Children benefit in terror free era

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Project worth Rs, 1,058 m for IDP children: Nadira GUNATILLEKE The Sri Lankan Government has launched projects worth Rs.1,058 million to provide higher education facilities for children of displaced families as part of the Uthuru Wasanthaya program. (Northern Spring).

Sri Lanka achieved victory over terrorism which existed for nearly 30 years and our children will benefit the most with hope for a better future free of violence and destruction caused by terrorist and separatist forces, Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka said. Addressing the fourth SAARC Ministerial Conference on Children held at the Hilton, Colombo yesterday, the Premier said that the Government believe that the sacrifices made by people and especially military can only be redeemed if we all unite as a common force to build and develop our nation. Special initiatives are also planned under the Northern Spring to develop the Northern Province of Sri Lanka which has been the worst affected because of terrorism. The Premier said over 40 percent of South Asia’s population comprises children under the age of 18 years and this works out to nearly half a billion children on whom we have to place our hopes and dreams of a better future for South Asia. “Our concerns need to range from the pursuit of individual self-interest and happiness to achieving sustainable development for all member nations of SAARC. Poverty remains a crucial issue for all of us and one which has to be more efficiently addressed, as children are the most vulnerable in a family. This is particularly so when there is deprivation and poverty. The child bears the brunt of its impact in the form of higher mortality, under-nutrition and child labour, including abuse and exploitation,” the Prime Minister said. Successive Sri Lankan Governments since independence irrespective of different political ideologies have closely adhered to pro child social policies to provide free education for both boys and girls without discrimination, provide free healthcare both curative and preventive including maternal and child health services. Such policies have contributed to consistent declines in under five child mortality, sustained levels of increasing expectation of life at birth for men and women. But we are also conscious of the need to do more to protect our children and make the relevant changes to national legislation and law enforcement processes so that perpetrators of child abuse and exploitation cannot get away with impunity”, he said. SAARC provides an important opportunity for collective action and a chance to learn more from each other. We all have good examples of successful programs in our own countries which are mutually beneficial,” the Premier said. Child Development and Women’s Empowerment Minister Sumedha G. Jayasena said a lot of decisions took during the past three conferences have already been implemented by the member countries.Courtesy: dailynews.lk