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வெளிநாட்டு உறவுகள் அமைச்சு  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS

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## **Media Release**

### **Foreign Ministry helps Sri Lankan exporters overcome adverse impact of COVID 19**

Comprehensive measures taken by the Ministry of Foreign Relations, in close coordination with the key Government Economic Agencies and the private sector to address and mitigate the impact of COVID 19 particularly on Sri Lankan exports, has helped in sustaining and regaining lost markets for traditional Sri Lankan exports, while enabling new opportunities. Exports which accounted for US \$ 277 Million in April 2020, had increased to US \$606 Million in May, and is expected to grow in the coming months, in line with the revised projections.

This observation was made by the Foreign Ministry's Additional Secretary/Economic Affairs P.M. Amza, during an interview on Ada Derana on 10 June 2020, held to discuss the economic impact of COVID-19, and its demands and challenges for Sri Lanka.

The Additional Secretary said, since the outbreak of the COVID-19, the Ministry's 'Economic Diplomacy Programme' has been playing a pivotal catalyst role, in partnership with Agencies such as the Export Development Board and the Tea Board, in facilitating Sri Lankan exporters to overcome the adverse impact of COVID 19. Despite the challenging circumstances, including disruptions to the global supply chains and logistics, the proactive stance of the Ministry and Missions abroad has seen the emergence of new market destinations as well as opportunity to regain the markets for Traditional Sri Lankan exports such as Tea, Rubber and fresh/processed food. As a result of the evolving global COVID 19 situation, Sri Lanka has also been able to target new products and markets particularly for Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) and rubber based products (Face masks – 12 markets, protective gowns – 17 markets, Rubber Gloves – 12, Hand sanitizers – 12). Interventions made by the Ministry saw 344 MT and 220 MT of Ceylon Tea exported to Turkey and Egypt and 30 MT of frozen food to Oman, under challenging circumstances.

At the request of the Joint Apparel Forum of Sri Lanka (JAAF), the Ministry together with the Sri Lankan Missions have also successfully coordinated sourcing raw materials for the production of PPEs, thus catering to the rising demand from many countries. 53 potential suppliers for specific raw materials were identified.

In the context of the post COVID 19, the Ministry together with the EDB has additionally identified 15 potential sectors with a view to capture new markets and strengthen the demand in the existing markets. Comprehensive measures targeting coconut, processed food, seafood, spices and concentrates, electronics and electrical, logistics, printing, ceramic and porcelain, Ayurveda and herbals, wellness, ICT/BPM, marine and offshore engineering, construction, and boat and ship building sectors are being mapped out taking the current

constraints, challenges as well as opportunities into account. As a way forward, webinars and virtual B2B meetings are being planned by the EDB for priority sectors with increased demand including Ayurveda and herbal, ceramic and porcelain, boat and ship building, and electronics and electrical sectors.

The Ministry, Missions abroad and the private sector, are also working in collaboration with Sri Lankan Airlines, which has been one of the few carriers which has continued to operate cargo flights internationally. The viability of these flights has been enhanced, where possible, by also bringing back Overseas Sri Lankans seeking to be repatriated, making both passenger and cargo transport more cost effective to all parties.

Ministry of Foreign Relations  
Colombo

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