
Sri Lanka can do it says Akashi

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By Nizla Naizer Japan's Special Envoy Yasushi Akashi last night called on all Sri Lankans to draw strength from its greatness to overcome challenges in the highly favourable post-war era. "I am not aware of any other developing country that has faced such a dire challenge and emerged with significant results," Akashi said commenting on the Government's response to the humanitarian crisis in the North at a premier business forum yesterday

"And it is rare to find a more beautiful, more natural resource filled, more warm hearted and more talented country like Sri Lanka in the world where even despite the violent conflict that people had to endure, everyone is coming together to rebuild the nation," he said at the inauguration of Ceylon Chamber organised two and half day Sri Lanka Economic Summit titled "Dawning of a new era: Opportunities and Challenges." Akashi stated that Sri Lanka is now faced with a "unique and non-recurrent" opportunity to build a united and truly pluralistic democracy based on universal human rights. "There is no point blaming the colonial system of divide and rule after 60 years of independence," he stressed. "You have proven that you can work in unity and solidarity, in friendship and in business and that is a trend that needs to be accelerated now." Japan has pledged to support Sri Lanka in the early resettlement of the IDPs into permanent homes, removal of landmines, basic infrastructure, vocational training in fisheries, agriculture and environmental concerns. However, Akashi stated that apart from a Government to Government official approach, it is the ideal time for the private sector to spearhead development. "To facilitate this, it is important that administrative impediments are removed expeditiously and when making policies, naïve cosmopolitanism and extreme nationalism must be left behind." Speaking on the same vein, Prime Minister Rathnasiri Wickremanayake stated that the private sector in Sri Lanka must be commended on their efforts. "With the right policies at the right time Sri Lanka has managed to negate the effects of the global economic crisis," he said, "And with the end of terrorism there is many more opportunities and challenges that we need to face together." He said that now is the time for post-war development with focus on infrastructural development but added that it is important to let the people who suffered from the war to feel the benefits of peace and that domestic growth must be encouraged. Courtesy: thebottomline.lk