

Sri Lanka's Ambassador in Stockholm in talks with Swedish Foreign Minister Ms. Ann Linde

Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Sweden Dharshana M. Perera, engaged in discussions with Sweden's Foreign Minister Ms. Ann Linde in Stockholm on 8 June 2021.

Tuesday's discussions focused on all areas which straddle bilateral engagement. There was general convergence of views to explore further initiatives focussed on the bilateral political, economic, sustainable development, environment and climate change and women's empowerment.

On trade and economic cooperation, the Ambassador highlighted the need to enhance trade-in-goods including better utilization of EUGSP+ provisions. Observing that the current volume is below the actual potential, he sought Sweden's partnership to enhance market access, emphasizing also the need to better encompass SMEs to the supply chains. They also shared views on climate change and environment. The Ambassador briefed the Minister on Sri Lanka's policy orientation towards mitigating climate change informing that the country intends to lend greater dependence on renewable energy sources by 2030. He highlighted Sri Lanka's interest to cooperate with Sweden on Clean technology. The Minister agreed that the two countries should explore avenues on green technology and climate infrastructure cooperation. Sweden implements a Feminist Foreign Policy. The discussions also focussed on women's empowerment and their economic up-liftment. The Ambassador referred to the vibrant women-led businesses in Sri Lanka including Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and that support to them through market access and capacity building would empower them significantly. Articulating Sweden's commitment to this area of cooperation, Foreign Minister Ann Linde shared Sweden's initiatives including the country's strong partnerships in the UN on women empowerment.

Foreign Minister Ann Linde and Ambassador Dharshana Perera exchanged views on the respective Covid -19 Pandemic mitigation efforts, the vaccine supply challenge associated with the inoculation programmes and the socio economic impacts of the pandemic. Ambassador Perera highlighted Sri Lanka's request for urgent supply of vaccines, especially the Astra Zeneca vaccine and the need for sustained supply to address the critical public health needs. Foreign Minister Linde underscored Sweden's strong partnership in the global efforts to address vaccine needs through the COVAX process which contributes towards the supply of vaccines including to Sri Lanka.

Swedish Foreign Minister Ms. Ann Linde was joined at the discussions by Ambassador Maria Christina Lundqvist-Chief of Protocol, Mr. Niklas Ström-Head of Department/Minister's Office, and Ms. Lovisa Hofmann-Desk Officer, Department for Asia and the Pacific Region of the Ministry. As per the current practice the meeting took place virtually.

Consultations on matters arising from the discussions are to be further progressed.

Sri Lanka and Sweden established formal diplomatic relations in November 1949 and thus share a longstanding relationship of over 71 years.

Embassy of Sri Lanka, Stockholm

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