



Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN, Geneva

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Ambassador Aryasinha calls on expatriate Sri Lankans and organizations to help in making the 'Declaration of Peace' pledge a reality abroad in practical ways

Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha has said the special 'Declaration of Peace' pledge made at this year's Independence Day celebration in Sri Lanka was an important reminder of the concerted efforts being made in the country to seek reconciliation and to ensure that we do not repeat mistakes of the past. He said the challenge before expatriate Sri Lankans, was to consider ways and means of making the 'Declaration of Peace' pledge a reality abroad in practical ways. He particularly urged Sri Lanka related organizations abroad, to play a catalytic role in furthering the objectives of unity, amity and reconciliation contained in the 'Declaration of Peace' in all their work. .

Ambassador Aryasinha made these observations, when he addressed the Sri Lankan community resident in Geneva and the environs on Saturday (7 February 2015), who joined together to mark Sri Lanka's 67th anniversary of Independence, at a solemn event organized by the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN in Geneva held at the ILO premises in Geneva.

Earlier, following the national anthem and the observance of two minutes silence for all the National Heroes, multi-religious observances were conducted. Ven. Thawalama Dhammika Thero and Ven. Halyale Wimalarathana Thero invoked blessings according to the Buddhist religious tradition. Uma Shankar Kurukkal and Karthik Ragavan Kurukkal performed the Hindu prayers. Imam A.M. Zawahir performed the Islamic prayers. Rev. Vincent Schmid and Rev. Richard Lord conducted the Christian prayers.

The 67th Independence Day message of the President was read by Mrs. Samantha Jayasuriya, Deputy Permanent Representative, while Mrs. Mafusa Lafir, Second Secretary read the Message of the Prime Minister and Mr. Chatura Perera, Second Secretary read the Message of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Addressing the gathering Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha said the occasion was a celebration of the Sri Lankan identity and the events of the day represented the rich ethno-religious diversity that all Sri Lankans share. He noted that Sri Lanka ushers in Independence Day this year at a time when there has been a new government elected in Sri Lanka under the leadership of President Maithripala Sirisena, which has committed to a new programme which focuses on good governance, sustainable economic development, peace and stability based on a compassionate society and adherence to a non-aligned foreign policy.

Ambassador Aryasinha who drew particular attention to the special 'Declaration of Peace' pledge which was made in all three languages at the official 67th Independence Day ceremony at Sri Jayawardenapura Kotte, further said this was in line with a key recommendation of the 2011 Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) Report. He said this pledge was an important reminder to all Sri Lankans living abroad, that back in Sri Lanka there is a concerted effort to seek reconciliation and to ensure that we do not repeat past mistakes. He said the challenge to expatriate Sri Lankans, was to consider ways and means of making this pledge a reality among their fellow Sri Lankan communities abroad in practical ways. He particularly urged those belonging to Sri Lanka related Organisations to try to think how their organizations can play a catalytic role in furthering the objectives of unity, amity and reconciliation contained in 'Declaration of Peace' in all the work they do.

Ambassador Nimal Karunatilake, Permanent Representative to the World Trade Organization delivered the Vote of Thanks.

The hosts of the evening were Mr. Chatura Perera, Second Secretary in Sinhala, Mrs. Mafusa Lafir, Second Secretary and Mrs. Asha Neeliya, Management Assistant in Tamil, and Ms. Dilini Gunasekera, Second Secretary in English.

The ceremonial segment of the programme was followed by a Sri Lankan dinner hosted by the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka.

Earlier on the 5 February 2015, the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka hosted a reception for the diplomatic community at the United Nations building in Geneva to commemorate the 67th Independence Day of Sri Lanka. The event was attended by over 200 guests, including Permanent Representatives to the United Nations and World Trade Organization, Heads of United Nations Institutes, diplomats and representatives of civil society organizations.

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