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வெளிநாட்டு உறவுகள் அமைச்சு
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS

ජනරජ ගොඩනැගිල්ල, කොළඹ 1, ශ්‍රී ලංකාව குடியரசுக் கட்டிடம், கொழும்பு 1, இலங்கை Republic Building, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka

Media Release

Sri Lanka Missions abroad seek to re-position Sri Lanka's exports to meet market conditions resulting from the COVID-19 crisis

Foreign Secretary Ravinatha Aryasinha has observed that even as the Foreign Ministry was preoccupied with endeavouring to mitigate a multitude of problems faced by Overseas Sri Lankans, it was in parallel also seeking to re-position Sri Lanka's exports in the context of market conditions that have arisen as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. He said if this was successful, Sri Lanka would emerge one step ahead in the global supply chain, in a post COVID-19 world.

The Foreign Secretary made these observations earlier this week in an appearance on the Sri Lanka Rupavahini's 'Ethera Methara' programme. Commenting on the efforts by Sri Lanka's network of 67 Missions and Consulate-General Offices abroad in promoting Sri Lanka's exports during these constrained times, he said the Ministry's traditional 'Economic Diplomacy Programme' led by the Economic Affairs Division, has been modified to accommodate the changed circumstances.

It is noted that the Ministry of Foreign Relations, together with the Export Development Board (EDB) and Sri Lankan Missions abroad, are continuing to explore access for Sri Lankan products into new markets, to support the government's economic plan in sustaining the economy during the pandemic and mitigating the economic downturn in its aftermath. Informed by weekly updates provided by Missions abroad on the evolving world markets as well as prevailing procedures, requirements and restrictions in their countries of accreditation, in the background of COVID-19 pandemic, this initiative has thus far facilitated in connecting Sri Lankan exporters with importers in ten countries with regard to tea, spices, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), rubber gloves, face masks, reusable masks, surgical masks, surgical caps, surgical gowns, sanitary tissues, processed food, fruits and vegetables, spices and seafood.

Additional Secretary, Economic Affairs P.M. Amza notes that, to date 56 market updates have been filed by Sri Lanka missions abroad and all of them have been uploaded in the EDB website, which can be accessed at <https://www.edb.gov.lk/marketalerts>. The summary of the market updates received so far revealed that there is demand for Ceylon Tea from 21 countries (including orders amounting to 336 MT to Turkey, 100 MT to Egypt and 25 MT to Libya, materialized during the last two weeks), face masks from 25 countries, protective gowns from 15 countries, PPE from 13 countries and rubber gloves from 15 countries. There are also demands for food and vegetables from 13 countries.

The Ministry is also working with Sri Lanka Tea Board in expediting the process of authentication of export documents, in respect of tea consignments to various destinations in Middle East and Turkey, as well as several other products. Recognizing the difficulties faced by exporters the Ministry is also formally pursuing requests with the Customs and other relevant agencies in significant export destinations to facilitate the clearance of relevant documents of Sri Lankan exporters. Several Colombo based Diplomatic Missions have also cooperated in this endeavour by taking appropriate measures to also authenticate export documents.

Additionally, the Ministry is also supporting Sri Lanka Tourism in the facilitation required for over 12,000 foreign tourists who have chosen to remain in Sri Lanka, despite the present COVID-19 pandemic and the prevailing curfews in many parts of the country. This includes over 4000 tourists from Western countries, notwithstanding the continuance of commercial as well as charter flights to return home. Visas for tourists in Sri Lanka were automatically extended in the face of the crisis situation, up to 12 May, 2020.

Ministry of Foreign Relations
Colombo

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