
Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva thanks UN Secretary General

Tuesday, 19 May 2009

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Hon. Nimal Siripala de Silva, who is the current President of the World Health Assembly (WHA), met Mr. Ban ki-moon, the Secretary General of the United Nations today (19/05) in his bureau at the UN office in Geneva. Hon. Minister conveyed greetings from his Excellency the President of Sri Lanka to the Secretary General and also thanked on behalf of the President of Sri Lanka for the support extended by the Secretary General throughout the difficult situations prevailed in the country during the recent past.

Secretary General congratulated Hon Minister on his appointment as the President of the World Health Assembly and said that Hon Minister's leadership is extremely crucial at this important moment in the global health arena. While thanking the Secretary General extending this opportunity despite his busy schedule, Hon. Minister briefed the Secretary General on the current situation in Sri Lanka and also explained the various measures taken by the government and his ministry to provide optimal care for the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Hon. Minister further explained that the Government and people in the South has taken a keen interest in providing basic needs such as food, shelter, water and sanitation and healthcare to the IDPs in the North. Hon. Minister briefed the Secretary General with regard to healthcare provided such as setting up healthcare centres in each welfare centre, posting nearly 200 medical officers for the care of IDPs, posting nearly 500 nursing officers and a large number of paramedical staff. Hon. Minister further explained the Ministries of Nation Building, Resettlement and Disaster Management and Human Rights are taking maximum efforts to provide the humanitarian assistance to the IDPs. Several countries and international organizations have extended their support for this purpose and the ground situation has improved considerably. His Excellency the President is taking a personal interest to look after the welfare of the IDPs and in fact he has appointed a high powered task force including a special task force for phycho-social care to oversee the matters relating to the IDP care. Hon. Minister further stated that the vision of the HE the President is to bring in National reconciliation and embarked upon a vibrant infrastructure and economic development to the North as done in the case of eastern province. The Minister emphasized that the area which was under the LTTE control has to be cleared of mines in order to properly plan the resettlement and the reconstruction in the area. Hon. Minister further briefed the Secretary General on the political reconciliation plans and all party conference set up for this purpose is working hardly in order to address this issue. Hon. Minister stated that expatriate Tamil community living in Europe and other countries enjoying facilities and maximum benefits as political refugees carrying out demonstrations to lobby the western media and the communities as they do not want to come back to Sri Lanka. He further stated that the opinion makers and leaders of the west should not be misled by this false propaganda. He emphasized that 54% of the Tamil community live outside the Northern and Eastern Provinces and they live in harmony with Sinhalese and other communities. Reiterating the commitment of the government to establish democracy, Hon. Minister said that LTTE child soldier who embraced the democratic process has been elected and appointed as the chief minister of the eastern province through democratic elections. Hon. Minister gladly mentioned to the SG that the appointed Chief Minister of the Eastern Province has a multicultural cabinet where key Ministries are working together for the development of the Eastern province of Sri Lanka. Hon. Minister welcomed the visit of the Secretary General and said that government of Sri Lanka will extend the fullest support to the success of his visit. He further stated that SL government has the fullest confidence on SG in receiving assistance for humanitarian care and supporting development and reconciliation. H.E. Dr. Dayan Jayatilleka who also participated at the discussion mentioned the importance of taking into account the attitudes and perceptions of the neighbouring countries with regard to the situation in Sri Lanka as they know best the circumstances and underlined issues pertaining to same. Dr. Jayatilleka also said Sri Lanka is grateful to its neighbours for the understanding that they have shown towards its difficult times. In this connection, Dr. Jayatilleka thanked the Secretary General for his balanced approach towards Sri Lanka. This meeting was attended by Dr. Dayan Jayatilleka, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka in Geneva, Dr. Nihal Jayathileka, Additional Secretary /Medical Services, Dr. Wimal Jayantha, Deputy Director General/ Medical Services, Ms. Manorie Mallikaratchy, Second Secretary/ Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka in Geneva. Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations Geneva 19 May 2009