
Minister G.L. Peiris holds Bilateral Meetings with his counterparts

Wednesday, 29 September 2010

Last Updated Thursday, 30 September 2010

External Affairs Minister G.L. Peiris continued with his bilateral discussions in New York on the margins of the UN General Assembly and met on 28th September with his Brazilian counterpart, Foreign Minister Celso Amorim. Minister Peiris expressed the appreciation of Sri Lanka for the firm stance taken by Brazil towards the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. He also thanked for the generous donation by Brazil for UNHCR relief operations in Sri Lanka. The two Ministers discussed the strengthening of bilateral economic and trade collaboration. Minister Peiris briefed Minister Amorim on the plans of the Government to develop Sri Lanka as a hub for services, by drawing on the high quality of its human resources. The Minister invited Brazil to use Sri Lanka's potential as a hub, in her outreach to Asia. Brazil being a member of the G15 which is currently chaired by Sri Lanka, the discussions also dealt with the specific measures now underway to strengthen the Group and to augment the effectiveness of its advocacy, on behalf of the developing world. The discussion concluded with an invitation for Minister Peiris to visit Brazil, so that an even more structured approach to bilateral collaboration, may be evolved. Minister Peiris accepted the invitation with pleasure. Later on the 28th, Minister Peiris had discussions with the Foreign Minister of Israel, Mr. Avigdor Liberman. The conversation focused among other matters on developments in Middle East. Minister Peiris elaborated in this context on Sri Lanka's principled position regarding the issue of Palestine. The two Ministers noted that there is sound scope for the further expansion of the bilateral relationship. Sri Lanka is particularly interested in mutually beneficial collaboration in agriculture, given the strong expertise of Israel in that area. Other sectors that would afford potential are tourism and well prepared arrangements, for Sri Lanka migrant labour to work in Israel. Minister Peiris and Minister Liberman agreed that specific measures would be taken to advance all of these opportunities. The final bilateral meeting of Minister Peiris on the 28th of September was with the Rt. Hon. Baroness Amos, UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. The External Affairs Minister set out the sound progress made by Sri Lanka in the resettlement of the internally displaced, along with the generation of avenues for employment, with the Government urging the private sector to open industrial plants in the formerly conflict affected areas. It was the Minister said, a matter for satisfaction that several women in those areas had thereby been enabled to become bread-winners. The Minister also briefed the UN Under Secretary General on the economic renaissance now underway in the North and the East, as well as the plans of the Government to revive the electoral process in the North, as had happened earlier in the East. He emphasized in particular that accessibility is not an issue, with 78 local and international NGOs operating in the area, along with 11 UN agencies. The Under Secretary General stated that it is highly commendable that Sri Lanka has been able to move so quickly. She said that her Office might, drawing on the information provided by the Minister, approach the concerned authorities in Sri Lanka, in the event of a humanitarian organization engaged in Sri Lanka, wishing to improve its access. Minister Peiris stated that any representations made in this regard would be considered most seriously, since the welfare and wellbeing of the populace who were affected by the conflict, remain the foremost consideration of the Government. At the end of the discussion, the Minister invited the Under Secretary General to visit Lanka and see for herself the dramatic amelioration of the situation, since the end of the conflict. Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations New York

28th September 2010