
Visit of Canadian Parliamentary Delegation to Sri Lanka

Tuesday, 17 January 2012

Last Updated Tuesday, 17 January 2012

To assess the Post- conflict Reconciliation and Developments in Sri Lanka 8th to 11th January, 2012 On the invitation of the Acting Minister of External Affairs Hon. Neomal Perera, a Parliamentary delegation from Canada comprising Hon. Chungen Leung (M.P.), Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multiculturalism and Deputy Minister of the Government of Canada, Hon. Joe Daniel (M.P.), and Marlene Gallyot Special Assistant to Hon. Joe Daniel (for Sri Lanka) visited Sri Lanka from 8th to 11th January, 2012. The delegation paid a courtesy call on the Acting Minister at the Ministry of External Affairs.

The delegation visited the Northern Province on 9th and 10th January 2012. During their tour, they met with the Governor of the Northern Province, the Government Agents of Jaffna and Killinochchi, the Bishop of Jaffna and the Chairman of the Jaffna Chamber of Commerce. The team also visited the Jaffna and Chavakachcheri hospitals, and the Killinochchi resettlement villages, schools and the agricultural areas in the Northern Province. The delegation also explored prospects for trade and investment in the Northern Province. The delegation, having made observations during their visits, stated that they appreciated the government's role in the reconciliation, reconstruction and the infrastructure development programmes implemented in the Northern Province. Education, health and employment opportunities being provided by the government of Sri Lanka to the people of the North and East to open a window of opportunity to engage in their normal life after three decades of conflict was commended by the delegates. In a media interview on 10th January, the delegation stated that Sri Lanka should be given time and space to effectively implement the recommendations made by the LLRC that would give an opportunity to create a peaceful and prosperous Sri Lanka. The delegation was of the view that normalcy has returned to all areas including the North and East and that there is no discrimination against the Tamil community in Sri Lanka. The Canadian Parliamentarians admitted that funds are collected in Canada by the Tamil Diaspora with the promise that the monies will be expended productively for the welfare and wellbeing of the people in the North and East of Sri Lanka. However, they have observed in the course of their interactions with the people in the North that the latter do not receive such financial assistance from the Diaspora in Canada. The Parliamentary members thanked the Acting Minister of External Affairs for inviting them to visit Sri Lanka and for giving them the opportunity to experience firsthand, the ground situation in the North, and the post conflict developments in these areas. They were optimistic that Sri Lanka will be able to move forward and achieve prosperity for all Sri Lankans. The Acting Minister thanked the Canadian Parliamentarians for visiting Sri Lanka and for the encouraging sentiments expressed by them. The Acting Minister also requested the delegates to brief their fellow parliamentarians on the progress taking place in Sri Lanka since the end of the conflict which they witnessed themselves during the visit. Ministry of External Affairs Colombo 12th January 2012