Bahrain PM His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa assures support to “rebuild” Sri Lanka

Wednesday, 29 July 2009
Last Updated Wednesday, 29 July 2009

His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain assures support to “rebuild” Sri Lanka. Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama during a courtesy call on His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain on 28th July 2009 stated that the Government of Sri Lanka was appreciative of the support rendered by the Kingdom of Bahrain which proved to be ‘a good friend’ during Sri Lanka’s fight against terrorism. Responding, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain congratulated the Government of Sri Lanka for eliminating terrorism and assured the support of the Kingdom of Bahrain to “help rebuild” Sri Lanka. He also expressed the hope that such help would be forthcoming from other Gulf countries as well.

During the discussion, Foreign Minister Bogollagama also elucidated the’ resolve’ of H. E President Rajapaksa in the fight against terrorism which had heralded a ‘terror free Sri Lanka’ and further explained the priorities of the Government in terms of resettling the Internally Displaced Sri Lankans, the inclusive policy being adopted by the Government where the local political establishments and the international community too have been given a role and the need to sustain the recent achievements. Explaining further, Foreign Minister Bogollagama also stated that Sri Lanka already had the experience and expertise in resettling some of its population following the tsunami devastation in 2004 and the successful resettlement efforts in the Eastern province of Sri Lanka two years ago. He also stated that the Government of Sri Lanka which had set a target of 180 days to resettle the nearly 280,000 Internally Displaced Sri Lankans was confident of being able to achieve this goal with the support of the international community. He further stated that H. E the President was also keen to ensure the expeditious resettlement of the displaced and take peace forward. The Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain while reiterating the support of his country, stated that it was important for Sri Lanka to hold on to the achievements so far and rebuild the country with the assistance of “friends”. During the discussions, His Highness also recalled the contribution made by Sri Lankan nationals in Bahrain and described the expatriate workers as being “hard working” and “trustworthy”. Acknowledging the generosity of the rulers and the people of the Kingdom of Bahrain for providing employment opportunities for expatriate Sri Lankan workers, Foreign Minister Bogollagama also explained the contribution to the economy by this section of workers and pointed out that despite the many challenges encountered by Sri Lanka during the past years, the economy of the country had continued to be resilient and had also sustained its growth. In addition, he also described the various roles played in the international arena by Sri Lanka with special reference to the SAARC, Commonwealth, UN and other Asian regional bodies and stated that Sri Lanka would continue to engage with the international community. He also placed on record his appreciation to the support rendered by the Kingdom of Bahrain during a crucial vote in Geneva during the UN Human Rights Council recently. The Foreign Minister also outlined Sri Lanka’s plans to reinvigorate the tourism industry in the aftermath of the defeat of terrorism and showcase Sri Lanka as a hub for connectivity and sought the support of the Kingdom of Bahrain in this connection. In response to the Minister’s request, His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, stated that despite his current visit being brief, he was pleased with the welcome accorded and recalled his previous visit which was private in nature almost ten years ago and pointed out that his current visit was a result of the encouragement of the H. E the President. He added that the Kingdom of Bahrain had “stood for the rights of Sri Lanka” and reiterated his commitment to support the development of Sri Lanka. Foreign Minister Bogollagama while thanking His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa for his support rendered to Sri Lanka so far, also requested the Prime Minister to consider opening a permanent Mission for Bahrain in Sri Lanka which will help further strengthen the warm and cordial bilateral relations between the two countries. The Prime Minister, recalling the role played by Sri Lanka’s Honorary Consul in Bahrain for over 30 years for the welfare of the Sri Lankan expatriates, assured the continuous support of his country to Sri Lanka. Senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Kingdom of Bahrain were present during the discussions. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Colombo 29th July 2009