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# Large investor presence, a valuable vote of confidence in Sri Lanka-President at Sri Lanka Expo 2012

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You are a strong and valuable vote of confidence in Sri Lanka an expression of growing trust in the new opportunities for export trade in a country that was famous for international trade from ancient days, President Mahinda Rajapaksa said. Addressing "Sri Lanka Expo 2012", organized by the Export Development Board (EDB) at the BMICH this morning President said the presence of investors here today shows the failure of the efforts of those who still support the agenda of separatist terror that prevented development in Sri Lanka for more than three decades. You are here today, with a measure of confidence in Sri Lanka that has not been diminished by false propaganda that is currently spread by those who are trying to prevent investment flowing to our country and the large international presence at this event is a clear indication of the growing awareness in the world of the new investment opportunities in Sri Lanka, said the President. "Sri Lanka is in the midst of peace won at great sacrifice. We are progressing on the path of peace and reconciliation. Our government is committed to walk that extra mile to establish permanent peace through reconciliation. That is our commitment to our people and no one has to tell us what to do," President further said. Here is the full text of the speech:

I am indeed very pleased to be present at this most important occasion for Sri Lanka that marks a major stride in the progress of Business in our country. I understand that this mega event has been much looked forward to by the Sri Lankan and foreign business communities for the opportunity it presents to show the world of the new prospects for trade, investment and development activities in Sri Lanka and the opportunity for valuable participation in the new progress so evident in Sri Lanka today. I am glad to extend a very warm welcome to all the foreign participants and visitors to this mega trade, investment, tourism promotion and development initiative in our country. Your presence in such large numbers is truly encouraging, and brings good promise of future progress in these areas of development. The magnitude and range of exhibits at this memorable event makes it very clear that Sri Lanka is now fully open to business. It is noteworthy that this event, Sri Lanka Expo &dash; 2012, takes place after a lapse of 15 years in a climate that seeks to integrate trade, and the widest range of activities in export related investment in a single arena. This gap of 15 years requires some explanation. It is nearly half the period when this country suffered the worst brutalities of terrorism. It is the period when business turned away from us, because of the forces of terror that had some support from certain countries. As you can see at this event and as you travel freely in our country and also as you interact with your business partners and counterparts it will be very clear to you that the period of conflict is now over. Friends, I will assure you that we will not allow forces of separatism and terror to raise their ugly heads again, certainly not in our motherland. Sri Lanka is in the midst of peace won at great sacrifice. We are progressing on the path of peace and reconciliation. Our government is committed to walk that extra mile to establish permanent peace through reconciliation. That is our commitment to our people and no one has to tell us what to do. My Dear Friends, Sri Lanka Expo &dash; 2012 seeks to attract international buyers from every region of the world offering them a rich range of products and services that reflects a multi-cultural heritage a tradition of skilled craftsmanship and the best of modern skills in industry and services. Moving in tandem with the new rise of Asia as the economic hub of the world you will see that Sri Lanka is now ready to be re-positioned as a strategically important economic centre in this continent of growth. In our own region we are today unique in being free of conflicts no threat of terrorist violence, open to competitive market strategies not held back by a regimen of tough regulations led by a government that encourages business and ably assisted by a fully participatory private sector. This is why foreign direct investment in Sri Lanka has more than doubled in the past year. This is why the statistics of net inflows to the Colombo Stock Exchange so far this year is most encouraging just as the inflows of investment in Commercial Banks. This is why foreign investors are ready to place their trust in Sri Lanka Development Bonds and also the reason for the many new Initial Public Offerings in the Colombo Stock Exchange. It is our conducive business environment coupled with a good image abroad and the rapidly increasing tourist arrivals in itself a barometer of confidence that have brought international hotel chains such as Shangri-la, Sun City and Sheraton to invest in Sri Lanka while other investments in a diverse portfolio of opportunity are in the pipeline. The 370 exhibitors present here including seventy (70) from the Small and Medium Enterprise Sector represent 25 sectors of export related trade that is growing in importance in Sri Lanka today. This is a remarkable demonstration of the growing importance of Sri Lanka as a hub of trade and commercial activity in this region. This is fully in keeping with our determined goal to make Sri Lanka a remarkable hub of export driven trade and commerce activity in this region, and very soon in Asia, too. My dear Friends, What is showcased here is the rapid development process that Sri Lanka is engaged in today. It is a process that develops five hubs of key activity that will soon transform Sri Lanka to the Wonder of Asia as envisaged in Mahinda Chinthana, Future Vision, the wonder of a newly won peace and the wonder of strengthened peace and national unity. It is a wonder of reconciliation being achieved through our own means in keeping with our own traditions. Our Knowledge Hub is based on much valued and readily available resource unmatched in most other parts. It is made up of a well educated skilled energetic and easily trainable workforce. The Commercial Hub being developed will be the link of major cities productive centres and the rural sector through major expressways, good highways and new rail links. Some of this are already open and others are under speedy construction. International Banks and Financial Services of quality are already contributing to this growth. The Colombo International Airport will soon be further expanded to meet all new demands and a second international airport in the Southern heartland of Sri Lanka, will also contribute to the building of the new Aviation Hub in the region. Similarly, in addition to the Port of Colombo, South Asia's premier trans-shipment port is already being expanded and the new Port at Hambantota in the South of Sri Lanka will provide added facilities to the vastly increased ocean trade demands in the region establishing a Maritime Hub, too. Significantly, our

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infrastructure development projects also extend to the energy sector with new power stations commissioned and being constructed to meet the new demand for power and energy by industry and commerce and other domestic demands. This will be our new Energy Hub. My dear Friends, These are intended to provide the best facilities for investors who are looking for opportunities in the new conditions of peace and progress in Sri Lanka. It is my belief that the large international presence at this event is a clear indication of the growing awareness in the world of the new investment opportunities in Sri Lanka. You are here today, with a measure of confidence in Sri Lanka that has not been diminished by false propaganda that is currently spread by those who are trying to prevent investment flowing to our country. Your presence here today shows the failure of the efforts of those who still support the agenda of separatist terror that prevented development in Sri Lanka for more than three decades. You are a strong and valuable vote of confidence in Sri Lanka an expression of growing trust in the new opportunities for export trade in a country that was famous for international trade from ancient days. In the next few days you will see the many opportunities for export related business in what will soon be the new commercial hub of the modern day Silk Route. We are a new hub of opportunity in a vast field of business. As much as we are encouraged by your presence here today, I urge you to make the most careful studies of the progress we are making and earn the best profits by your confident investments. Friends, discover the challenges of opportunity in a land liberated from terror and participate in the progress of Sri Lanka. I commend the Export Development Board, all its partners in the State and Private Sectors the exhibitors from Sri Lanka and abroad and participants in all related corporate activities for the commitment to the success of this unique mega event. Let me also wish all foreign participants a pleasant stay in Sri Lanka and trust that you will take with you happy memories of the hospitality and friendship of our people the beauty of our country with firm links with our exports to add more value to your business. May you all be blessed by the Noble Triple Gem! Thank you. Source: PRIU