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Prime Minister's Media Division - Temple Trees, Colombo 03.
දුරකථන | தொலைபேசி இலக்கம் | Telephone } 0114354854
ෆැක්ස් | தொலைநகல் | Fax } 0114354743
විද්‍යුත් තැපෑල | மின்னஞ்சல் | E-mail } pmmmedia@gmail.com

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ஊடக வெளியீடு

PRESS RELEASE

2020.06.30

Prime Minister Meets African Heads of Mission and Discusses Further Strengthening Relations and Issues Faced by the Afro-Lankan Community

In honor of Africa Day 2020, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa met with a delegation of African heads of mission in Sri Lanka at Temple Trees today and discussed further strengthening relations between Sri Lanka and African countries as well as issues faced by the small community of Afro-Lankans living in the country.

High Commissioner of South Africa in Sri Lanka Robina P. Marks, who led the delegation, said even though all countries are facing difficult times due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sri Lanka and Africa should look for new opportunities that may emerge as a result of the outbreak as a way of strengthening relations.

Prime Minister Rajapaksa, recalling his foreign policy when he was President, mentioned that he had placed a special emphasis on strengthening relations with Africa. However, much of that work was dismantled by the previous administration. He said he is keen on reestablishing those close relations once again.

The delegation thank Prime Minister Rajapaksa for prioritizing improved relations with Africa during his presidency. Sri Lanka obtained Accreditation Status in the African Union in 2014 and expanded its diplomatic presence in Africa, which helped further cooperation with the region. Prime Minister Rajapaksa, during his Presidency, made a number of official visits to African countries, including Tanzania, South Africa, Uganda, Kenya, Seychelles and Libya.

The High Commissioner of Seychelles Vincent Conrad Mederic said his country is planning to continue the collaborations with Sri Lanka, especially in the health sector. He said Seychelles would also like to develop a regional tourism program post COVID-19. Seychelles is reopening its borders on Aug. 1.

The Ambassador of Egypt Hussein Abdelhamid El Saharty informed the Prime Minister that high quality Sri Lanka tea is being reintroduced into the Egyptian market in large quantities once again and that trade has started to pick up as well.

At the meeting, the Prime Minister was also presented with a book titled "Tell Us Our Story, Grandma" about the history of the Sri Lankan community of African descent, authored by the South African High Commissioner Robina Marks. The High Commissioner informed Prime Minister Rajapaksa that a scholarship fund has been established to help students in the Afro-Lankan community. Two of them - Gayathri Thikshi and Sherin Alex - met Prime Minister Rajapaksa today, and Thikshi was awarded a scholarship check from that fund.

Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of Libya Nasser Y.M. Alfurjani and Honorary Consul of Rwanda Cally Alles were also a part of the delegation.

Prime Minister's Media Division