
“Seychelles wants Sri Lanka to be the Ship Building Hub”- Seychelles Foreign Affairs Minister

Tuesday, 24 April 2012

Last Updated Wednesday, 25 April 2012

The Seychelles Foreign Minister H.E. Jean-Paul Adam visited Sri Lanka at the invitation of Prof. G.L. Peiris, Minister of External Affairs from 19th to 20th April 2012. The Seychelles Foreign Affairs Minister called on Prof. G.L. Peiris today (19/04/2012) at the Ministry of External Affairs and had fruitful bilateral discussions. The External Affairs Minister Prof. Peiris welcomed the Foreign Minister Adam and said that he was so pleased to receive the Minister from a friendly island nation of Seychelles. He noted with pleasure that it was the first visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Seychelles. The External Affairs Minister noted that as both the countries share common geo-political interests, Sri Lanka could exchange with Seychelles its experience and expertise knowledge in many fields, particularly in the fields of fisheries, maritime security, ship building and tourism. The External Affairs Minister also identified education, health sector and mini-hydro power and hospitality as the areas for further cooperation between the two countries. Both Ministers emphasized the necessity of establishing direct air links between the two countries as the way to enhance the tourism trade. The Seychelles Foreign Minister thanked the External Affairs Minister for inviting him to visit Sri Lanka and giving him an opportunity to enhance the bilateral cooperation between the two countries, particularly in the trade, economic and tourism areas. The Seychelles Minister stated that their President James Alix Mitchel has the vision to promote Sri Lanka as the ship building hub and to build strong links with Sri Lanka. The Seychelles Minister said that the Government of Seychelles is very keen to have closer cooperation between smaller nations in the Indian Ocean so that it would be beneficial to the people of the countries in the region. Both Ministers noted that countries have been affected by the piracy in the sea and stressed that it is essential for both countries to work together to fight against the piracy in order to protect the sea transportation in the region. The Seychelles Minister said that although Seychelles has a small population of 90,000, they receive more than 250,000 tourists annually and that they are interested in obtaining the services of Sri Lankan companies in the health sector and hospitality trade as well. The Minister of External Affairs Prof Peiris said that Sri Lanka is very pleased to extend whatever possible support to the Government and the People of Seychelles and that the Ministry has already arranged separate meetings for the Minister to meet with private sector companies that would be interested in engaging in trade with business community in Seychelles. The Seychelles Minister said that one of the purposes of his visit was to do the ground work for the forthcoming visit of their President James Alix Mitchel later in the year, who has already accepted the invitation extended by President Mahinda Rajapaksa. He also said that Seychelles has already established some trade links with the Sri Lankan companies and that he is looking forward to more private sector involvement and for the Sri Lankan companies to enhance their trade with Seychelles. He also stated that the Government of Seychelles would be the client to the Sri Lankan companies that would be interested in making investments in the health sector, particularly in the construction of hospitals and development of health services, including supply of Medical Officers. The Minister further said as the cost of production is fairly high in Seychelles, they look forward to import many of their required products from Sri Lanka as they are very much satisfied with the Sri Lankan products. The Seychelles Minister also said that they have identified Sri Lanka as their major supplier of their commodities as well as the vessels. The visiting Minister stated that their Parliament has recently passed a Bill on complete liberalization of renewable energy and that therefore the Sri Lankan companies which are interested in making investments in Seychelles in this field, have vast opportunity to make investments now. As Seychelles is a Member of the African Union, Sri Lankan businessmen could use Seychelles, as the gateway to Africa, particularly to East Africa in their trade relations. The Minister of External Affairs Prof. Peiris said that the External Affairs Ministry has arranged meetings for the visiting Minister to meet the Minister of Economic Development, Minister of Fisheries and Minister of Industry and Commerce, Secretary/Defence and Urban Development and that the visiting Minister could discuss in detail on specific issues with them, that would be very beneficial to both countries. Later in the evening, both Ministers addressed a joint media briefing session and they also had an interaction with some private sector representatives of the leading companies in the health, ship building and hydropower sectors in which areas Seychelles is interested in dealing with. The Seychelles Minister is accompanied by a senior official from the Ministry of Fisheries and he intends visiting the Colombo Dockyards PLC. External Affairs Minister Prof. Peiris hosted to a dinner in honour of the visiting Seychelles Foreign Affairs Minister on 19th April. The bilateral meetings were also attended by Mr. K. Amunugama, Secretary/External Affairs of the Ministry and senior officials of the Ministry of External Affairs. Ministry of External Affairs Colombo