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Dabindu Collective
வியர்வை துளிகளின் கூட்டமைப்பு
Reg. No. G A 659

**Statement Condemning the Misrepresentation of Dabindu Collective**

The Dabindu Collective strongly condemns the statement made by Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) Hon. M.P Dayasiri Jayasekara in the Sri Lankan Parliament on 08 January 2026, under the protection of parliamentary privilege, which falsely, irresponsibly, and misleadingly misrepresented our organization, its mandate, and its sources of support.

Dabindu Collective has, for 41 years, lawfully and transparently carried out its mandate to promote and protect the rights of working women, particularly those facing exploitation, discrimination, and structural inequality. Our work is grounded in the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, national labour laws, and international human rights standards. We categorically reject the false and defamatory implication that Dabindu Collective functions as an organization serving only a particular community in a manner intended to discredit its legitimacy. Such statements amount to the deliberate dissemination of misinformation and undermine the constitutional principle of equality before the law.

The Dabindu Collective further strongly rejects the misleading assertion made in Parliament regarding our financial support, including references to funding allegedly received through the Grassrooted Trust, Think Equal, and the Grassrooted Fund. All financial assistance received by Dabindu Collective has been obtained lawfully, transparently, and in full compliance with Sri Lankan laws and regulatory requirements applicable to civil society organizations, including financial reporting and donor disclosure obligations. The public naming of donors in Parliament, accompanied by insinuations of impropriety, constitutes an attempt to delegitimize civil society work and create public suspicion without evidence or due process.

The use of parliamentary privilege to make unsubstantiated allegations whether regarding our mandate or our funding constitutes a serious abuse of constitutional safeguards designed to protect free legislative debate, not to shield misinformation or enable the targeting of human rights organizations. Parliamentary privilege cannot be used as a mechanism to evade accountability, incite discrimination, or intimidate civil society actors. Civil society organizations are protected under the fundamental rights framework of the Constitution, including the freedoms of speech, expression, and association. Attempts to publicly question the legitimacy of lawful funding sources threaten these freedoms and contribute to the shrinking of democratic and civic space.

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Throughout multiple national crises, Dabindu Collective has continued its work despite threats and intimidation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when grave violations occurred during quarantine processes and workers were subjected to ill-treatment at quarantine centers, Dabindu Collective publicly raised these issues in the interest of justice and human dignity. As a result, our officers were directly threatened, particularly by military personnel, including instances involving the Army leadership. At that critical time, civil society solidarity played a vital role in protecting human rights defenders. Even today, civil society organizations, movements, and progressive actors have a collective responsibility to stand in solidarity with institutions that work for justice, equality, and the protection of working women.

Sri Lanka has binding obligations under international instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), core ILO Conventions, and the UN Declaration on Human Rights, which explicitly recognize the right of organizations to seek, receive, and utilize resources for the promotion and protection of human rights. Attempts to stigmatize lawful civil society funding contradict these obligations and weaken democratic accountability. Efforts to conflate human rights work with moral panic, discrimination, or financial suspicion establish a dangerous precedent that places human rights defenders at risk and undermines the rule of law.

In light of the above, Dabindu Collective demands:

1. An immediate withdrawal of the misleading statements made in Parliament.
2. An end to the targeting, intimidation, and misrepresentation of civil society organizations and human rights defenders.
3. A reaffirmation by Parliament of its commitment to protecting constitutional freedoms and civil society space.

We call upon Members of Parliament, networks, civil society organizations, trade unions, and democratic institutions to uphold democratic norms, resist the misuse of parliamentary privilege, and stand in solidarity with organizations working for justice and equality. Dabindu Collective remains steadfast in its commitment to constitutional democracy, labor justice, gender equality, and fundamental rights. We will continue our work without fear or compromise, as we have done for over four decades.

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