used for public service
3. Awareness with regard to the Official Languages Policy
4. Officers' communication ability
5. Sinhala/Tamil language training courses
6. Officers' language proficiency
7. The website
8. Translations
9. Front office background
10. Special matters related to the institution (ex:- police stations –recording complaints, Registrar of births/marriages/deaths registrar – issuing certificates in official languages)

All non-compliances exists with regard to the Official Languages Policy will be identified at this observation and, recommendations to correct said non-compliances are issued to the relevant head of the institution. The said non-compliances should be corrected within 3 months and reported to the Commission. Table 2 contains the names of institution where the langue audits were conducted within this year.

Table No 2

Language conducted from
January to December 2019

S.No.	Venue	Date
1	Asiri Hospital	2019.01.23
2	Asha Central Hospital	2019.01.23
3	Kotagala Divisional Secretariat	2019.03.06
4	Kotagala Pradeshiya Sabhawa	2019.03.06
5	Nuwaraeliya Urban Council	2019.03.06
6	Nuwaraeliya Post Office	2019.03.06
7	Office of the Medical Officer of Health	2019.03.07
8	Police Station - Maradana	2019.06.18
9	Police Station - Maligawatta	2019.06.18
10	Police Station - Dematagoda	2019.06.18
11	Police Station - Kotahena	2019.06.19
12	Police Station - Mattakkuliya	2019.06.19
13	Police Station - Modera	2019.06.19
14	Police Station - Fort	2019.06.20
15	Police Station - Bambalapitiya	2019.06.20
16	Police Station - Wellawatta	2019.06.20
17	Police Station - Slave Island	2019.06.21
18	Land Registrar's Office - Colombo 07	2019.06.21
19	Port Police Station	2019.08.07
20	Police Station - Borella	2019.08.08
21	Police Station - Harahenpita	2019.08.08
22	Police Station - Mirihana	2019.08.09
23	Police Station - Wellampitiya	2019.08.09
24	Police Station - Thalangama	2019.08.09
25	Police Station- Dehiwala	2019.08.11
26	Police Station - Mount Lavinia	2019.08.11
27	Police Station - Kohuwala	2019.08.11
28	Police Station - Cinnamon Garden	2019.08.12
29	Police Station - Kirulapone	2019.08.12
30	Police Station - Kosgas Handiya	2019.08.12
31	National Hospital	2019.08.05
32	National Zoological Garden - Dehiwala	2019.08.06

S.No.	Venue	Date
33	National Eye Hospital	2019.08.15
34	Kalubowila General Hospital	2019.08.16
35	National Cancer Hospital	2019.08.19
36	Police Station - Muthur	2019.08.21
37	Police Station - Kinniya	2019.08.21
38	Police Station - Nilaveli	2019.08.21
39	Police Station- Kanagarayakulam	2019.09.18
40	Police Station- Omanthai	2019.09.18
41	Police Station - Palai	2019.09.18
42	Police Station - Kilinochchi	2019.09.19
43	Police Station - Ampara	2019.10.10
44	District Secretariat - Ampara	2019.10.09
45	Uhana Pradeshiya Sabhawa	2019.10.09
46	Ampara Post Office	2019.10.09
47	Police Station - Wellawatta (Proficiency in the second language)	2019.10.14
48	Police Station - Modera (Proficiency in the second language)	2019.10.14
49	Police Station - Dimbulapathana	2019.10.23
50	Police Station - Nanuoya	2019.10.23
51	Police Station - Thalawakele	2019.10.23
52	Police Station - Nuwaraeliya	2019.10.24



Language audit conducted at Maradana Police Station

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(b) Investigating of the railway announcements conducted in 2019

The Official Languages Commission investigates the railway announcements conducted in all railway stations without prior notice whether they are conducted in trilingual.

The Commission's language audit team consists with about six persons to which includes the Asst. Director or Language Officer, three Language Promotion & Investigating Officers, one Management Assistant and one Office Aids.

After investigating as aforesaid, the recommendations are issued to the relevant railway stations. Three months' notice is given to correct the railway announcements that are non-compliance to the Official Languages Policy.

Table No 3

Language audits conducted in railway stations

Date	Railway station
13.06.2019	From Colombo to Kandy
22.08.2019	Kantale



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02. Language Circles

The Commission has identified that encouraging school children regarding language education and use of language is a long term beneficial task toward implementation of the Official Languages Policy. In order to promote this, a circular to establish the language circles has been issued by the Official Languages Commission after having discussions with the Ministry of Education. Table No. 4 contains the number of schools participated these programmes. Three programmes were conducted in 2019 in Colombo, Polonnaruwa and Jaffna districts. A set of books was given by the Official Languages Commission, for the libraries of the schools took part in said programmes.

Table No 4

Schools programmes conducted by the Commission

S. No.	Programme	No. of Schools	Date
01	Language circle programme conducted in Kalutara district	49	2019.02.28
02	Language circle programme conducted in Nuwaraeliya district	45	2019.03.07
03	Language circle programme conducted at Co/Vivekananda College, Colombo 13, in respect of the 'Official Languages Week' (152 school children took part in the programme)	01	2019.07.02
04	Language circle programme conducted in Kilonochchi district	27	2019.09.19



Language circle programme – Kilinochchi district



03. Awareness Programmes

Awareness creation among the heads of government and semi-government institutions in Divisional Secretariat Divisions – 2019

Awareness creation among the heads of government institutions has been conducted by the Commission within this year, in Divisional Secretariat Division level. The awareness programmes were organized with the assistance of the Divisional Secretary. The ethnic ratio exists in the Division also was taken into consideration, in selecting the Divisional Secretariat Division to conduct the programmes.

The officers participate these programmes are made aware of with regard to the legal provisions relating to the Official Languages Policy and, the criteria used at a language audit. In concurrence to the awareness programme, a report containing the details of implementation of the Official Languages Policy is called from each head of the institution. A questionnaire prepared for this is used for above. Three months' time is given to submit this report to the Commission. Random samples from the institutions participated these awareness programmes are also selected for the language audits conducted in 2019. This will support to enhance the efficiency of the awareness programmes as well as the language audits. Table No. 5 contains the details of the awareness programmes conducted within this year.

Table No 5

Awareness creation among the officers in the government and semi-government institutions in Divisional Secretariat Divisions

S. No.	Venue	Date
1	Awareness creation among the heads of departments	2019.04.01
2	Awareness creation among the government and semi-government officers – National Transport Board	2019.07.30
3	Awareness creation among the government and semi-government officers in Trincomalee Divisional Secretariat Division	2019.08.22
4	Awareness creation among the government and semi-government officers in Ampara Divisional Secretariat Division	2019.10.10
5	Awareness creation among the government and semi-government officers in Walapane Divisional Secretariat Division	2019.10.24



Awareness creation programme among the heads of departments



Awareness creation programmes at Ampara Divisional Secretariat Division

04. Investigating Complaints

Special powers to investigate the complaints received in relation to the violation of the language rights have been vested to the Commission by the Official Languages Act. Investigating of such complaints is a key task of the Commission. Complaints are forwarded to the commission by following ways.

01. By letters
02. By attending to the Commission
03. Complaints published in the printed media
04. Via e-mail
05. Over the telephone
06. Complaint received to the call center No. 1956, maintained by the ministry.

Three hundred six (306) complaints had been received by the Commission within the year under review, out of which 212 complaints had been investigated. Following table contains few complaints investigated within this year.

Table No 6

Investigating of complaints received in 2019

S. No.	Complaint	Calling observations of the Commission and, issuing recommendations
1	The name of 'Banararanaike Memorial International Conference Hall' displayed in the main name board has written erroneously in Tamil language as "Sarvadesha".	The Director General of Banararanaike Memorial International Conference Hall has informed the Commission that the Tamil spelling errors in the relevant name board have already been corrected.
2	The leaflets relating to the providing of general insurance by the National Insurance Trust Fund Board, sent to Velvetighurai Urban Council situated in Jaffna area, where the majority is Tamil people, is only in Sinhala language.	The Chairman of National Insurance Trust Fund Board has informed the Commission that the relevant leaflets have already been translated into Tamil language.
3	There are spelling errors in the Tamil translation of the name of Koslanda Police Station, fixed near the entry road to said Police Station.	The Officer-in-Charge of Koslanda Police Station has informed the Commission that the Tamil spelling errors in the relevant name board have already been corrected.
4	There are spelling errors of the Tamil translation of the information displayed in a name board, fixed inside Bandaranaike International Airport.	The Chief of the airport has informed the Commission that steps have already been taken to correct the Tamil spelling errors in the relevant name board.
5	There are spelling errors in the Tamil translation of the department name, written in the main name board, fixed near the Department of Measuring Units, Standards and Services.	The Officer-in-Charge has informed the Commission that the relevant name board has already been re-arranged after correcting the Tamil spelling errors.

6	There are spelling errors in the Tamil translation of the main name board written as ' <u>De Zoysa Hospital for Women (Teaching)</u> ' fixed by said hospital.	The hospital Director has informed the Commission that the relevant name board has already been re-arranged after correcting the Tamil spelling errors.
7	The information contained in the forms, applications etc... issued by the Department of Health Services are only in Sinhala and English languages.	Necessary recommendations to prepare the relevant documents in trilingual, have already been issued.
8	There are spelling errors in the Tamil translation in the department name of the letter head, of the Department of Buddhist Affairs.	The Commissioner General of the Department of Buddhist Affairs has informed the Commission that the relevant letter head is not used by said institution.
9	There are spelling errors in the Tamil translation of the road name board written as 'Colombo Way Road' fixed near Wellawatta Beach Road belong to Dehiwala – Mount Lavinia Municipal Council.	The Municipal Commissioner has informed the Commission that the Tamil spelling errors in the relevant name board have already been corrected.
10	The information contained in the application prepared to obtain a new Assessment Number / New Estimate, issued to the public by Negombo Municipal Council are only in Sinhala language.	Observation pertaining to this have been called from the Municipal Commissioner. Necessary steps have already been taken to prepare the information contained in the relevant application, in trilingual.
11	There are spelling errors in the Tamil translation of the road name board written as 'Baudhaloka Mawatha' fixed by Kurunegala Municipal Council.	Observation pertaining to this have been called from the Municipal Commissioner. He has informed the Commission that the relevant name board has re-arranged after correcting its Tamil spelling errors.
12	There are spelling errors in the Tamil translation of Certain information contained in the application prepared to obtain the living allowance for disabled persons, issued by the National Secretariat for Disabled Persons.	The Director has informed the Commission that the relevant application has already been re-arranged after correcting its Tamil spelling errors.
13	The information contained in the Housing Application sent to the Muhudubadapattuwa Divisional Secretariat of Mulativu, by National Housing Development Authority to issue for public, are only in Sinhala language.	A setter calling observations pertaining to this has sent to the Chairman of said Authority. He has informed the Commission that the relevant Housing Application has already been prepared in both Sinhala and Tamil languages and, sent to all Divisional Secretariats in the Divisional Secretariat Division of Mulativu.
14	There are certain spelling errors in the Tamil translation of the information contained in the Personal Health Record, issued to the patients by the Government Hospital of Vavunia.	The hospital Director has informed the Commission that the spelling errors exist in the Tamil translation of the information contained in the Personal Health Record, issued by the hospital have already been corrected.