Ambassador Tamara Kunanayakam presents credentials to Pope Benedict XVI

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Ambassador Kunanayakam presents credentials to Pope Benedict XVISri Lanka’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, Ambassador Tamara Kunanayakam, who is concurrently accredited to the Holy See, presented her credentials to His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI at a ceremony in the Vatican on 15th December 2011, in the presence of His Eminence Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of State of the Holy See, and other high officials of the Vatican. Non-resident Ambassadors from the following 10 countries also presented their credentials at the ceremony: Pakistan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Guinea Bissau, Switzerland, Burundi, Mozambique, Kyrgyzstan, Andorra, and Burkina Faso.

Presenting of credentials to Pope Benedict XVIThroughout the past week, the Ambassador met with State officials from the Holy See, among them Secretary of State of the Holy See, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Substitute of the Secretariat of State, Archbishop Giovanni Angelo Becciu, and the Undersecretary for Relations with States, Monsignor Ettore Balestrero, discussing prospects for further strengthening of bilateral ties between Sri Lanka and the Vatican. Changing a 50 year old diplomatic practice of exchanging individual speeches in the form of written texts, a practice first introduced on exceptional occasions by Pius XII during the Second World War and systematically by Paul VI, Pope Benedict XVI addressed "a common speech" to the 11 new non-resident Ambassadors representing all regions of the world. In his Address to the new Ambassadors, Pope Benedict XVI stressed the need for shared responsibility and international solidarity in a globalised world in which the challenges faced have global dimensions. Solidarity, he said, is the driving force, the “real leverage of integral human development that will allow humanity to progress toward its fulfillment.” In this context, he highlighted "intergenerational solidarity" which has its roots in the family. Concern for education and for the destiny of future generations is "a significant contribution to the perception of the unity of the human race", he said. “Shared responsibility" for the good of humankind is not opposed to cultural and religious diversity, the Holy Father went on. Peace and social harmony require “not just an appropriate legislative framework, but also the high moral stature of all citizens, because solidarity has two complementary aspects: social principle and moral virtue". Meeting with His Eminence Cardinal Bertone Secretary of State of the Holy SeeAfter the ceremony, Ambassador Kunanayakam had a cordial meeting with the Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone at which she expressed pleasure at the warm and friendly relations that existed between the Vatican and Sri Lanka based on mutual respect, briefed them on the importance given by the Government of Sri Lanka to national reconciliation, and thanked the Vatican for the valuable support extended through its charitable organizations, such as Caritas, to the country’s recovery and rehabilitation efforts. The Holy See at present has full diplomatic relations with more than 180 countries. Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations Geneva 22 December 2011