



Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN, Geneva  
**Tel: (+41) 022 919 12 50, Fax: (+41) 022 734 90 84**  
**E-mail: [mission@lankamission.org](mailto:mission@lankamission.org) Web: [www.lankamission.org](http://www.lankamission.org)**

## **Minister Senaratne draws attention of the World Health Assembly to the recent floods in Sri Lanka**

Minister of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine Dr Rajitha Senaratne on Tuesday (24 May 2016) drew the attention of the 69<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly (WHA) meeting in Geneva to the recent floods and landslides in Sri Lanka that affected nearly half a million people and appreciated the expression of solidarity and support by countries, partners and the World Health Organization (WHO), to strengthen the timely health response to the affected people.

Addressing the Assembly under this year's theme, "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", Minister Senaratne stated that "the Government of Sri Lanka is fully committed to the Sustainable Development Agenda and has already set up a multi sectoral Sustainable Development Secretariat to achieve this goal". Drawing attention to the increasing influx of migration, Minister highlighted the need to pay attention to the health of migrants, irrespective of their status of migration. In this context, he recalled the offer made by the President of Sri Lanka to host the second Global Consultation on Health of Migrants in Sri Lanka October this year, and stated that Sri Lanka is envisaging a political declaration as the outcome of the Global Consultation to demonstrate the commitment to this important issue.

The invited speaker of this year, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Ms. Christiana Figueres, addressing the Assembly, highlighted the links between climate change and health, and warned that "if the world does not fundamentally change its approach to energy within the next 5 years, there is a risk that damage to the atmosphere will be irrevocable and continue to impact health for decades". The meeting was also addressed by the President of the Assembly - Hon. Dr. Ahmed Bin Mohammed al - Saidi, Minister of Health of Oman, Dr. Margaret Chan, Director General /WHO and a large number of Health Ministers from Member countries.

On the side – lines of the WHA, the Minister also met with his counterparts from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Thailand, Nepal and Spain, and with Dr Poonam Singh, the Regional Director of South East Asian Region (SEAR) of WHO. Minister Senaratne participating as a panellist at a side – event jointly organised by the WHO and several Member States, including Sri Lanka on Prevention and Control of

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), shared the best practices of Sri Lanka in achieving its multisectoral NCD targets.

Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha, Director General of Health Services Dr. P.G. Mahipala, and other senior officials of the Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous Medicine were associated with the Minister during his meetings.

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