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வெளிநாட்டு அமைச்சு  
FOREIGN MINISTRY

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

## Media Release

### **Sri Lanka and Australia to strengthen practical cooperation**

Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena during a meeting with the Australian High Commissioner David Holly on 13 July 2021 discussed avenues for consolidating relations between the two countries in multiple spheres to achieve tangible outcomes.

Following up from the successful telephone conversation held with the Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne in June this year, the two sides discussed ways and means to enhance the capacity of the Sri Lankan Marine Protection Authorities to minimize the damage caused by future maritime catastrophes. In this regard, the Minister Gunawardena extended Sri Lanka's gratitude for the provision of personal protective equipment and gear to assist the coastal cleaning efforts due to the MV X-Press Pearl disaster. It was agreed to build a broad-based dialogue around the issue of maritime environmental calamities and the importance of curtailing the adverse impacts of such incidents through international and regional fora such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).

The Foreign Minister Gunawardena appreciated Australia's continuous support to enhance capability of the public health sector to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and projects implemented under Australian Overseas Development Assistance to bolster the socio-economic development in Sri Lanka.

The two sides also agreed to prioritize convening of bilateral consultations between the two countries in the political, economic and maritime sectors as key platforms for deepening and extending the bilateral partnership in keeping with the mutual interests of the countries. Advancing collaborations in the science and technology field through a structured mechanism, was also identified as a potential sector for exchange of expertise.

High Commissioner Holly affirmed Australia's keenness to jointly promote Sri Lanka as an educational hub where international students could obtain Australian qualifications in Sri Lanka. While welcoming the education cooperation between the two countries and Australian Government's current efforts to permit the return of international students to Australia, whose higher studies have been affected due to the ongoing COVID-19 related travel restrictions, Foreign Minister Gunawardena requested to consider the early facilitation of Sri Lankan students' travel to Australia.

Foreign Ministry  
Colombo

14 July, 2021

