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வெளிநாட்டு அமைச்சு
FOREIGN MINISTRY

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

Media Statement

Temporary Closure of Identified Sri Lanka Missions / Posts Overseas: High Commission of Sri Lanka in Abuja/Nigeria, Consulate General of Sri Lanka in Frankfurt/Germany, Consulate General of Sri Lanka in Nicosia/Cyprus

The Foreign Ministry, following careful consideration, has taken a decision to temporarily close three of its Missions / Posts overseas, i.e., the Sri Lanka High Commission in Abuja, Nigeria; the Consulate General of Sri Lanka in Frankfurt, Germany; and the Consulate General of Sri Lanka in Nicosia, Cyprus; with effect from 31 December 2021. The decision, which has received the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers, is part of a restructuring process of Sri Lanka's network of Missions and Posts overseas carried out by the Foreign Ministry. The restructuring is undertaken with a view to conserving the country's much needed foreign reserves and minimising expenditure related to maintenance of Sri Lanka's Missions / Posts overseas, while ensuring the effective conduct of bilateral relations, in the backdrop of the grave economic challenges posed by the global pandemic.

Upon closure of the three identified Missions / Posts, their functions, including maintenance of bilateral political, economic, cultural relations as well as consular functions as relevant, will come under the purview of accredited, and in the case of Abuja and Nicosia, non-resident High Commissions / Embassies of Sri Lanka. In this regard, action is in process to concurrently accredit Nigeria through Sri Lanka's High Commission in Nairobi, Kenya; and the other countries in Africa concurrently accredited through the Sri Lankan Mission in Abuja, through Sri Lanka's Embassy in Cairo, Egypt and High Commission in Nairobi, respectively. The functions of Sri Lanka's Consulate General in Frankfurt, including trade, investment and tourism promotion, as well as consular matters of Sri Lankan nationals living and working in and around Frankfurt, will come under the purview of Sri Lanka's Embassy in Berlin, Germany.

The concurrent accreditation of Cyprus through the Sri Lanka Embassy in Rome, Italy will continue, with the latter handling Sri Lanka's bilateral relations with Cyprus as per current practice. The consular functions handled by the Consulate General in Nicosia will be brought under the purview of the Sri Lanka Embassy in Rome. However, considering the significant consular and welfare requirements of the approximately 6,000-strong Sri Lankan employee community living and working in Cyprus, which need to be addressed on a regular basis, action is being taken by the Foreign Ministry to appoint forthwith a suitably qualified Honorary Consul based in Nicosia. The Honorary Consul thus appointed will function under the direction of the Sri Lanka Embassy in Rome and the Foreign Ministry, in close coordination with the State Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotions & Market Diversification and the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment. The Foreign Ministry will closely monitor the transition

process in Cyprus in order to address issues, if any, and provide further solutions if deemed relevant and necessary in the foreseeable future.

Notwithstanding cost-cutting measures, the Foreign Ministry continues to attach highest priority to maintenance of bilateral relations with all countries at optimum level, to meet the foreign policy objectives of the Government with special focus on economic diplomacy, which entails the promotion of exports, foreign direct investment, tourism and foreign employment generation. The Ministry pays high attention to its mandate of safeguarding the welfare and effective functioning of Sri Lankan employees overseas with due regard to their direct and significant contribution to the nation's economy in terms of foreign remittances. A continuous evaluation of Mission / Post requirements vis-à-vis achievement of targets is being undertaken by the Foreign Ministry through a consultative process, both internal and external, involving senior representation of the Foreign Ministry and Sri Lanka's Heads of Mission / Post overseas, as well as relevant line institutions of Government including the Ministries of Finance, Trade and Labour; the State Ministries of Regional Cooperation and Foreign Employment Promotion & Market Diversification; the Department of Commerce, the Sri Lanka Export Development Board, the Board of Investment of Sri Lanka and the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, among other agencies. The decision to temporarily close the three identified Missions / Posts is subject to continuous review, and action will be taken in due course to consider re-instatement of relevant resident Missions / Posts as deemed necessary.

Foreign Ministry
Colombo

27 December, 2021

