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## Sri Lanka and Maldives agree on intelligence sharing

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Sri Lanka and the Maldives have reached agreement to share intelligence and exchange information on the flow of funds that may be linked to terrorist activities. This understanding emerged following discussions between Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama and the visiting Maldivian President, H.E. Mohamed Nasheed in Colombo today (19 June 2009). The Maldivian dignitary arrived last evening on a brief visit to Sri Lanka, during which he will also be meeting President Mahinda Rajapaksa in Anuradhapura today.

At the outset of the bilateral talks, President Nasheed conveyed his warmest congratulations to the Government of Sri Lanka on successfully ending the internal conflict and defeating terrorism in the country. He informed Minister Bogollagama that he had explained to world leaders whom he had met in the recent past, the Maldivian Government's strong support for the action taken by Sri Lanka to eliminate terrorism. He noted that a prosperous and strong Sri Lanka is beneficial to the Maldives. Noting that Sri Lankan companies held substantial investments in the Maldives, the President invited more companies to invest in his country, adding that the end of the conflict in Sri Lanka would encourage greater economic cooperation between the two countries. Minister Bogollagama, welcoming the Maldivian leader, thanked him for the message of felicitation which he had sent President Rajapaksa immediately upon the Government's historic victory over terrorism last month. He informed the Maldivian President that Sri Lanka is turning a new page in its history, with a focus on launching a vibrant economic agenda which would bring prosperity for all the people in the island. The true potential for economic growth and development would then be realized. Responding to a query by the Maldivian President, the Foreign Minister acknowledged that although the LTTE leadership and its military capability had been annihilated within Sri Lanka, its international terror network remains largely intact. It was important that there be greater international cooperation to dismantle this network and the overseas assets of the LTTE and its front organizations be frozen, to prevent funds generated from such assets being diverted for various nefarious and illicit activities, including narcotics trafficking, human smuggling, money laundering etc. In this context, President Nasheed and Minister Bogollagama agreed that it would be mutually beneficial if both countries entered into a formal agreement under which their intelligence agencies would be able to share information and cooperate more closely. Senior officials of the Maldivian Government and the Maldivian High Commissioner in Colombo, Ali Hussain Didi were present on the Maldivian delegation, while senior officials of the Foreign Ministry attended the discussion from the Sri Lankan side. Courtesy: Isria.com