



Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN, Geneva

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Sri Lanka initiates collaboration with CERN

Sri Lanka and the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) have entered into an agreement to begin cooperation between CERN and the scientific community in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha and the Director General of CERN, Mr. Rolf-Dieter Heuer, signed an "Expression of Interest" (EOI) Agreement on Thursday, 25 June 2015 at the CERN Headquarters in Geneva to give effect to this process.

CERN is the most prominent particle physics research institute in the world and is best known for its flagship discovery of the 'Higgs-Boson' in 2012, conferring the 2013 Nobel Prize for Physics to two theoretical physicists who had predicted this fundamental particle almost 50 years earlier. More than half of the world's particle physicists - about 11,000 in number coming from over 600 universities in 80 countries - do research at CERN, and are engaged in complex scientific experiments.

The Agreement will facilitate engineers, scientists and researchers from Sri Lankan universities and research institutes to gain valuable first-hand experience and knowledge in both experimental and theoretical 'particle physics' and related aspects of technologies through the highly-demanded programmes conducted by CERN. Sri Lankan students, teachers, scientists, engineers and researchers may also apply on a competitive basis for the CERN's annual 'High-School teacher', 'Summer Student' and other training programmes. The agreement will also pave the way for an 'International Cooperation Agreement', which will enable the development of a networked scientific community of Sri Lankan scholars, who could remain engaged with the research activity carried out by CERN in the field of high energy physics.

As part of an action plan to give effect to this EOI, in a discussion following the signing ceremony, Ambassador Aryasinha and DG/CERN Heuer agreed to consider the possibility of two programmes in the current year. First, for CERN to conduct a workshop in Colombo for Master Teachers of Physics in order to generate interest at the secondary school level throughout the country. Second, for a group of leading physicists, representing the different Universities in Sri Lanka, to visit CERN in order to be exposed to the research work currently underway.

Dr. Rüdiger Voss, Head of International Relations CERN, Mrs. Samantha Jayasuriya, Deputy Permanent Representative and Ms. Dilini Gunasekera, Second Secretary of the Sri Lanka Permanent Mission, were associated in the discussions.

In November 2014, the Permanent Mission in Geneva facilitated a visit to Sri Lanka by Dr Voss, through the Coordinating Secretariat for Science, Technology and Innovation (COSTI). During his visit, Dr. Voss had discussions with the then Senior Minister for Scientific Affairs, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Technology, Research and Atomic Energy. He also met officials from COSTI, the University Grants Commission, the Atomic Energy Authority, as well as senior scientists.

CERN, which was founded in 1954 through a convention signed by 12 European states, presently has 21 states as members, 3 Associate member states and 4 observer States. With the signing of the EOI, Sri Lanka became the latest non-member state of CERN to come into an agreement in terms of an Expression of Interest (EOI), and could progressively graduate to enter into an 'International Co-operation Agreement' with CERN, a status already reached by South Asian neighbors Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, who are among the more than 40 countries already collaborating with CERN through such a mechanism.

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Photo caption

Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha and the Director General of CERN, Mr. Rolf-Dieter Heurer, signed an "Expression of Interest" (EOI) Agreement to begin cooperation between CERN and the scientific community in Sri Lanka, on Thursday, 25 June 2015 at the CERN Headquarters in Geneva. Dr. Rüdiger Voss, Head of International Relations CERN, Mrs. Samantha Jayasuriya, Deputy Permanent Representative and Ms. Dilini Gunasekera, Second Secretary of the Sri Lanka Permanent Mission, were associated in the ceremony.