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## Foreign Minister appreciates Japan's continued support for IDP relief

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Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama at a meeting last Saturday (02nd May 2009) with Japan's Representative for Peace Building to Sri Lanka, Ambassador Yasushi Akashi, stated that Sri Lanka is encouraged by Japan's continued interest in seeing the establishment of peace in Sri Lanka and its continued constructive engagement in Sri Lanka. The Japanese Special Envoy was in Sri Lanka on a three-day visit last week to meet Government leaders and officials. Pointing out that Sri Lanka is on the threshold of defeating terrorism unleashed by the LTTE, the Foreign Minister stated that the next phase in this aspect is post-conflict rehabilitation, reconstruction and rebuilding for 'sustainable development' in bringing about lasting peace for the people of Sri Lanka. He expressed Sri Lanka's appreciation for Japan's continued support for the immediate needs of the IDPs and for post conflict development efforts in the country.

Minister Bogollagama conveyed Sri Lanka's gratitude to the Government of Japan for their decision to pledge US\$ 4 million grant aid through UN agencies for IDPs. Ambassador Akashi was briefed on the ongoing efforts by the Government and the close collaboration with the international community as well as UN agencies and the ICRC, in supplying the needs for the displaced population including food, shelter and health facilities. Further, the Minister briefed the Special Envoy on the additional measures in place for the long term resettlement as well as the rehabilitation of the ex-LTTE combatants. The Minister informed the Special Envoy that Japanese assistance towards the de-mining process would facilitate and expedite the resettlement of the displaced civilians in their original places of habitation. The visiting Japanese Representative thanked the Foreign Minister for the detailed briefing and appreciated the extensive ongoing efforts undertaken by the Government of Sri Lanka in managing the current humanitarian situation. Ambassador Akashi emphasized Japan's concern on the current situation, particularly the conditions and the welfare of the IDPs. He further encouraged the Government of Sri Lanka to continue its cooperation with the UN agencies and ICRC and, look at the possibility of providing more access to the international community, especially the friends of Sri Lanka, in order to bring transparency to the efforts of the Government in dealing with the current situation. He welcomed the re-settlement process of the IDP families in their original places and noted that the Government is targeting 80% of all IDPs to be resettled before the end of the year, provided mine clearing operations are completed. The Japanese Special Envoy had a breakfast meeting earlier in the day with President Mahinda Rajapaksa during which present developments, including the reintegration process of the post-conflict scenario were discussed. He also toured the Kadirgamar and Ramanathan IDP welfare villages in Chettikulam on the previous day (01st May 2009) and met with Minister of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services, Rishad Bathiudeen. During this visit, Mr. Akashi also had the firsthand opportunity to talk to the IDPs and inspected the facilities provided to them. The Ambassador of Japan in Sri Lanka, H.E. Kunio Takahashi, Director of the South & West Asia Division in the Japanese Foreign Ministry, Yusuke Shindo and other officials accompanied the Special Envoy to the meeting. The Foreign Secretary, Secretary to the Ministry of Justice & Law Reforms, Secretary to the Nation Building and Eastern Infrastructure Development were present with other senior officials of the Foreign Ministry. Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
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