
Minister Prof Peiris emphasizes the relevance of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to Sri Lanka

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Minister of External Affairs, Prof. G. L. Peiris today (6th May) when signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) conferring the status of a Dialogue Partner of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) on Sri Lanka, emphasized the great relevance of the Organization to Sri Lanka. He noted that the MoU enables cooperation between SCO and Sri Lanka on areas such as ensuring security through combating terrorism, economic cooperation and collaboration in science and technology, education, healthcare, culture and sports. All of these spheres of engagements are of particular interest to Sri Lanka in the current post conflict scenario, where rapid and equitable economic growth accompanied by the continued safeguarding of security and peace remain the priorities.

The MoU was signed at the Ministry of External Affairs on behalf of the SCO by its Secretary-General, Mr. Muratbek Sansyrbayevich Imanaliev. The SCO is a permanent, intergovernmental, international organization which was proclaimed on 15th June 2001 in Shanghai, China by the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan. The SCO focuses on maintaining and ensuring peace, security and stability in the region while moving towards the establishment of a new, democratic, just and rational political and economic international order. The Heads of State Council (HSC) is the highest decision-making body in the SCO, which meets once a year. External Affairs Minister Peiris commenting further on the work of the SCO in areas such as fighting terrorism and regional security noted that while Sri Lanka had won its campaign over the LTTE, the remnants of the terrorist organization were still active in other spheres, including in the endeavours to set up a purported 'Provisional Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam'. The Minister underlined the importance of thwarting such campaigns and recalled the comments made recently in this regard by Defence Secretary Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa. The Secretary General of the SCO, Mr. Imanaliev, who has also served twice as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, responding to the External Affairs Minister Prof. Peiris, expressed his confidence that the relationship between the SCO and Sri Lanka would be equal and mutually beneficial. The Secretary General emphasized that he perceives his having been received earlier that day by President Mahinda Rajapaksa, as a further manifestation of the welcome and rapidly strengthening relationship between Sri Lanka and SCO. Ministry of External Affairs Colombo

6th May 2010