

# VOICE OF BUSINESS

2024 JAN-MARCH ISSUE



The  
National  
Chamber  
of Commerce of Sri Lanka



The National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka

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# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE AGM

**65th Annual General Meeting of The National Chamber of Commerce** was held on 7th February 2024 at the Kingsbury Hotel, Colombo.

Elected office bearers:

- |                            |                              |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. PRESIDENT               | - MR DEEPAL NELSON           |
| 2. SENIOR DEPUTY PRESIDENT | - MR. ANURA WARNAKULASOORIYA |
| 3. DEPUTY PRESIDENT        | - MR. KAVINDA RAJAPAKSA      |
| 4. HON. SECRETARY          | - DR. LAKMAL FERNANDO        |
| 5. HON. TREASURER          | - MR. CHAMIKA GODAMANNA      |





# 65TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The ceremonial session was graced by Hon. Jayantha Jayasuriya, PC - Chief Justice of Sri Lanka as the Guest of Honour and Dr. P. Nandalal Weerasinghe - Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka as the Keynote Speaker. Mr. Jayantha Fernando - Digital Law Specialist, Partner Heritage Partners & Director at Sri Lanka CERT|CC made an informative presentation on, "Laws impacting digital transformation in Sri Lanka" as the Guest Speaker of the event. Distinguished invitees, member organizations and Officials of the National Chamber participated.



# SPEECH BY MR. DEEPAL NELSON, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL CHAMBER

At the Annual General Meeting held on 7 February 2024



As the President of the National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka, it gives me great honor and privilege to welcome all gathered today.

I assume you have observed some of the initiatives carried out by the National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka during 2023, one of the most turbulent years in the history of the country.

In brief, our main objectives for the upcoming year are to carry out;

1. Youth and women empowerment programs
2. Skills development initiatives focusing on rural economies
3. Projects to support the commercialization of novel inventions;
4. Programs to boost, start-ups
5. Initiatives to introduce sustainable development for SME sector companies
6. Local and Global business networking programs
7. Programs to develop international technology transfers and global market access and Focusing on a knowledge based economy

The fact that Sri Lanka is currently dealing with its most severe economic crisis in history is not a secret. Despite being on the road to recovery, there is strong sense of uncertainty that still exists.

Due to the crisis, Sri Lanka is at a crucial juncture in its economic path. The choices made at this point will have a direct bearing on the future of our island nation.

Therefore, in my capacity as the President of the National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka, I would like to appreciate some of the important stakeholders present here today;

His Lordship the Hon. Chief Justice of Sri Lanka;

Some of the recent judgments have been remarkable. Confidence in the legal system is a pertinent factor for Sri Lanka to maintain its image and reputation globally.

The Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka;

Dear Governor, you assumed a challenging role during an exceptionally tough period for the country.

# SPEECH BY MR. DEEPAL NELSON, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL CHAMBER



Early in your tenure, you indicated that the Sri Lankan economy was on the verge of shutting down. But you were able to prevent this from happening. Your aim was to prevent Sri Lanka from experiencing the fate of a failed state and you have succeeded.

Whilst appreciating that the onward journey for Sri Lanka in its road to recovery is a long and exhausting one, we, on behalf of the National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka, wholeheartedly appreciate and commend your actions.

The business community of Sri Lanka;

As mentioned earlier, as Sri Lanka progresses on its recovery journey, there remains considerable uncertainty. The commendable resilience displayed by the business community in the face of what is deemed the worst economic crisis deserves acknowledgment and commendation. I urge the business community to be ready to confront these uncertainties promptly and in the most innovative manner possible. This is a moment that calls for disruptive innovation.

I also take this opportunity on behalf of the National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka to express its gratitude to diplomats and senior government officials, for their steadfast support and commitment during the most challenging economic crisis witnessed by the country.

The road ahead is challenging, and we cannot navigate it alone. As chambers, we must become the voice for change. We will formulate a comprehensive mechanism to address the issues mentioned—demanding transparency, good governance, and accountability for corruption. Our collective strength lies in walking forward together, hand in hand. By fostering collaboration among businesses, government bodies, and civil society groups, we can collectively overcome obstacles and build a more resilient and prosperous nation.

I am also pleased to announce a historic milestone for the National Chamber of Commerce in Sri Lanka. Starting this year, Mrs. Nilupul Chandrasena has assumed the position of Secretary General, marking the first time a lady has held this role in the history of the Chamber. I also take this opportunity to express my gratitude to our former Secretary General, Mr. Bandula Dissanayake, for his dedicated service over the years.

In conclusion, my sincere appreciation goes to my colleagues at the head table and the Council members for their unwavering commitment. A special thank you to our keynote speaker for the evening, Mr. Jayantha Fernando for that thought-provoking address. I would be failing in my duties if I do not thank the diligent staff at the National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka for their continuous support.

Ladies and gentlemen, once again, I warmly welcome all of you. Let us unite, innovate, and move forward into a future of prosperity for Sri Lanka.



# EXTRACTS OF THE SPEECH BY THE CHIEF GUEST AT THE AGM 2024

## DR. NANDALAL WEERASINGHE, CENTRAL BANK GOVERNOR



### Navigating Economic Transformations: A Central Bank Perspective

In the face of shifting economic landscapes and persistent challenges, it is crucial for institutions like the National Chamber of Commerce to adapt and innovate to support various sectors across the economy. The initiatives undertaken by the chamber in the past year reflect a timely response to the evolving needs of businesses, aligning with the imperative of preparing industries for transition in a rapidly changing economic environment.

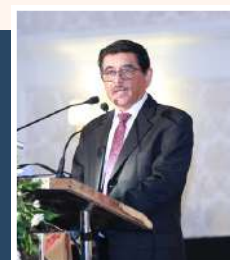
As Governor-General of the Bank, focus remains on steering monetary policy and upholding financial stability. Reflecting on recent years, it's evident that decisive actions were necessary to address inflationary pressures. While such measures might have seemed harsh at the time, they were instrumental in averting a deeper crisis and setting the stage for the current stabilization we observe.

The effectiveness of these policies is evident in the significant reduction of inflation and interest rates, alongside enhanced exchange rate stability. Central to our responsibilities is ensuring a robust financial system that fosters confidence and facilitates economic activity. Despite past uncertainties, the banking sector now stands on firmer ground, contributing to overall stability and resilience.

Looking ahead, our monetary policy framework emphasizes the importance of maintaining low and stable inflation over the medium to long term. Predictability, in this context, extends beyond fixed exchange rates or interest rates; it hinges on the ability to manage inflation expectations effectively, providing businesses with a stable foundation for decision-making.

Similarly, fiscal predictability is essential for sustaining economic stability. Government revenues must be sufficient to meet expenditure without resorting to unsustainable debt levels. Stability in fiscal policy complements efforts to stabilize inflation and maintain financial system resilience. However, stability alone is insufficient to drive long-term prosperity. Economic transformation is imperative to stimulate growth and elevate living standards, particularly in the aftermath of crises. This necessitates a shift towards globally competitive business models, characterized by innovation, efficiency, and adaptability.

## EXTRACTS OF THE SPEECH BY THE CHIEF GUEST AT THE AGM 2024, DR. NANDALAL WEERASINGHE, CENTRAL BANK GOVERNOR



Industries must embrace change, moving away from reliance on protectionist measures towards strategies that foster competitiveness on a global scale. Embracing technology, enhancing productivity, and seeking opportunities beyond domestic markets are pivotal steps towards sustainable growth.

While certain sectors may face decline, others have the potential to thrive through transformation and diversification. It's imperative for businesses to embrace this shift towards global competitiveness, shedding reliance on external support in favor of self-sufficiency and innovation.

In conclusion, navigating economic transformations requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders. By embracing change, fostering innovation, and prioritizing global competitiveness, businesses can not only survive but thrive in the evolving economic landscape, paving the way for a prosperous future for the country as a whole.

## EXTRACTS OF SPEECH BY MR. JAYANTHA FERNANDO - DIGITAL LAW SPECIALIST, PARTNER HERITAGE PARTNERS & DIRECTOR AT SRI LANKA CERT|CC AS THE GUEST SPEAKER

### “LAWS IMPACTING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN SRI LANKA”



Mr. Jayantha Fernando - Digital Law Specialist provided an overview of the impact of digital laws on Sri Lanka's economy, highlighting the country's efforts to support digital transformation. The digital economy is valued at around \$1.5 billion, with plans to increase to \$15 billion in the next 6 - 7 years. However, there's a shortage of skilled ICT workers, with plans to increase the workforce to 250,000.

“...Efforts are underway to revitalize the digital economy through strategies and initiatives led by the Ministry of Technology. The government aims to create an environment for job creation and increase digital exports. Notable initiatives include the Presidential Task Force on Artificial Intelligence and the development of a digital transformation roadmap...”

Emphasized the importance of digital laws and international standards in supporting the digital economy. Sri Lanka has adopted various legal frameworks, such as the Electronic Transactions Act, Data Protection Act, and accession to the Budapest Cybercrime Convention. These laws aim to address issues like cybercrime, data privacy, and electronic commerce. Furthermore, the Online Safety Act was highlighted as a significant initiative, aiming to protect individuals from online harm and regulate online behavior. However, there are challenges in implementing the law, particularly in obtaining evidence from foreign service providers and addressing internet intermediary liability.

Overall, Mr. Fernando emphasized the importance of a strong institutional framework and international cooperation in driving the digital economy and ensuring online safety.





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# 'ELEVATE SKILLS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS'

**A PROGRAM BY THE NATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CELEBRATING THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**



Objectives of the program was two fold where the significance of the women's day was discussed in an open forum with the participants followed by a skills building session for the MSME sector women entrepreneurs focusing on the need for women's economic empowerment and fostering gender equality.

The National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka conducted a special program titled "ELEVATE: Upskilling Women Entrepreneurs" in view of celebrating the International Women's Day, on Tuesday, 12th March 2024 at the National Chamber Auditorium.

This significant event was graced by distinguished invitees representing women leaders in the state and private sector establishments.

Program was specifically designed for women entrepreneurs within the MSME sector, as well as aspiring youth with a keen interest in entrepreneurship. It offered a unique opportunity for both existing women entrepreneurs and potential youth interested in getting into their own startups to embark on an entrepreneurial journey. Focused on uplifting Women's economic empowerment to ensure that women can equally participate in and benefit from decent work and social protection, access markets and have control over resources, increased voice, and meaningful participation in economic decision-making at all levels. As such the core focus of this program was to equip women entrepreneurs with the essential skills necessary for achieving success in their business endeavors. The sessions are tailored to empower and provide valuable insights, further strengthening the commitment to fostering women's equality within the economy.





Welcome address was delivered by Ms. Renuka Jayamanna, A Senior Council member of NCCSL, and emphasized the importance of the day in her remarks, “ International Women's Day which falls on 8th of March, a day dedicated to recognizing the remarkable contributions of women around the world. Today, we shine a spotlight on the women entrepreneurs who play a pivotal role in shaping our world. In this hall, we are surrounded by visionaries, leaders, and innovators – women who have defied the odds, shattered glass ceilings, and emerged as beacons of inspiration for generations to come. Their resilience, creativity, and unwavering determination have not only transformed industries but have also paved the way for a more inclusive and equitable future.

As we acknowledge the accomplishments of women entrepreneurs, let us also reflect on the challenges they have overcome and continue to face. It is through their tenacity that they have become catalysts for change, breaking barriers and forging new paths in business and beyond.



*“Today is not just about recognizing achievements of women; it's about fostering a collective commitment to empower, support, and amplify the voices of women entrepreneurs. Let this celebration be a reminder that we are united in our pursuit of a world where every woman has the opportunity to thrive and make a lasting impact. Let us join hands in applauding the indomitable spirit of women entrepreneurs, whose dedication and brilliance illuminate the path towards a more inclusive and prosperous future for all.”*

**Mrs. Renuka Jayamanna, Council Member, National Chamber,**

A well experienced Certified Professional Leadership Coach, Mrs. Dayalani Abeygoonawardene, served as the resource person. Mrs. Abeygoonawardene delivered the session with more practical oriented coaching techniques to enhance the essential skills set of participants and guided them through the program. Her inspiring session focused on empowering and motivating women entrepreneurs to drive success in their business ventures. Success Stories and Experience sharing session: The program was enriched with an experience sharing session of success stories of three women entrepreneurs from Ms. Maduwanthi Kumari of BMP Products, Ms. Jayomi Lokuliyana of ZMessenger and Ms. Senani Warusawithana of Senani Products.



The event was successfully organized with enormous support received from the leading organisations namely, Dankotuwa Porcelain PLC, APIIT, HNB Assurance PLC, MAC Holdings Private Limited., Esna Allied Enterprises (Pvt) Ltd, Country Style Foods (Pvt) Ltd, Eswaran Brothers Exports (Pvt) Ltd, Bellose Lanka (Pvt) Ltd., Pan Asia Banking Corporation PLC, Senani Food Products (Pvt) Ltd and Janet Lanka (Pvt) Ltd.



The National Chamber of Commerce remains committed creating opportunities for women entrepreneurs, empowering them with the tools and knowledge to thrive in their respective industries and looking forward to reviving activities of the Women's Forum of NCCSL to create an engagement platform to support emerging women entrepreneurs.





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# BILATERAL SESSIONS



## A SESSION TO EXPLORE BILATERAL TRADE OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN SRI LANKA AND INDONESIA BY THE NATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF SRI LANKA



The National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka successfully conducted a session on strengthening bilateral trade opportunities between Sri Lanka and Indonesia with the gracious presence of H.E Ambassador of Indonesia at the National Chamber Auditorium on February 15, 2024. Her Excellency Dewi Gustina Tobing, the Ambassador of Indonesia in Sri Lanka, enlightened the session with her presence as the guest speaker, accompanied by a team of officials from the Embassy of Indonesia in Sri Lanka, Mr. Fiki Oktanio, Minister Counselor in Economic Section I, and Ms. Lailal Khairiyah Yuniarti, Minister Counselor in Economic Section II. The session marked an important milestone in fostering economic ties and cooperation between the two nations to connect with the business community in Sri Lanka.





Furthermore H.E. Admiral Prof. Jayanath Colombage, the Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Indonesia & ASEAN, and Ms. Heshani Kaushalya, Second Secretary (Commercial) connected virtually. H.E. Admiral Prof. Jayanath Colombage addressed the gathering and provided an overview of the market conditions and potential sectors to captivate in Indonesia during the bilateral session.

The National Chamber President Mr. Deepal Nelson delivered his opening remarks welcoming the dignitaries and emphasized the objective of this session to support the business community who strive to grow amidst the economic calamity that the country has experienced in the recent past. Special invitees attended the session representing Export Development Board (EDB), Board of Investment (BOI), Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sri Lanka, media agencies and most importantly the leaders representing the business community.



Her Excellency Dewi Gustina Tobing, Ambassador of Indonesia to Sri Lanka made a presentation on 'Current status of Bilateral trade, potential market opportunities in Indonesia', elaborating the need for strengthening economic cooperation between Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

Valuable information on trade, investment and opportunities for export/import were discussed. The participants were able to freely interact with her excellency and her officials and discuss possibilities with regard to trade & investments in Indonesia during the Q & A session.

The National Chamber intends to conduct follow up sessions with the intention of developing business connects between the two countries.



## A BILATERAL TRADE DISCUSSION WAS HELD WITH MR. MORTEN REIMERS, HON. CONSUL TO ROMANIA

A bilateral trade discussion was held with Mr. Morten Reimers, Hon. Consul to Romania (designate to) along with his delegation on 16th February 2024 at 1.00 pm, 4th floor, National Chamber Boardroom. Council members, Secretary General/CEO and NCCSL team participated. The Romanian delegation expressed their enthusiasm to develop the agriculture sector-based SMEs in Sri Lanka and upgrade the storage facilities to reduce waste in the Agri produce.





## **A SESSION TO EXPLORE BILATERAL TRADE OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN SRI LANKA AND ITALY BY THE NATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF SRI LANKA**

The National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka successfully conducted a session on strengthening bilateral trade opportunities between Sri Lanka and Italy with the gracious presence of His Excellency Damiano Francovich, Ambassador of Italy as the Guest Speaker at the National Chamber Auditorium on March 27, 2024 at 2.30 pm.

Welcoming both Ambassadors and their diplomatic officials, invitees and the participants National Chamber President Mr. Deepal Nelson made his remarks that it is extremely necessary to generate export revenue for the country at this needy hour and the expectation of the event is to pave the path to Italian entrepreneurs to directly interact with Sri Lankan entrepreneurs in much focused manner in the space of Tourism, FDIs, Trade and Export, etc.”

H.E. Jagath Wellawatte, the Sri Lankan Ambassador in Rome, Italy, emphasized Italy's significance as a key trading partner. Italy holds the top position as both the primary trading partner and export destination for Sri Lankan products within the EU region, making it the most crucial country for Sri Lanka in terms of trade within the European Union.



## A SESSION TO EXPLORE BILATERAL TRADE OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN SRI LANKA AND ITALY BY THE NATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF SRI LANKA

The speech delivered by Ms. Tharaka Botheju, Counsellor (Commercial), representing Ms. Dilani Weerakoon, Consul General of Sri Lanka in Milan, Italy, highlights the significant trade relationship between Sri Lanka and Italy. Italy stands out as Sri Lanka's primary trading partner within the EU, serving as both a key export destination and a second home to many Sri Lankan expatriates. Additionally, recognizing the importance of diversifying Sri Lanka's export basket beyond textiles and apparel, the speech emphasizes the strategic value of participating in trade fairs like Host Milano to showcase a range of Sri Lankan products, including Ceylon Tea, cosmetics, spices, and herbal-based goods. Furthermore, niche opportunities in supplying components to Italy's automobile industry and meeting the demand for Sri Lankan culinary traditions and Ayurvedic products in Italy. Overall, the speech underscores the potential for expanding bilateral trade and collaboration between Sri Lanka and Italy across various sectors.

His Excellency Damiano Francovich the Italian Ambassador in Sri Lanka, graced the session as the guest speaker, enriching the gathering with an insightful presentation. His excellency emphasized about the present economy in Italy and its trade interaction with Sri Lanka and elaborated on statistics on various aspects including the growing SME sector and leading business sectors for growth; international connectivity; subnational strength; and bilateral relations.

“

Italy ranks as the 4th economic partner for Sri Lanka based on exports. Additionally, he highlighted the significant presence of Italian investors in Sri Lanka, with more than 15 on-site businesses. These investors play a vital role in the local tourism sector and fashion garment industry.

”

The Sri Lankan business community gathered at the session extensively engaged with the HE Ambassador in clarifying regarding the business opportunities available in Italian markets. The National Chamber intends to conduct follow up sessions in view of facilitating business connections between the two countries.







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## A BUSINESS DELEGATION FROM INDIA

The National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka hosted a Business Delegation from India, led by IGTD Exim Chamber of Commerce in India on 09th January 2024 at the National Chamber Auditorium. B2B discussions were successfully conducted with the business community in Sri Lanka. Program facilitated by Mr. Anura Warnakulasooriya, Senior Deputy President, Mr Ruwan Fernando, Council Member and Mrs. Nilupul Chandrasena Secretary General/CEO of National Chamber.

Business delegates were consisted of importers of Cinnamon, Clove, Coconut, Granite & Marbles, Rubber and Tea and the exporters of Corn, Export Products, Filter products, Garlic, Millet, Mustard Cake, Mustard Oil, Onion & Onion powder & frozen French fries, Other Agri Products, Potato, Red Chilly, Green Chilly.





## THE NATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF SRI LANKA (NCCSL) HOSTED A 11-MEMBER BUSINESS DELEGATION FROM RUSSIA RECENTLY.

This business delegation from Russia was led by Dr. Alexander Rybas, Trade Commissioner of the Russian Federation to explore trade and investment opportunities between Sri Lanka and Russia. B to B sessions hosted by the Chamber opened up several business opportunities to the local business community. The delegation represented diverse sectors such as pharmaceuticals, trade, fertiliser, hi-tech, infrastructure development, logistics, shipbuilding and port infrastructure, IT solutions, education, banking and the finance sector. The event was graced by His Excellency L. S. Dzhagaryan, Russian Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Ms. Thilaka Jayasundera, Secretary, Ministry of Industries, Ms. Renuka Weerakoon, Director General Board of Investment of Sri Lanka.



## VIRTUAL B2B CONCLAVE BANGLADESH AND SRI LANKA

Online B2B meetings with Bangladesh Counterparts was held on 13 March 2024 at 10.30 am. Session was jointly organized by the High Commission of Sri Lanka in Bangladesh, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI) and the National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka. 12 Bangladeshi organizations connected the virtual B2B session with 23 participants from Sri Lankan entities. Session was conducted via Microsoft Teams platform.

Mr. Ashraf Ahmed, President, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI), H.E. Tareq Md Ariful Islam, High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Sri Lanka, and H.E. Dharmapala Weerakkody, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Bangladesh also joined the meeting and shared their opening remarks to the session.

Mr. Deepal Nelson, President of National Chamber, Mr. Andre Fernando, President of the Sri Lanka Bangladesh Business Co-operation Council, Mrs. Nilupul Chandrasena, SG/CEO, Ms. Nishanthi Dilrukshi, Project Executive, Mr. Darshana, Web Master of the National Chamber joined the meeting.

Session was Moderated by Ms. Srimali Jayarathne, Counsellor (Commercial), High Commission of Sri Lanka in Bangladesh.





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# SEMINARS / WORKSHOPS

## SEMINAR ON “VALUE ADDED TAX AND RECENT AMENDMENTS’

The National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka in collaboration with the Department of Inland Revenue, Sri Lanka organized a Seminar on “Value Added Tax and recent amendments’ on Wednesday, 17 January 2024 at 10.00 am at the National Chamber Auditorium. The Panel discussion was conducted by a team of officials representing the Department of Inland Revenue led by Mr. A M Nafeel - Commissioner, Ms. Dushani Chandrasiri - Deputy Commissioner, Mr. D I U K Dias - Senior Deputy Commissioner, Mr. H A K K Sanath - Assistant Commissioner and Ms. Sarah Afker – Partner Tax Services of BDO Partners also joined as a panelist. The program was moderated by Ms. Radhini Thomas, Associate Director KPMG and attended by Mr. Ruwan Fernando - Council member and Ms. Nilupul Chandrasena - Secretary General.





# SEMINARS / WORKSHOPS

## WORKSHOP ON 'UNLOCKING INTERNATIONAL MARKETS - EXPORT PROCEDURE & DOCUMENTATION'

A full day Workshop on 'Unlocking International Markets - Export Procedure and Documentation' held on 20 March 2024 from 9.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. at National Chamber Boardroom with a group of 41 Participants. Program was conducted by Mr. Ravindrarajah, An experienced trainer and also a former Customs Director with extensive experience in Sri Lanka Customs procedures. Participants were awarded a certificate of participation .





## NATIONAL CHAMBER HOSTS NETWORKING SESSION WELCOMING NEWLY APPOINTED SRI LANKAN AMBASSADORS / HIGH COMMISSIONERS

The National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted a networking session with the newly appointed Sri Lankan Ambassadors / High Commissioners designate to several countries such as Canada, China, Maldives, Myanmar, Netherlands, Poland, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Thailand and Vietnam on 21st March 2024 from 2.30 pm. – 3.30 pm. at the National Chamber Auditorium. Ambassadors and High Commissioners, Officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, President and Office Bearers of National Chamber, distinguished invitees and business community participated. The objective of this session was to foster bilateral trade and investment between Sri Lanka and respective countries.





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Item No.	Event	Date, Time & Venue
1.	Special NTFC (National Trade Facilitation Committee) meeting with Trade Chambers	4 January 2024 at 11.00 am at the meeting room of ADGC (Corporate), Sri Lanka Customs.
2.	Annual Policy Statement – 2024 (Monetary and Financial Sector Policies for 2024 and beyond) organized by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka	10 January 2024 at 10.00 am at The Atrium, Central Bank of Sri Lanka.
3.	An Introductory Seminar on National Business Excellence Awards 2024 in view of providing more guidance and clarity to the applicants in completing the application submission process was held via Teams platform Chaired by Mr. Wijesinha, Chairman, Panel of Judges and Mr. Sanath Fernando, Chairman, Technical and Financial Evaluation Committee and program conducted by Mrs. Nilupul Chandrasena, Secretary General/CEO of The National Chamber.	10 January 2024 at 3.00 pm via Teams platform
4.	03rd & 04th Quarterly Meetings of the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC)	12 January 2024 at 2.00 pm at the Randora Auditorium, Ministry of Finance.
5.	Meeting of the High Level Steering Committee on Trade National Single Window System (TNSWS) project to discuss the matters on the establishment of Project Implementation Unit (PIU) of the TNSWS project.	16 January 2024 at 1.30 pm at the Ministry of Finance.
6.	Meeting with Sri Lanka China Business Co-operation Business Council (SLCBCC) to discuss about the possible collaborative efforts to organize programs targeted at the business communities representing the respective members of the NCCSL and SLCBCC ,Mr. Aravinthakumar, President of SLCBCC, Mr. Ranjith Laksiri, Vice President, SLCBCC, Mr. Arjuna Yatawara, Secretary General, SLCBCC and Ms. Nilupul Chandrasena, Secretary General, NCCSL participated.	19 January 2024 at 3.00 pm at National Chamber Committee Room
7.	Stakeholder Consultation Meeting on Trade under India - Sri Lanka Economic & Technology Cooperation Agreement (ETCA).	23 January 2024 at 9.30 am at the *Auditorium, 01st Floor, SEMA Building, Janadhipathi Mawatha, Colombo 01.
8.	Meeting to discuss about the preparations for the selection of final winners of the "Made in Sri Lanka" logo organized by National Enterprise Development Authority (NEDA).	24 January 2024 at 9:30 a.m. via the Zoom platform.
9.	Annual General Meeting of the LCMA (Lanka Confectionery Manufacturers Association).	24 January 2024 at 5.00 pm at the Cinnamon Grand Hotel, Colombo.
10.	Virtual meeting with the Athens Chamber of Commerce & Industry to discuss the Insights on Sri Lanka-Greece bilateral relations.	25 January 2024 at 11.00 am
11.	International Customs Day celebrations program.	26 January 2024 at 9.00 am. at the Main Auditorium, Sri Lanka Customs House.
12.	Made in Sri Lanka Logo Awards Ceremony organized by the National Enterprise Development Authority (NEDA).	29 January 2024 at 10.00 am at the BMICH.
13.	Launch of the Strategy to Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Businesses to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Sri Lanka.	31 January 2024 at 9.30 am at Temple Trees, Colombo 03.
14.	"A discussion with the Officer in Charge of the Visa Section of the German Embassy on "Embark on a Journey to Germany" organized by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce	06 February 2024 at 7.30 am. at the Hilton Colombo Residencies, Colombo 02.
15.	The first meeting of National Steering Committee on Elimination of Child Labour (NSCECL) for the year 2024. Chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Foreign Employment.	06 February 2024 at 2.00 pm. at 4th floor Auditorium, Labour Secretariat, Colombo 05,
16.	Workshop on WTO-TFA Articles 7.8 Expedited Shipment, and E-Commerce, Organized by the World Bank International Experts.	16th February 2024 from 09.00 am – 5.30 pm at Galle Face Conference Room 1, Galle Face Hotel, Colombo.
17.	International Mother Language Day programme organized by the High Commission of Bangladesh in collaboration with the Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka and United Nations, Sri Lanka.	21st February 2024 at 8.30 am at Independence Square



18.	A Discussion on "World Bank supporting for Implementation of National Water Resource Policy Sharing of successful Experience on Water Management in Thailand" chaired by Mr. Anura Dissanayake, Secretary to the Prime Minister.	22 February 2024 at 9.00 am at the World Bank office.
19.	Stakeholder consultation meeting on the "Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation" chapter of the ETCA. Purpose of this discussion is to address concerns of Sri Lankan exporters at Indian entry points and discuss the Indian proposal on trade grievance mechanisms.	26 February 2024, at 10:30 am, Customs Auditorium, Sri Lanka Customs Head Office.
20.	Half-day conference titled "Spice Horizons: Tracing the Legacy of Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) Ceylon Cinnamon and the Future of Other PGI Products for Export Development." Organized by UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization).	27th Feb 2024 at 8.30 am at Water's Edge Hotel.
21.	The Food Control & Administration Unit of The Ministry of Health & Department of Commerce together with the World Trade Organization (WTO) & Commercial Law Development Programme (CLDP) organized WTO National Workshop on the Agreement of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement)	28th - 29th February and 01st March 2024 from 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. at Courtyard by Marriott Colombo.
22.	519th Council meeting of the National Chamber.	23 January 2024 at 4.00 pm at the National Chamber Boardroom.
23.	A special council meeting to discuss about the recent correspondence received from Urban Development Authority regarding the Lease Agreement of the land occupied by NCCSL.	1 February 2024 at 4.00 pm at the National Chamber premises and zoom platform too.
24.	New member interviews Conducted by Dr. Lakmal Fernando, Hon. Secretary of the National Chamber.	15th February 2024 at 8.30 am at 4th floor, National Chamber Boardroom.
25.	Special Meeting of Sri Lanka Bangladesh Business Corporation Council (SLBBCC), chaired by Mr. Andre Fernando, the President of the Sri Lanka Bangladesh Business Corporation Council (SLBBCC) to discuss the upcoming virtual b2b with Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry in Bangladesh.	1st March 2024 at 3.00 pm at the National Chamber Boardroom
26.	"Womanhood", a special program to mark the international Women's Day organized by BNI Sri Lanka, Colombo Central Region. Mrs. Nilupul Chandrasena, Secretary General/CEO of the National Chamber invited as the Guest Speaker of the event.	5th March 2024 at 7.30 am. at Granbell, Colombo 3
27.	A consultative meeting organized by the World Bank with respect to Agriculture sector in Sri Lanka. Purpose of this consultation meeting is to inform relevant public, private and non-governmental stakeholders on ways to enhance performance of respective crops/products and value chains by capturing new economic opportunities while also providing guidance to shape the Bank's strategy to support these sectors.	5th March 2024 at 6.00 pm via zoom platform.
28.	The consultative meeting with National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka - This consultation is a part of the ongoing Agriculture Sector Review (ASR), an advisory services and analytics project, being undertaken by the Bank.	5 March 2024 at 6.00 pm via online.
29.	Weekly Management meeting to discuss the ongoing and future activities of the Chamber and operational matters.	13 March 2024 at the National Chamber Boardroom
30.	520th Council Meeting of the National Chamber to discuss special engagements of National Chamber, Activities (present and future), Chamber representation with other organizations, etc.	13 March 2024 at 4.30 pm in the National Chamber Boardroom
31.	A Knowledge sharing session by the Guest speaker Mr. Mario Perumal, Managing Director of Vigilant Security and also of International Investigators Network (Pvt) Ltd. Scope of the speech, 'Protecting your business: Role of Background Screening in Mitigating Risks'.	13 March 2024 at 5.30 pm in the National Chamber Boardroom
32.	A consultative workshop on Development of formulation of National Tariff Policy.	14 March 2024 at the Galle Face Hotel.
33.	Virtual meeting to discuss and update of the National Business Excellence Award 2024 - Progress of Evaluations.	19 March 2024 at 2.45 pm
34.	Weekly Management meeting to discuss the ongoing and future activities of the Chamber and operational matters.	21 March 2024 at 3.30 pm at the National Chamber Boardroom

35.	Beyond Compliance: A public private dialogue on building a lasting food safety and quality culture organized by the United Nations Industrial Development organization.	21 March from 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm at Galle Face Hotel, Jubilee Ballroom.
36.	New Member Interviews, Chaired by Dr. Lakmal Fernando, Honorary Secretary of National Chambers,	25 March 2024 at 1.00 pm at the National Chamber Boardroom
37.	Conference on 'Digital Public Infrastructure' organized by the High Commission of India in association with the Ministry of Technology, Government of Sri Lanka. The keynote address delivered by H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.	26 March 2024 on 9.15 pm at Hotel Taj Samudra
38.	43rd Annual General Meeting of the FTZMA (Free Trade Zone Manufacturers' Association).	28 March 2024 at 6.30 pm. at the "Courtyard by Marriott" Colombo.
39.	Co – creation workshop on developing a National Action plan for Inclusive and Sustainable Business (ISB) models in Sri Lanka Conducted by the Ministry of Industries and Sustainable Development Authority, UNESCAP.	28 March 2024 at 8.30 am- 5.00pm, at BMICH



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