



News & Views



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PRESIDENT AT THE UNGA

H. E. President Mahinda Rajapaksa in his address at the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on 23rd September stated that "it is necessary to have a spirit of openness and adaptability" to the fundamental and dramatic transformations taking place in societies all around the world.



While noting the urgency to nurture traditions and cultures against alien impositions the President expressed solidarity with the Republic of Cuba. President Rajapaksa, in addition, highlighted the necessity for the International Community to continue extending support to the African continent in these times of crisis.

Referring to the end of the conflict against terrorism in Sri Lanka, the President stated that the "battle for peace is every bit as important and difficult as the struggle against terror". He also made reference to the new mechanism used by terrorist groups; the use of front organizations to promote their clandestine propaganda. He emphasised the need for



organizations, whose duty is to protect the needs of the developing nations, “to be uniform, consistent and devoid of discrimination”.

At the end of three decades of war, the Government of Sri Lanka is now, focusing on development of zones affected by the conflict. With 95% of the IDPs resettled, demining of combat-zones, development of infrastructure and other economic activities over a span of 30 months is an indication of the government’s commitment to focus on economic development of the country.

President Rajapaksa, requested the international community to support the government on its mission to pursue reconciliation: with ‘home-grown solutions’ that may respond more positively to their needs, which are more suitable to the people of Sri Lanka instead of alien remedies.

In conclusion, President Rajapaksa, reminded the assembly the importance of maintaining social equilibrium at an international level.

Full text of the speech can be accessed following this link:

www.srilankahcottawa.org/index.php/HC/the-might-of-powerful-nations-cannot-prevail-against-justice-and-fair-play-president-at-unga.html



HIGH COMMISSIONER CALLS ON THE CANADIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

High Commissioner Chitranganee Wagiswara called on the Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird on 14th September 2011 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As this was the first meeting the High Commissioner had with the new Foreign Minister, she thanked the Minister for providing the opportunity to discuss important issues of interest to both countries. While acknowledging the long standing links between Sri Lanka and



Canada, the High Commissioner briefed the Foreign Minister on the post conflict development activities being undertaken in Sri Lanka following the defeat of terrorism in May 2009. The High Commissioner also

explained the initiatives taken by Sri Lanka on issues pertaining to consolidating peace and reconciliation and outlined the Government’s plans for the future. In this context, High Commissioner Wagiswara discussed the activities of the Sri Lankan Diaspora in Canada with the focus on the promotion of multiculturalism and integration.

High Commissioner Wagiswara also referred to the recent statement made by the Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper on the next Commonwealth Summit to be hosted in Sri Lanka in 2013. Clarifying Sri Lanka’s position, she stated that the Commonwealth Member States in 2009, at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting [CHOGM] held in Trinidad & Tobago decided to hold the 2013 Summit in Sri Lanka and therefore it would be unfair to reopen the issue and that the arrangements for hosting the summit in 2013 are already underway.

The possibility of arranging for a visit to Sri Lanka by a group of Canadian Members of Parliament was also discussed among other matters.

Mr. Kenneth Macartney, Director General South East Asia & Oceania (GSD) of the Department of Foreign Affairs & International Trade was also associated with the Foreign Minister at the discussion. The High Commissioner was accompanied by Mr. Sumith Dassanayake, Minister Counsellor of the High Commission.



INTERACTIVE SESSION ON "SECURING PEACE IN SRI LANKA"



Dr. SinhaRaja Tammita - Delgoda, an independent Researcher and Academic who was at the war front, was invited for an interactive session entitled "Securing Peace in Sri Lanka" with the participation of Senior Officials of the Canadian Government, Academics, Journalists and some members of the Sri Lankan Diaspora at the High Commissioner's residence on September 22, 2011.



Through his presentation, Dr. Tammita-Delgoda shared his experiences with the invitees on the last stages of the war. He has excellent credentials having followed his graduate, post-graduate and doctoral studies at prestigious universities in the UK. He is a well-recognized academic who was one of the select few permitted to proceed to the frontlines during the latter stages of the military action in Sri Lanka.

Following Dr. Delgoda's presentation, the High Commission organized a screening of clips of the Defense Ministry Documentary "Lies Agreed Upon" that depicts the LTTE's brutal acts of terror as well as footage of the humanitarian operation and interviews by former LTTE cadre, Tamil civilians, Government officials who served in the conflict affected areas etc.

Dr. SinhaRaja Tammita-Delgoda was visiting Toronto & Ottawa on the invitation of Sri Lanka United National Association of Canada.



HIGH COMMISSION PARTICIPATE AT THE OTTAWA MAYOR'S FUNDRAISING EVENT



The High Commission responding to the Ottawa Mayor His Worship Jim Watson's invitation, participated at the "Ottawa Cares: An Evening in Support of Famine Relief" organized by the City Of Ottawa to support victims of famine in East Africa. The region is currently experiencing the most severe food crisis in the last 30 years. Millions of people are severely affected and in urgent need of humanitarian aid.



INTERNATIONAL TEA CONVENTION, COLOMBO, SRI LANKA 1-3 FEBRUARY 2012

The Colombo Tea Traders Association in partnership with the Sri Lanka Tea Board will hold the Colombo International Tea Convention at the Cinnamon Grand Hotel, Colombo from 1-3 February 2012.

The year 2012 marks 145 year of the Sri Lanka (Ceylon) tea industry. To coincide with the Convention the following global tea related Conferences & Forums will also take place: 20th Session of Food and Agriculture Organization and the Inter Governmental Group on Tea and the International Tea Committee Producer/Consumer Members Forum 29th January 2012. For updated information/online registration visit www.ceylonteaevents.com. The deadline for early bird registration is 31st October 2011.



ICRC IN THE POST-CONFLICT AREAS

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Sri Lanka has been engaged in humanitarian services in the North during the conflict and continues to work in the post conflict needs in Sri Lanka. The ICRC has been providing outstanding services to the people in the north in order to upgrade their living conditions through economic, social, educational and cultural means. The ICRC continues to run its family visit programme in conjunction with the Sri Lankan Red Cross Society (SLRC), helping families by different means. They help people to keep in touch giving them travel allowances to visit their relatives. In the Vavuniya district, the ICRC and the SLRC are setting up a pilot project that will provide households to those who have been affected by the conflict with micro credit, vocational training or grants to help them to start their livelihood.



RISE IN COUNTRY'S AGED POPULATION

Sri Lanka's elder population has increased to four million or 18% of the total population during the past four decades. It is estimated that it will increase up to five million or 22 % of the total population by 2031. The average life expectancy of Sri Lankans have increased to 71 years during the past five decades.



RECORD CROWDS VISITING NAGADEEPA



It is reported that 195,971 pilgrims had visited the Nagadeepa temple situated in the Nainative island in the Northern peninsula in the month of August.

The Sri Lanka Navy had assisted the large number of pilgrims by systematically organizing the ferry services needed for sea transportation of pilgrims and, thereby, regulating the transport facilities as well as by providing much needed sanitary, welfare and security facilities for them.



SRI LANKA EX-COMBATANTS ON A FAMILIARIZATION TOUR IN THE SOUTH

Over 500 ex-combatants from North who were rehabilitated visited the south on a familiarization tour. These five hundred ex-combatants have gone back home to start a new life free of violence having undergone a



successful rehabilitation process under the government's rehabilitation program and after learning new skills.



UNICEF EXPANDS FAMILY REUNION PROGRAMME IN NORTH

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has expanded its project to bring together family members, who were separated during the last phase of the Humanitarian Operation. The programme now underway in the North and two districts in the East are now expanding it to cover the entire Northern Province and a part of the Eastern Province.

The UNICEF launched the programme in December 2009 in response to many requests to trace family members & relatives received since the conclusion of the conflict in May 2009.



NEW GARMENT FACTORIES IN VAVUNIYA



A programme had been launched to construct garment factories in the Vavuniya District to economically empower the war affected people, who have been resettled there. The construction of factories is underway in Vavuniya and Chettikulam areas at a cost of US \$ 25 million and US \$ 15 million respectively. The project is aimed at generating 1,000 direct employment opportunities for

both men and women and also a large number of indirect employment opportunities are expected to be generated. These factories will begin to function from April 2012.



FIRST WOMAN ATTORNEY GENERAL

Shanthy Eva Wanasundera, PC was sworn in as the 26th Attorney General of Sri Lanka on 12th September. She is the first woman Attorney General of Sri Lanka.



Shanthy Eva Wanasundera was born in Kurunegala. She joined the Attorney General's Department in 1979 as a State Counsellor. Subsequently, she served as the Senior State Counsellor, Deputy Solicitor General, Additional Solicitor General and Solicitor General. She also served as the first woman Senior State Counsellor, first woman Deputy Solicitor General, first woman Additional Solicitor General and the first woman Solicitor General. Eva Wanasundera has a Masters degree in Law from the University of Leicester, United Kingdom.



GERMAN TECH IN KILINOCHCHI

The government of Germany has agreed to establish a branch of the Ceylon German Technical Training Institute (CGTTI) in Kilinochchi.

The CGTTI is the foremost institute in Sri Lanka for training of skilled technicians in the automobile engineering and other technical training fields. The Institute was originally established in 1959 under an agreement between the governments of Federal Republic of



Germany and Sri Lanka. The CGTTI was under the Transport Ministry and now it is under the Youth Affairs and Skills development Ministry.



SRI LANKA'S DISPLACED COMING BACK FROM TAMIL NADU



With the resettlement process in the North reaching its final-phase, the Ministry of Resettlement has stepped up its resettlement drive to bring back to this country Displaced Sri Lankans living in 31 camps in Tamil Nadu.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in Colombo is assisting the repatriation process and the Government of Sri Lanka is planning to resettle them in the North.

*Sri Lanka High Commission, Ottawa, Canada.
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According to reports, out of a quarter million Displaced persons, they are now in the process of resettling 7,000. A 600 acre land in the Kombavil area in the Mullaitivu district has been chosen for the resettlement of these people. Each displaced family will be given a 40 perch block of land.



RS. 57MN COMPENSATION FOR 56 LAND OWNERS NEAR KARAINAGAR NAVAL CAMP

The Ministry of Land and Land Development has taken steps to compensate land owners of the Northern and Eastern Provinces, whose lands had been acquired for military purposes. Nearly 56 land owners who had owned 78 acres of land near the Karainagar Navy camp were compensated last week after 25 years. A total of Rs. 57 million had been utilised for this purpose. The land, where Karainagar Navy camp was set up had been acquired by the military in 1985.



SL RE-ELECTED TO CHAIR COMMONWEALTH TELECOMMUNICATIONS ORGANISATION



COMMONWEALTH
TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ORGANISATION

Sri Lanka has been re-elected unanimously as Chairman of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) at the 51st Council Meeting held at Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

