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வெளிநாட்டு அமைச்சு
FOREIGN MINISTRY

ජනරජ භවනගිරිල්ල, කොළඹ 1, ශ්‍රී ලංකාව, குடியரசு கட்டிடம், கொழும்பு 1, Republic Building, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka

Media Release

Colombo Plan is a Source of Strength to Face Post- Pandemic Global Challenges – Foreign Minister

Addressing the inaugural session of the 47th Consultative Committee Meeting of The Colombo Plan on August 11, Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena said that The Colombo Plan's work and experience in the areas of socio-economic development will be a source of strength as member countries grapple with the challenges of the post-pandemic world. As the global climate calls for even more focus on social and economic development, The Colombo Plan member states must build upon existing cooperation and explore new avenues for cooperation in a new and challenging global environment.

Recalling that the success of the organizations cause depends on the commitment, contribution and meaningful action of all member states, the Minister Gunawardena requested advanced states to continue extending their support to The Colombo Plan so that it may sustain and further develop meaningful programmes for the developing member states in the quest for shared prosperity for all.

In keeping with President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's vision of 'Green and Smart' cities, within the Government's environmental policy, *Vistas of Prosperity & Splendour*, Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena announced Sri Lanka's willingness to take leadership to promote programmes within The Colombo Plan on building sustainable green cities. Speaking on the globally topical issue of rapid urbanization and the need for sustainable cities and increasing green spaces, the Minister Gunawardena said rapid urbanization has a greater impact on developing countries and poorer nations who are constantly playing technological catch-up. As building sustainable cities requires investment, he said, countries must be supported through assistance such as capacity building, access to green technology, energy and infrastructure, and the development of sustainable and reliable public services.

The Foreign Minister Gunawardena also quoted Prof. Ranil Senanayake, leading Sri Lankan global environmentalist, in his proposed paradigm shift in green environmental discussions, to provide positive returns to offset financial debt of nations which have shown ecological contribution and commitment.

In his welcoming remarks, Foreign Secretary Admiral Prof. Jayanath Colombage recalled that The Colombo Plan has made history as one of the earliest attempts at international cooperation by recognizing the importance of human resources development and south-south cooperation. He observed The Colombo Plan's significance today as an economic group with a combined population of about 40% of the world's population and a total GDP of about US\$ 37 Trillion.

The Secretary-General of The Colombo Plan Ambassador Phan Kieu Thu addressed the session as well and commended the contribution made by Sri Lanka and other Members States to the deliberations of The Colombo Plan.

Sri Lanka is hosting the two day 47th Consultative Committee Meeting for the fifth time since the inception of The Colombo Plan and the first time in twenty years. Additional Secretary for Economic Affairs of the Foreign Ministry P.M Amza chaired the Consultative Committee Meeting while the Sri Lanka Delegation comprised Acting Director General/ Economic Affairs H. M. K. Herath, Director/Economic Affairs Priyanga Wickramasinghe and Acting Director Economic Affairs Ahamed Razeed.

Sri Lanka is a founding member of The Colombo Plan which was conceived at the 1950 Commonwealth Conference on Foreign Affairs in Colombo, as a cooperative endeavour. It was established in 1951 and has grown from the initial seven member states to twenty-seven in 2021. For the past 70 years, the organization has been headquartered in Colombo.

Foreign Ministry
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