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வெளிநாட்டு அலுவல்கள் அமைச்சு
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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2023

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CHAPTER-1- INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

1.1 Introduction

2023 was a significant year for Sri Lanka and as well as for the world. It marked the stabilisation of the Sri Lankan economy with a clear trajectory towards growth, following the challenges faced in 2022. Globally, major geopolitical and geo-economic transformations continued to take place. As the executor of Sri Lanka's foreign policy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reoriented its focus in line with the Government's priorities in the context of the above evolving national and international developments. Along with our core tasks of safeguarding Sri Lanka's interests and sovereignty and maintaining friendly relations with all nations, the Ministry's key focus in 2023 was on 'economic diplomacy' with a view to enhancing revenue opportunities for the country and greater integration with the global economy, through trade expansion, value addition, diversification of export products and markets, promotion of tourism and investment promotion. The Ministry engaged in widening trade relations beyond our traditional partners in the West, giving priority to the neighbourhood, East Asia and ASEAN, which is where the highest future growth is forecast, while also reaching out to Africa.

In its international engagements in 2023, Sri Lanka enhanced its image as an active member in the international community and strengthened relationships with countries and organizations. Sri Lanka championed the causes of the Global South such as financing just and sustainable climate change adaptation and energy transition, tackling sovereign debt relief, bridging global digital and technological divides and enhancing the legitimacy and representative nature of multilateral institutions including the International Financial Institutions. At the 19th NAM Summit held in 2023, H.E. the President Ranil Wickremesinghe called for an immediate ceasefire and the creation of a State of Palestine in 5 years, on the basis of a two State solution while ensuring the security of Israel.

Sri Lanka also continued to actively reach out to new partners while enhancing existing friendships. The past year saw high level engagements with countries across the spectrum including traditional partners like India, China, Japan and Iran as well as in the Western world. For instance, a French President visited Sri Lanka for the first time in 2023. Action was also taken to strengthen partnerships with South East Asia and Africa including an application for membership of regional arrangements like RCEP.

In October 2023, Sri Lanka took on the Chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) under the theme "Strengthening regional architecture: Reinforcing the Indian Ocean identity" in view of its interest in peace, stability, safety, and security as well as freedom of navigation and a Blue Economy in the Indian Ocean. IORA seeks to promote sustainable and safe use of the ocean for its 23 member states and 10 Dialogue Partners, and as IORA Chair Sri Lanka will seek to promote maritime safety and security as a means of combatting ocean related transnational organized crime such as trafficking in humans, drugs and WMD material as well as promoting a Blue Economy for the prosperity of all.

In addition, the Ministry continued to assist the Government's initiatives on national unity and reconciliation by facilitating work relating to the reconciliation mechanisms and assisting the implementation of Sri Lanka's voluntarily undertaken commitments on human rights, which will benefit the people of the country and also enhance external confidence in our genuine efforts towards national unity and reconciliation. Additionally, the Ministry also continued to counter

in the strongest terms false narratives relating to alleged genocide in Sri Lanka emanating from foreign actors.

As the public face of the Ministry, the Consular Affairs Division continued to significantly enhance its services provided to the general public. These included the digitalization of the document authentication process resulting in more efficient and hassle-free delivery of services, the decision to establish more regional offices offering consular services, and shifting of the Consular Affairs Division to form a one-stop consular service centre in Battaramulla.

In 2023, the Ministry also initiated the process of increasing and enhancing its human resources, including for the recruitment of 20 new officers to the Sri Lanka Foreign Service. The number of career Foreign Service officials appointed as Heads of Sri Lanka Missions abroad also significantly increased during the year.

While ensuring effective financial and administration management, the Ministry continued to expand Sri Lanka's diplomatic outreach within financial constraints. Processes were initiated to establish new Missions in areas of the world where Sri Lanka has less diplomatic presence, including in the Central Asian region.

In 2023, the Ministry also conducted several outreach activities for the diplomatic community based in Colombo, highlighting Sri Lanka's tourism potential and cultural and religious diversity.

1.2 Vision and Mission

Vision

To be a responsible nation within the international community and to maintain friendly relations with all countries.

Mission

The promotion, projection, and protection of Sri Lanka's national interests internationally, in accordance with the foreign policy of the Government and to advise the Government on managing foreign relations in keeping with Sri Lanka's national interests.

1.3 Duties and Functions

Part 1: Sec (I) –Gazette Extraordinary No: 43/2289 of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka – 22 July 2022

Duties & Functions

1. Formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects concerning the subject of Foreign Affairs and those subjects under the purview of Departments, Statutory Institutions and Public Corporations listed in Column II based on the national policies implemented by the government.
2. Provision of public services under the purview of the Ministry in an efficient and people-friendly manner.
3. Reforming all systems and procedures using modern management techniques and technology, thus ensuring that the functions of the Ministry are fulfilled while eliminating corruption and waste.
4. Maintaining diplomatic relations with foreign countries broadens Sri Lanka's cooperation as an active member internationally, thereby stabilising its good image abroad.

Column II

(Departments, Statutory Institutions & Public Corporations)

1. Diplomatic Missions abroad
2. National Oceanic Affairs Committee Secretariat
3. Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute for International Relations and Strategic Studies

Column III

Laws and Ordinance to be Implemented

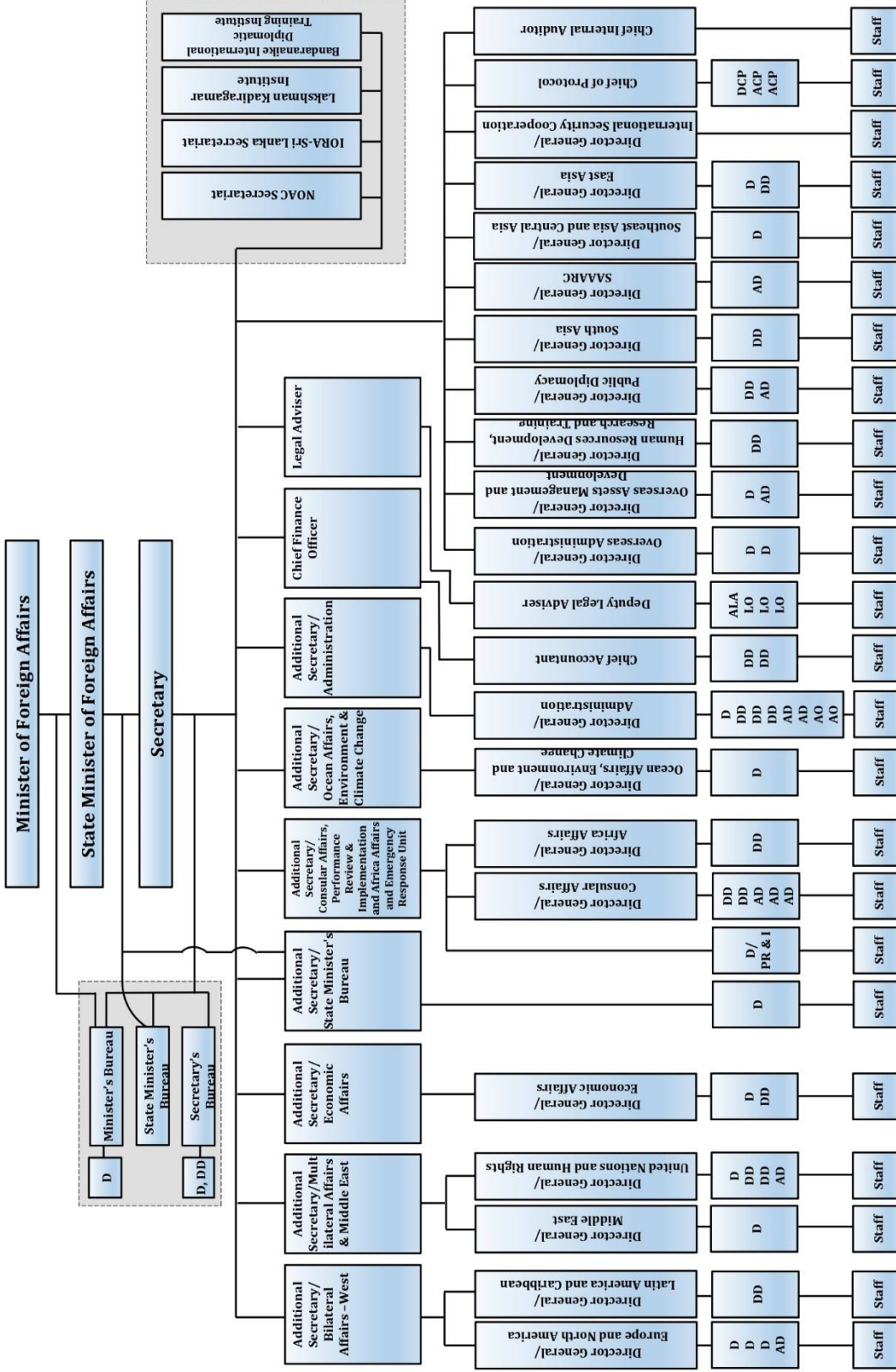
1. Consular Function Act, No. 4 of 1981
2. Diplomatic Privileges Act, No. 9 of 1996
3. Sri Lanka Institute of Strategic Studies Act, No. 45 of 2000
4. All other legislations pertaining to the subjects specified in Columns I and II and not specifically brought under the purview of any other Minister.

5. Adoption of necessary measures to widen international cooperation in accordance with national policies, coordination and provision of necessary advice to the Government.
6. Responding appropriately to counteract adverse propaganda affecting the good image of Sri Lanka and stabilise the image of Sri Lanka.
7. Active engagement with international and regional associations for political, economic, environmental, social, and cultural cooperation.
8. Maintain diplomatic relations with foreign countries and conduct negotiations regarding treaties, agreements, and conventions.
9. Provision of diplomatic immunities and privileges.
10. Provide assistance to relevant Ministries and Institutions to promote external trade, investment, tourism, employment, and external financial relations.
11. Consolidating foreign relations is required to protect the territorial integrity and maritime rights of Sri Lanka.
12. Adoption of necessary measures related to the welfare of Sri Lankan residents in foreign countries.

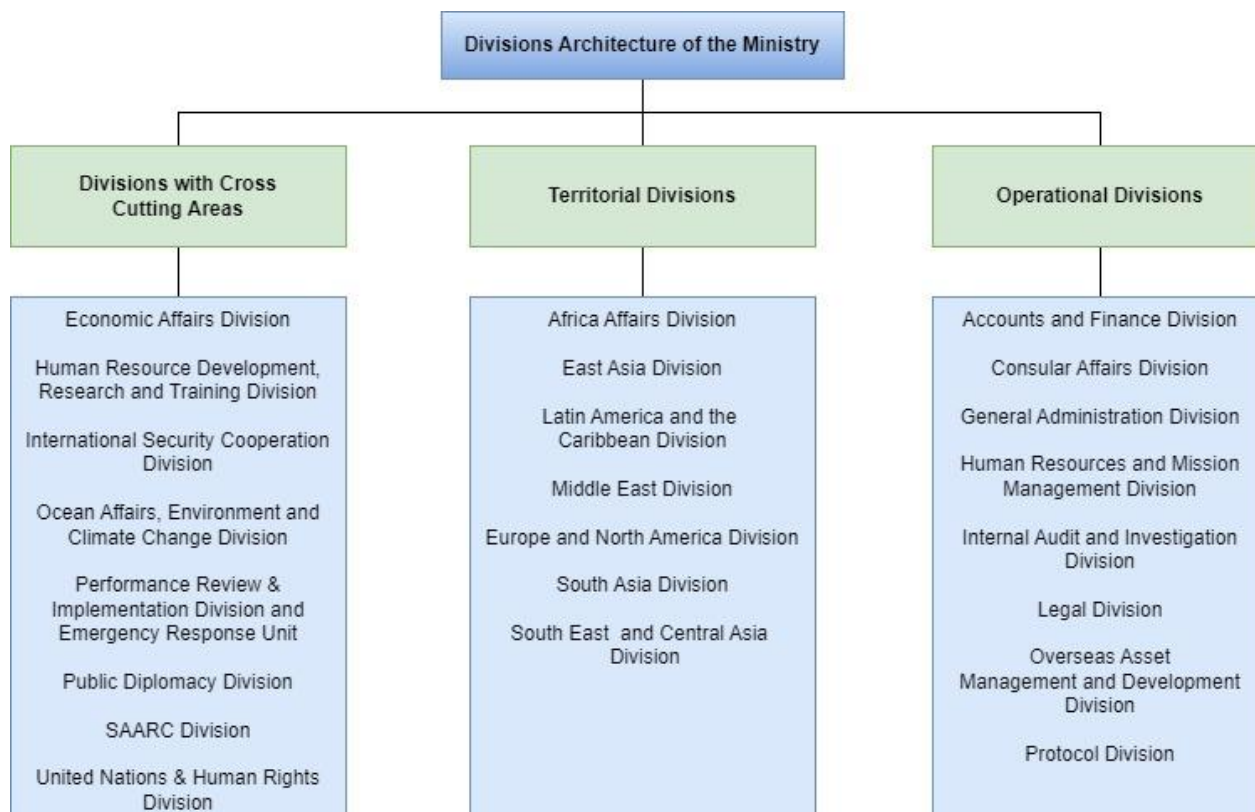
13. Provision of consular services.
14. The administration of personnel in Sri Lanka Foreign Service and those attached to overseas diplomatic missions and taking measures to enhance their professional skills.
15. Study geopolitical trends and advise the government on strategies for managing them in a manner beneficial to Sri Lanka's interests.
16. Supervising all Institutions referred to in Column II and matters relating to all subjects assigned to such Institutions.
17. Supervision of all Institutions listed in Column II.

1.4 Organogram

Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Organogram



1.6 Divisions Architecture



CHAPTER - 2 - PROGRESS AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka made productive and successful achievements in 2023. Building on past achievements, the Ministry displayed resilience and determination to overcome various challenges. The Ministry carried out various activities throughout the year to enhance Sri Lanka's diplomatic presence worldwide. The Ministry fostered stronger relationships with key partners, addressed regional and global challenges, and promoted trade and investment. The Ministry facilitated partnerships to boost Sri Lanka's economy and create new opportunities for growth. Additionally, the Ministry has showcased Sri Lanka's rich heritage and fostered people-to-people relations with other countries. Active participation in multilateral and regional foras including the hosting 23rd meeting of IORA was another significant achievement that contributed to global dialogue and cooperation on various issues of mutual interest.

Looking ahead, the Ministry's future outlook focuses on enhancing Sri Lanka's diplomatic presence globally. The Ministry will further strengthen Sri Lanka's diplomatic presence by expanding outreach in key regions and capitals. In line with the current digital age, the Ministry will embrace digital platforms for diplomacy to increase its online presence and engagement with global audiences. Economic diplomacy will remain a priority, with efforts to attract foreign investment and promote Sri Lankan exports. The Ministry will also focus on promoting Sri Lanka's culture, tourism, and heritage to a global audience. Moreover, the Ministry will engage in global efforts to address climate change and promote sustainable development goals. Improving consular services for Sri Lankans abroad will remain a key priority, focusing on enhancing efficiency and accessibility. The Ministry will continue to work diligently towards achieving its goals and objectives for the betterment of Sri Lanka and its people.

2.1. Diplomatic Outreach of Sri Lanka

During the period being considered, various high-ranking officials of Sri Lanka, including the President, Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, State Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Secretary of Foreign Affairs, actively participated in engagements with their foreign counterparts and interlocutors to address national priorities. Notable visits made during this time include the President's attendance at the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III in the United Kingdom, as well as visits to India, Japan, Singapore, Cuba, Germany, and the Maldives. H.E the President also participated in COP 28 held in Dubai. The transit visit of President Emmanuel Macron of the Republic of France to Sri Lanka marked a significant milestone in diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and France, as it was the first visit by a French President to Sri Lanka.

The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka visited Thailand to participate in the UN Vesak Day celebrations. Several high-level foreign dignitaries, including the Foreign Ministers of Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, and the Commonwealth Secretary General, visited Sri Lanka in February on official invitations extended by the Government of Sri Lanka to participate in the 75th anniversary of independence celebrations. The business forum was held on 3 February 2023, with the exclusive

participation of 17 visiting Heads of Mission from the African region, CEOs, and business leaders, who demonstrated Sri Lanka's 'Look Africa Policy'.

The international community's support for Sri Lanka's measures to address economic challenges contributed to the restoration and re-graduation of Sri Lanka's economy. Official visits by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the State Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Secretary of Foreign Affairs to various countries opened new vistas for cooperation between Sri Lanka and foreign nations. The following tables, I and II, illustrate the details of Sri Lanka's inward and outward high-level visits during the period under review.

Table - I- High-Level Visits-Inward

Heads of State/Government

1.	Private Visit of H.E. Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, President of the Republic of Maldives, to Sri Lanka	29 December 2022 – 02 January 2023
2.	His Holiness Dr Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin Saheb, Spiritual Leader of the International Bohra Community as a State Guest	01– 17 March 2023
3.	Visit (Transit) of H.E. Emmanuel Macron, President of the Republic of France	28-29 July 2023
4.	His Holiness Dr Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin Saheb, Spiritual Leader of the International Bohra Community as a State Guest	5 -20 November 2023

Foreign Ministers

1.	Hon. Dr A.K. Abdul Momen, Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bangladesh	02 – 05 February 2023
2.	Hon. Takei Shunsuke, State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan	02 – 04 February 2023
3.	Hon. Abdulla Shahid, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Maldives	01– 05 February 2023
4.	Hon. Dr. Bimala Rai Paudel, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal	02– 05 February 2023
5.	Hon. Hina Rabban Khar, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan	03– 04 February 2023
6.	Hon. Jun Weidong, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of China	29 May -01 June 2023
7.	Hon. Abdulla Shahid, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Maldives	07 June 2023
8.	Visit of Mr Hayushi Yoshimasa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan	28-29 July 2023
9.	Visit of Hon. Zamby Bin Abdul Kadir, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia	08-12 October 2023
10.	Hon. Dr A.K. Abdul Momen, Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bangladesh	11-12 October 2023

11.	Hon. Dr. S. Jayasankar, Minister of External Affairs, India	11-12 October 2023
12.	Hon. Maneesh Gobin, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mauritius	11-12 October 2023
13.	Hon. Dr Naledi Pander, Minister of International Relations, South Africa	11-12 October 2023
14.	Hon. Suleiman Masound Makkane, Minister of Blue Economy and Fisheries, Tanzania	11-12 October 2023

Visits of Speakers of the Parliament and Other Ministers

1.	Hon. Jai Bir Rai, Minister of Education & Skill Development of Bhutan	02- 07 February 2023
2.	Hon. V. Muraleedharan, Minister of State for External Affairs of India	02 – 05 February 2023
3.	Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland KC, Secretary General of Commonwealth	01- 05 February 2023
4.	Visit of Hon. Dr. L Murugan, Minister of State in the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting	09 – 11 February 2023
5.	Private Visit of H.E. Anna Kosala Hakobayan, Spouse of Prime Minister of Armenia	06 April 2023
6.	Visit of Hon. Dr. H.R. Hassan, Minister of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture of the Government of Maldives	04 – 08 June 2023
7.	Visit of Hon. Aymam Kamal, Egyptian Assistant Foreign Minister of Asian Affairs	17-20 July 2023
8.	Visit of Secretary of Foreign Affairs of India	10- 11 July 2023
9.	Visit of BIMSTEC Secretary General	23-27 July 2023
10.	Visit of Hon. Tim Watts, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs	11-12 October 2023
11.	Hon. Suleiman Masound Makkane, Minister of Blue Economy and Fisheries, Tanzania	11-12 October 2023
12.	Hon. Shihesak Phunangketkeow, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs	11-12 October 2023
13.	Hon. Saeed Mubarak, Assistant Minister for Economic and Trade Affairs, United Arab Emirates	11-12 October 2023
14.	Hon. Awsan Abdullah, Deputy Foreign Minister of Yemen	11-12 October 2023
15.	Hon. Masahiro Komura, Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan	11-12 October 2023
16.	Hon. Waleed Ejkhareiji, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	11-12 October 2023
17.	Hon. Anne Marie Trevelyan, Minister for Indo Pacific, UK	11-12 October 2023
18.	Hon. Dr. Nirmala Sitharam, Minister of Finance, India	01-03 November 2023
19.	Hon. Shen Yiqin, State Councilor of China	18-21 November 2023

20.	Hon. Nikolai Patrashev, Secretary of the Security Council of Russia	28 November 2023
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Other Foreign Dignitaries

1.	Visit of H.E. Lee Jin-Bok, Presidential Special Envoy of the Republic of Korea (Senior Secretary to the President for Political Affairs)	22 March 2023
2.	Visit of Mr. Eric Solheim, Ex-Executive Director/UNEP	26– 30 March 2023
3.	Dr. Robert Floyed, Executive Secretary of the CTBTO	31 – 05 June 2023
4.	Visit of the Governor of Yunnan Province of China	16– 20 May 2023
5.	Visit of Ambassador of Israel to Sri Lanka (New Delhi Based)	02 – 06 June 2023
6.	Visit of Mr. Sarun Charoensuwan, Foreign Secretary of Thailand	26-29 August 2023
7.	Dr. Salman Al Farisi, Secretary General of IORA	08-12 October 2023

Conferences and Other Events

1.	75 th Anniversary of Independence Day & related events	01– 15 February 2023
2.	03 rd Meeting of the IORA Working Group of Maritime Safety	01 March 2023
3.	14 th ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting on Nuclear Proliferation & Disarmament	14 May 2023
4.	IFTAR Dinner hosted by Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs	03 April 2023
5.	International Harmony – 2023	02 June 2023
6.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Vesak Festival – 2023	30 May 2023
7.	Sri Lanka Maldives Joint Commission	07 June 2023
8.	IORA Ministerial Conference	8-12 October 2023

Table II- High-Level Visits-Outward

H.E. the President

1.	Visit of H.E. the President of Sri Lanka for the Coronation His Majesty the King Charles III London, United Kingdom	04– 08 May 2023
2.	Visit of H.E. the President of Sri Lanka to Japan, Malaysia, Singapore	22– 23 May 2023 Singapore 24 – 25 May 2023 Japan 26 – 27 May 2023 Malaysia
3.	Visit of H.E. the President of Sri Lanka for IDU Forum 2023 in the UK and Summit for New Global Financing Pact - 2023	17 -21 June 2023 – London, UK 21 – 25 June 2023 – Paris, France

4.	Official visit of H.E. the President to India	20-21 July 2023
5.	Visit of H.E. the President to Singapore	21-22 August 2023
6.	H.E. the President visited Cuba to attend the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China on “Current Development Challenges: the Role of Science, Technology and Innovation” Havana	13-16 September 2023
7.	Visit of H.E. the President to New York to attend the 78 th UNGA	16-21 September 2023
8.	Visit of H.E. the President to London	21-22 September 2023
9.	Visit of H.E. the President to Germany to attend the Berlin Global Dialogue	27-30 September 2023
10.	Visit of H.E. the President to China	15-21 October 2023
11.	Visit of H.E. the President to Maldives	15-18 November 2023
12.	Visit of H.E. the President to Dubai to attend the COP 28 Conference	30 November - 04 December 2023

Hon. Prime Minister

1.	Hon. Prime Minister’s Official Visit to Bangkok, Thailand to attend UN Vesak Day Celebrations	31 May – 03 June 2023
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Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs

1.	Official Visit of Hon. Foreign Minister to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	21 – 23 January 2023
2.	Visit of Hon. Foreign Minister to Kerala, India	10 – 13 February 2023
3.	Visit of Hon. Foreign Minister to India	02 – 04 March 2023
4.	Visit of Hon. Foreign Minister to London, United Kingdom	12 – 16 March 2023
5.	Visit of Hon. Foreign Minister to South Africa	22 -25 March 2023
6.	Visit of Hon. Foreign Minister to South Korea	02 – 05 April 2023
7.	Visit of Hon. Foreign Minister to Sweden, Stockholm	12 – 13 May 2023
8.	Visit of Hon. Foreign Minister to China	24 – 30 June 2023
9.	Visit of Hon. Foreign Minister to Jakarta and Thailand	13 -19 July 2023
10.	Visit of Hon. Foreign Minister to Iran	04-07 August 2023
11.	Visit of Hon. Foreign Minister to New York to attend 78 th UNGA and Washington	18-26 September 2023
12.	Visit of Hon. Foreign Minister to China	20-24 October 2023
13.	Visit of Hon. Foreign Minister to Mauritius	16-18 November 2023
14.	Visit of Hon. Foreign Minister to Dubai, UAE	30 November - 4 December 2023
15.	Visit of Hon. Foreign Minister to Doha, Qatar	10-11 December 2023
16.	Visit of Hon. Foreign Minister to Kathmandu, Nepal	21-22 December 2023

Hon. State Minister of Foreign Affairs

1.	Visit of Hon. State Minister to Bangladesh	12 – 13 May 2023
2.	Visit of Hon. State Minister to Saudi Arabia	21 – 24 May 2023
3.	Hon. State Minister Visit to Poland	13– 20 June 2023
4.	Hon. State Minister Visit to China	16 -19 August 2023
5.	Hon. State Minister Visit to Indonesia	10-11 October 2023

2.2 Regional and Multilateral Engagements of Sri Lanka

During the period under review, Sri Lanka hosted and participated in several meetings and conferences of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) at the regional level. Sri Lanka assumed the chairmanship of the IORA at its 23rd Council of Ministers meeting on 11 October 2023 in Colombo.

The participation at the 23rd Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) and the 19th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting (MM) held virtually in Bangkok, Thailand, in March 2023 further underscored Sri Lanka's commitments to this regional bloc.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs' participation at the Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in the Republic of Korea in May 2023 further highlighted Sri Lanka's regional engagements. Sri Lanka's participation at the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) at the Head of State level demonstrated Sri Lanka's commitment to the UN and multilateral relations. Sri Lanka also continued to engage with the UN Human Rights Council to address human rights and reconciliation issues. Sri Lanka participated in the 52nd, 53rd, and 54th Sessions of the Human Rights Council (HRC). As part of reconciliation efforts, study visits to South Africa by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Justice helped to learn insights into the South African model of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

The Sri Lanka National Report on UPR, prepared with extensive consultations with civil society and other stakeholders, was submitted to the HRC while participating in the 4th Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). During this period, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) ratification, signed on 24 October 1996, was an important milestone, demonstrating Sri Lanka's commitment to banning nuclear explosions worldwide.

2.3 Confronting Challenges

All sixty-one (61) Sri Lanka Missions/Posts abroad have efficiently discharged their duties with a minimum availability of human resources, demonstrating their commitment towards the national efforts to reduce public expenditure.

The Ministry achieved a significant milestone by delivering consular services to the general public through its Regional Consular Offices in Colombo, Jaffna, Matara, Kandy, Trincomalee, and Kurunegala, as well as the Sri Lanka Missions/Posts abroad. The Consular Division's sustainable digitalisation initiatives introduced an online authentication system for GCE O/L & A/L certificates starting in August 2023. This e-DAS system allows applicants to apply for online authentication for their GCE O/L & A/L certificates without physically visiting the Consular Division in Colombo.

The Ministry's Emergency Response Unit played a crucial role in coordinating and facilitating donations of essential medicines and medical equipment from various countries, including Human Insulin, Malnourishment Drugs, and other Essential Medicines during the period under review when the country was undergoing a serious shortage of medical supplies due to the financial crisis. Additionally, the Unit also organised outward donations of Ceylon Tea and Apparel as humanitarian aid for the earthquake victims in Türkiye and the cyclone victims in Myanmar.

Sri Lanka achieved Tier 2 status in The Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report during the year.

Overall, this report reviews the Ministry's performance from 1 January to 31 December 2023, focusing on the performance made by each Division in collaboration with the respective Sri Lanka Missions/Posts abroad, line Ministries/agencies, foreign diplomatic Missions, and international organisations based in Colombo.

2.4 Performance Overview: Divisions with Cross-cutting Areas

2.4.1 Economic Affairs Division

The Economic Affairs Division is mainly entrusted with activities related to promoting economic diplomacy. It plays a catalyst role between the Missions abroad and the line Ministries/agencies in Sri Lanka while providing strategic support and guidance to the Sri Lanka Missions in promoting and safeguarding Sri Lanka's economic interests overseas. The Economic Diplomacy Program, one of the main tasks of the Division, under which the Missions are assigned with economic targets is being implemented in coordination with a number of public and private sector institutions including the president's Office, Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance & its affiliated agencies (External Resources Department, Department of National Planning, Sri Lanka Customs, etc), Department of Commerce, Board of Investment, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, Sri Lanka Export Development Board, Sri Lanka Tea Board, Sri Lanka Gem & Jewelry Authority, Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Department of Inland Revenue, Chambers of Commerce, Joint Apparel Association, Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA), Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE), etc.

2.4.1.1 Economic Affairs (Bilateral)

The Economic Affairs Division organised a vital forum with the Heads of Mission of the Paris Club member countries and India, seeking their support for the IMF Process while awaiting China's assurance. They coordinated with SL Missions, ERD and CBSL to facilitate the IMF engagement. The division worked with the line Ministries and respective foreign missions in Sri Lanka regarding the country's emergency needs, such as fuel, wheat flour, medicine, fertilisers, chemicals, etc. As a member of the National Trade Negotiating Committee (NTNC), the Division played a key role in implementing the Sri Lanka-Singapore Free Trade Agreement, concluding the Sri Lanka-Thailand Free Trade Agreement, resuming negotiations with countries including India, Bangladesh and Indonesia for FTAs and PTAs and commencing of the process to enter into the RCEP. Aligning with the "Look Africa Policy", the Division organised Business Forums chaired by the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs in February and March 2023, respectively, with the participation of business leaders. Visas were facilitated for the Sri Lankan businesses for participation in trade fairs and other business engagements. Business delegations were organised to Saudi Arabia and Romania in the construction and employment sectors, respectively, and facilitated the visit of a business delegation to Sri Lanka from Pakistan. Developed a Plan of Action with the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau on Tourism Revival-Role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Missions". Missions were guided to arrange press briefings in respective capitals on the developments in the tourism industry and to address the negative publicity. In coordination with the line agencies, organised virtual meetings to promote investments and exports and allocated funds from the Economic Diplomacy budget for the promotional activities carried out by the Missions/Posts.

2.4.1.2 Economic Affairs (Multilateral)

The Division is the focal point for the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in Sri Lanka. In 2023, the Division participated in/facilitated 30 IORA-related meetings/Workshops/Training Programs in coordination with the relevant line Ministries/Agencies. Sri Lanka assumed the Chair of IORA for two years (2023 – 2025) at the 23rd Council of Ministers Meeting and the 25th Committee of Senior Officials Meeting held from 9-11 October 2023 in Colombo. The Division actively participated in 17 IORA-related meetings in person or virtually.

GoSL hosted the 25th IORA Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) Interactive Dialogue between Senior Officials and Dialogue Partners and the 23rd Council of Ministers' Meeting (COM) from 9-11 October 2023 in Colombo as the Chair of IORA. Sri Lanka hosted the 3rd Institutional Arrangement and Broadening Engagement Meeting (IABE) on 11th May 2023, the IORA Sub-Committee on Finance (SCF) of the Committee of Senior Officials Meeting held on 27th September 2023 and 29th Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF) virtually. The Division performed the key role of making preparations and substantive matters for the above IORA meetings.

The Division is also the focal point for the BIMSTEC in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan students participated and won the Championship in the BIMSTEC Quiz Competition held on 15th February 2023 in Bhutan. Sri Lanka hosted the first meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Technology on 21 June 2023 as the lead country for Science, Technology and Innovation, and the second meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Himalayan Science Council was held virtually on 26th

July 2023. Sri Lanka, as the lead country for Public Health, hosted the First Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Public Health (EGPH) on 26-27 July 2023 in person in collaboration with the Ministry of Health

Sri Lanka has prepared a Plan of Action on the Human Resource Development Sector and submitted it to the BIMSTEC Secretariat for sharing with Member States. Delegations from Sri Lanka participated in several BIMSTEC core meetings and sectoral meetings from January to December 2023.

Sri Lanka assumed the Colombo Plan Council Presidency for 2023 on 10th April 2023. Sri Lanka hosted the Workshop on the Sustainable Green Cities: Increasing Green Spaces on 06th September 2023 in collaboration with the University of Moratuwa and the Colombo Plan Secretariat.

The 46th session of the Governing Council of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was held from 14 to 15 February 2023 in Rome, with the participation of the State Minister of Finance. Sri Lanka participated in the 2nd Session of the International Dialogue on Migration 2023, held on 5th—6th October 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland. This Division liaised with the line Ministries on matters related to the Global Compact for Migration and Development (GFMD).

This Division liaised with the relevant line Ministries on matters related to the African-Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO), where 45 government officials obtained training opportunities, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank.

2.4.1.3 Technical Cooperation

The Division verified and recommended 210 short-term entry visas, 89 long-term entry visas and 51 resident visas to employees of International Organizations such as the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the International Finance Cooperation, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and Colombo Plan Secretariat etc. who are on specific assignments in Sri Lanka. Visas were facilitated so participants could attend workshops and seminars in Sri Lanka organised by the Line Ministries, including the Sustainable Development Council under the Ministry of Finance.

The Division facilitated 126 Procurement Notices received from Ministries, Departments and Institutions such as the Sri Lankan Airlines, State Pharmaceuticals Corporation, Litro Gas Lanka Ltd, Ceylon Petroleum Storage Terminals Ltd., etc. and advised Sri Lanka Missions overseas to provide adequate publicity for the notices and to update the website/social media of the Missions/Posts. Visas were facilitated for those who needed assistance from Government Institutes, Entrepreneurs, etc.

The Division also facilitated verification of International Companies through the Sri Lanka Missions Overseas.

2.4.1.4 Technical co-operation workshop on capacity development for diplomats

The Technical Co-operation and Special Projects Unit of the Economic Affairs Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organised a workshop on cyber security and the cyber domain for the staff officers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the diplomatic officers attached to the Sri Lanka Missions and Posts overseas on 25th February 2023. This workshop was the second in the series of capacity development programs initiated by the Economic Affairs Division for Ministry officials. Resource Experts from the government and private sector, as well as the National Computer Emergency Readiness Team (CERT), Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA), Cybercrime and Money Laundering Section of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Digital Transformation of Brandix, the META, the Centre for Integrated Communication Research & Advocacy Holdings (CICRA) conducted the cyber security and the cyber domain workshop. Two independent legal experts also shared their expertise on relevant legal frameworks at the workshop.

This workshop provided knowledge on data privacy, social media safety, and global and local cyber security policies involving the Ministry's day-to-day work and, more importantly, Sri Lanka Missions overseas.

2.4.1.5 Special Projects with Government of India's Grant Assistance

Implement hybrid power projects in three islands off Jaffna to generate wind, solar, and battery storage with efficient diesel generation in Analaitivu, Delft, and Nainativu. Implementation of Sri Lanka Unique Digital Identity (SL-UDI) Programme for systems integrator for introducing and maintaining the foundational ID platform for biometric identification; Tender notices were published a few times in India calling for bids, but the Indian Companies that came forward did not meet the criteria. Therefore, it was decided at the Ministerial meeting to call for fresh bids.

2.4.2 Human Resource Development, Research & Training Division

The Human Resource Development, Research and Training (HRD, R & T) Division plays an important role in ensuring that the career development and training needs of the officers working at the Ministry and the Sri Lanka Missions/Posts abroad are met.

In addition to its core responsibilities, the Division also serves as the focal point of the Ministry's Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute (LKI) and the Bandaranaike International Diplomatic Training Institute (BIDTI). These institutes are instrumental in providing specialised training and education to the officers, which allows them to enhance their skills and knowledge in various areas such as diplomacy, foreign policy, and international relations. The HRD R & T Division works closely with these institutes to develop training programs and workshops that are tailored to meet the specific needs and requirements of the officers. The progress made by the Division in line with the scope of the Division during the period under review is as follows:

Promotional Matters of the SLFS Officers: Prepared the guideline and the notice for calling applications from the eligible candidates of Grade I of the SLFS to be promoted to a particular grade in consultation with the Public Service Commission (PSC).

Amendments to the Service Minute of the SLFS: Coordinated with the Public Service Commission (PSC) to publish the 1st amendment to the Minute of the SLFS while making arrangements to finalise the 2nd amendment.

Reports and Publications: Prepared the Directory of Diplomatic, Consular & other Representation Abroad- 2023/2024. Coordinated with the Sectoral Oversight Committee on International Relations of the Parliament of Sri Lanka and submitted requested reports to the Committee in coordination with the respective Divisions of the Ministry.

Recruitments and Transfers: Interviewed a group of one hundred and fifteen (115) eligible candidates from the Open Competitive Examination for Recruitment to Grade III of the Sri Lanka Foreign Service to select forty (40) new entrants to the SLFS in line with the gazette notification no.2223 dated 9 April 2021. Coordinated with the Bandaranaike International Diplomatic Training Institute (BIDTI) to conduct the Third Efficiency Bar Examination-Capacity Building Training Programme for six (6) Grade-I Officers of the Sri Lanka Foreign Service. Made arrangements to conduct and disseminate the results of the First and Second Efficiency Bar Examinations and Foreign Language Test for the Officers of the Sri Lanka Foreign Service. Facilitated the competitive examination for filling vacancies in the Management Service Officers cadre in the Sri Lanka Missions/Posts abroad and the practical test. Facilitated the Limited Competitive Examination for filling vacancies in the Home Based Personal Assistants 'Posts in Sri Lanka Missions/Posts Abroad - 2021(2023), held on 20 August 2023. Steps were taken to obtain approval from the Public Service Commission to publish the gazette notification for the open competitive examination for recruitment to Grade III of the Sri Lanka Foreign Service in 2025.

Capacity Development Programs: During the period under consideration, this division facilitated and coordinated 21 foreign training programs for the SLFS officers in the Ministry to enhance their knowledge, skills, and capacity. Conducted an Orientation Program for a group of nine (9) newly appointed Heads of Mission. The Division also conducted 13 training programs for the officers of the Ministry. Conducted a briefing session on "Foreign Policy of Sri Lanka" for the Nigerian National Defence University visiting delegation on 1 April 2023 and, in coordination with the Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA), arranged to train a group of forty-seven (47) Management Service Officers and the Development Officers in the Ministry under the integrated capacity building approach.

2.4.3 International Security and Counter Terrorism Division

LTTE-related matters: The Division provided the required inputs and coordinated with relevant Missions regarding the continued proscription of LTTE in the European Union. The EU announced the retention of the LTTE in July 2023. The division prepared the first and second biannual submissions to the EU, submitted in March and September 2023, respectively. The Division has submitted information to support the retention of the LTTE listing in Canada. The division coordinated meetings and prepared submissions to counter genocide recognition by Canadian authorities. The division continued monitoring activities related to the LTTE abroad on significant days and events to identify patterns and developments that needed to be addressed.

Expanding bilateral Defence Cooperation: The Division has taken action to expedite the finalisation of bilateral agreements/MoUs with the Philippines, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Iraq. The MoU between Sri Lanka and the Philippines has already received Cabinet approval and is ready to be signed during a visit to Manila by a proposed Ministry of Defence (MOD) delegation. The revision of the MoU between Sri Lanka and Indonesia is currently being negotiated, and the Division has requested observations for the amended MoU received from the Indonesian side from the Ministry of Defence (MOD). This Division has forwarded the observations of the relevant Sri Lankan authorities on the MoU between Sri Lanka and Pakistan on combating International Terrorism to the High Commission of Pakistan in Colombo to obtain the concurrence of Pakistani authorities. Observations were submitted to the South Asia Division on the MoU between the Sri Lanka Coast Guard and the Maritime Security Agency of Pakistan on enhancing Maritime Cooperation and Exchange of Information. A draft MoU between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh on “Combating International Terrorism and Transnational Crimes and Intelligence Sharing” was sent to observe the Bangladeshi side. The division has obtained the Ministry of Defence’s observations for the proposed MoU between Sri Lanka and Iraq. As per the requests of the relevant political desks, this Division provided inputs/observations on the MoUs between Sri Lanka & Palestine, Sri Lanka & Maldives and Sri Lanka & Ethiopia in Defence Cooperation.

Capacity Development of Local Defence, Security, and Legal Agencies: The Division also coordinated participation in capacity-building programs offered by other governments and international organisations (e.g., UNODC) for officials of the Armed Forces, Ministry of Defence, etc. In addition, the division is coordinating the organisation of the first Thematic Working Group on Rehabilitation and Reintegration under the South Asian Network for Prevention of Violent Extremism (SAN-PVE) with UNODC, intending to share good practices and knowledge to enhance comprehensive Rehabilitation and Reintegration strategies through multidisciplinary collaboration.

Support Preventing / Countering Violent Extremism Efforts: The Division continued with support strengthening cooperation between the relevant agencies in countering and preventing violent extremism. The Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF- a global fund dedicated to preventing violent extremism) under its Accelerated Funding Mechanism for Sri Lanka to identify projects and consolidate funding under the UNODC SAN-PVE network were coordinated between the Sri Lankan stakeholders and the two initiatives. The Division represented the Ministry in the meetings of the two initiatives. The division worked on the development of ‘A Note to Cabinet’ on the Scope and Engagement of Sri Lanka with the SAN-PVE to proceed with implementing the SAN-PVE initiatives. The division has prepared ‘A Note to Cabinet’ on the Scope and Engagement of Sri Lanka with the SAN-PVE to implement the SAN-PVE initiatives.

The division is taking action to coordinate the Expression of Interest for Collaboration between the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism (SEARCCT) and the government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) to strengthen capacities and bolster the security of Malaysia and Sri Lanka in addressing and eradicating the threat of terrorism and violent extremism.

Countering Terror Financing: Together with the Deputy Legal Adviser, the Division represented the Foreign Ministry in the Officials' Committee convened by the Chief of National Intelligence to review the Designated List of Persons and Entities under UN Regulation No.1 of 2012 to promulgate UNSCR 1373. The new list was gazetted on 8 June 2023, and the subsequent amendments to the consolidated list under regulation 4(2) (b) of the United Nations Regulations No.2 of 2012 were gazetted on 4 September 2023.

Support other aspects of addressing threats to national security/image: The division has been coordinating with the relevant political divisions and SL missions to combat false propaganda about Sri Lanka by monitoring statements, events, social media, and political activity by pro-LTTE elements and providing recommendations and input for countermeasures.

Visits: The division has been arranging official visits abroad to participate in conferences, seminars, and workshops on counterterrorism, the 'Third United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States (HLC)', held in New York from 19-23 June 2023 and the Workshop on 'Developing national counter-terrorism policy and operational response to counter the use of new technologies for terrorist purpose', in Bangkok, Thailand from 25-26 October 2023.

2.4.4 Ocean Affairs, Environment and Climate Change Division

The Ocean Affairs, Environment & Climate Change Division has been assigned to promote, coordinate, and ensure coherence in Sri Lanka's international engagements related to ocean affairs, the environment, and climate change. It brings a foreign policy perspective to relevant government ministries and line agencies. Also, it works towards enhancing Sri Lanka's role in various international, regional, and sub-regional organisations that deal with ocean affairs, the environment and climate change. By doing so, the division aims to strengthen the objectives of these organisations and promote Sri Lanka's image as a bridge builder, thereby enhancing the country's interests.

As part of its mandate, the division coordinates projects and initiatives that increase Sri Lanka's overall interaction with foreign countries, organisations, and other related entities in promoting Sri Lanka as a platform for interactive dialogues, conferences, and workshops, working closely with all stakeholders.

This Division took action to revive the pending MOU between Sri Lanka and Seychelles in the Blue Economy Sector, the MOU on the Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP) with the UK government, which is finalised and now expecting to sign between the Hon. Minister or Secretary of the Environment Ministry and the Permanent Secretary or Minister concerns of the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) of the UK and the MOU between Sri Lanka and South Korea on cooperation on Carbon Crediting. In Multilateral Diplomacy, the Division successfully conducted the 3rd meeting of the IORA Working Group on Maritime Safety & Security, resulting in the revision of the 2022 – 2026 work plan as an actionable plan. The Division also contributed significantly to the Commonwealth Mangrove Ecosystem Livelihood

Action Group (MELAG). It revised the Action Plan with input from the Member States to focus on results-oriented benefits to the community depending on the mangrove ecosystem and preserving the mangrove habitat. In the Green Financing Sector, the Division followed up MOUs, including signing agreements with the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), Singapore, and the Republic of Korea. Other notable achievements include the ability of this division to institutionalise a partnership with the Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance (ORRAA), a US-based international government organisation. Further, we are trying to obtain support from the ORRAA for Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) related capacity building through connecting line agencies involved in the MSP initiative. The Division demonstrated a multifaceted approach to diplomatic engagements through initiatives such as the Mangrove Alliance for Climate (MAC) through connecting line agencies and monitoring their activities/projects initiated. Further, the Division successfully led efforts to oppose the proposed shifting of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) off Dondra Head, achieving a favourable outcome at the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The Division took steps to establish the Interagency Task Force headed by the Secretary/Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Aviation to oversee and manage maritime affairs and strengthen the Merchant Shipping Secretariat. The Division successfully coordinated the 28th Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC-COP28) held in Dubai, UAE, where Sri Lanka launched 03 climate change initiatives, namely, Launch of Climate Justice Forum, investing in the Tropical Belt towards Tackling Triple Planetary Crisis, COP28 Pledge on the Partnership for Establishment of the international Climate Change University in Sri Lanka. Workshops and dialogues, including those focused on the Law of the Sea and the Strategic Maritime Dialogue with Australia, underscored the Division's commitment to fostering international cooperation.

2.4.5 Performance Review & Implementation and Emergency Response Unit

The Performance Review and Implementation Division, which was established in January 2023, has been mandated with the functions of (i) preparation of the Ministry Action Plan, evaluating the implementation of the Ministry Action Plans and Reforms, (ii) preparation of all annual & quarterly performance reports of the Ministry and evaluating the achievement of the targets identified (iii) Monitoring the status and the implementation of MoUs/Agreements signed with the foreign countries (iv) Coordinating the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Consultative Committee meeting, COPA and other related audit and finance meetings (v) handling the functions of the Emergency Response Unit. In addition, the Division is also mandated to prepare special quarterly progress reports on the Foreign Secretaries' Performance Plan under the Key Results Areas (KRAs) as well as quarterly progress reports related to the follow-up on the throne speech by the President and submit them to the Presidential Secretariat.

Accordingly, the progress made by the Division during the period under review is as follows:

Annual Action Plan of the Ministry: Prepared the Ministry's Annual Action Plan-2023 and shared it with the respective entities.

Annual Performance Report of the Ministry: Prepared the Annual Performance Report-2022 and submitted it to the Parliament of Sri Lanka and other government entities. Also, submitted

quarterly progress reports on the Action Plan -2023 to the Presidential Secretariat up to the 4th quarter, in coordination with 23 Divisions of the Ministry and 61 Sri Lanka Missions/Posts abroad.

Secretaries' Performance Agreement: Prepared the annual performance plan of the Key Results Areas (KRAs) for the Foreign Secretary's performance agreement with the Presidential Secretariat in coordination with 23 Divisions of the Ministry and 61 Sri Lanka Missions/Posts abroad and reported quarterly progress up to the 4th quarter to the Presidential Secretariat.

Implementation of the Agreements, MoUs and other instruments signed with the foreign countries: Formulated a digital platform to follow up on the implementation of the agreements, MoUs, and other instruments signed/pending with the foreign countries, in coordination with the line Ministries/agencies, Sri Lanka Missions/Posts abroad and the Divisions of the Ministry.

Emergency Response Unit: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs established an Emergency Response Unit in January 2023 to handle all types of Emergency Response Activities. Accordingly, this Unit cooperated with several government institutions such as the Presidential Secretariat, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Health, the National Medicines Regulatory Authority (NMRA), the Disaster Management Centre (Ministry of Defence) and other institutions such as the Sri Lanka Tea Board, Board of Investments and Sri Lankan Airlines, as well as Sri Lanka Missions abroad and Foreign Missions in Sri Lanka in such emergency operation activities.

Due to the country's ongoing financial constraints and the shortage of essential medical supplies, the Unit facilitated seventeen consignments of urgently required Medicines (worth around US\$40 million), Medical Supplies, and Pharmaceutical items received as donations from Foreign Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations, Sri Lankans living abroad, and well-wishers to minimise the shortage reported by Health Authorities.

Accordingly, during the period under review, this Unit has coordinated and facilitated the donations of Human Insulin, Malnourishment Drugs and other Essential Medicines, Polypropylene Tips, Positive Glass Slides, Pharmaceutical Products, and other Essential Medical Devices & Medical Equipment received from Brazil, Canada, France, India, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Peru, South Korea and USA. Among the donations above, twelve consignments valued at over US\$ 37 million have already been received and handed over to the Health Authorities. The other consignments are yet to be received. Also, the unit organises and coordinates donations from the government of Sri Lanka to different foreign countries during major emergencies/calamities. Accordingly, this Unit has assisted and coordinated 1500 Kg of Ceylon Tea and 4.6 tons of Apparel for the victims of earthquakes hit Türkiye and 690 Kg of Ceylon Tea for the victims of the cyclone hit Myanmar as humanitarian aid.

2.4.6 Public Diplomacy Division

The Public Diplomacy (PD) Division carries out all media and public communication-related activities of the Ministry, including those of the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. State Minister, Foreign Secretary, Ministry Divisions, and Sri Lanka Missions and Posts abroad. These

activities pertain to important meetings, events, briefings, policy decisions, and positions of the Government of Sri Lanka with a foreign policy perspective.

The PD Division monitors essential news items related to the Ministry/Sri Lanka on the local/foreign media and web news. It keeps the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. State Minister, Secretary of Foreign Affairs and relevant officials in the Ministry and all Missions/Posts informed. Daily updates of the news items that are detrimental to the image of the Ministry and Sri Lanka are brought to the attention of the Foreign Secretary, and rebuttals are issued when deemed necessary. The PD Division responds to all written and verbal media queries, including on weekends and holidays.

During the period under review, 251 Ministry Media Releases, 719 Mission Media Releases and 158 Notices were disseminated to local print, online and electronic media and Foreign Correspondents based in Colombo.

The Division engaged daily on social media platforms to further strengthen public relations through Twitter (1058 tweets and retweets), Facebook (168 posts), Instagram (149 posts), and YouTube (09 posts). The Division also facilitated the visits of fifty-two (52) foreign film crews to Sri Lanka.

The Division coordinated with local and foreign media based in Sri Lanka. It facilitated 42 media accreditations for foreign journalists visiting Sri Lanka and 03 resident visas for foreign journalists based in Sri Lanka.

The Division provided Sri Lanka Missions/Posts with information on policy statements and daily updates on key developments pertaining to GOSL institutions relating to trade, investment promotion, tourism promotion, and the evolving economic situation.

The Division also played an active role during the 75th Independence Day by providing publicity and media coverage to related official events/meetings with the invited foreign dignitaries.

The Division assisted in organising the 'International Harmony' (02 June 2023)—an evening of classical orchestral music by the Symphony Orchestra of Sri Lanka—and the Ella Odyssey (1-3 July 2023)—a journey for foreign diplomats to Nuwara Eliya and Ella on board the Viceroy Special to mark 75 years of diplomacy. The Division also created a brochure for foreign diplomats during the visit.

The Division actively maximised visibility for Sri Lanka's engagement with the IORA and organised media coverage for the 23rd IORA Council of Ministers and the 25th Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials held from 9-11 October 2023. The Division also organised a joint media briefing at the conclusion of the IORA meeting on 11 October 2023, which TROIKA of IORA attended.

The Division covered the Deepavali and Christmas celebrations held at the Ministry on 20 November 2023 and 19 December 2023, respectively.

The Division also coordinated the following:

- i. Participation of the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and senior officials of the Foreign Ministry in TV programmes and interviews, including ITN's Hope programme,
- ii. Channel News Asia's (CAN) interview with the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs,
- iii. The Ministry's participation in TV 1's "Nagitimu Sri Lanka" and Ada Derana's "Neethiyata Idak" programmes.
- iv. ITN's Bonsoir interview with Secretary /Foreign Affairs and Sri Lanka Ambassador in France on 05 September 2023.
- v. The 2nd phase of the ITN Etherin Metherata documentary programme with relevant Sri Lanka Missions.
- vi. "Connect Sri Lanka" programme of the Ruphavahini.
- vii. Visit of High-level Vietnamese delegation to Sri Lanka from 16-18 November 2023 (media coordination)

The Division organised press briefings as follows:

- i. Joint press briefing by the Foreign Ministers of Sri Lanka and Japan on 29 July 2023.
- ii. Media interaction for Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs with the Colombo-based Foreign Correspondents' Association on 10 July 2023
- iii. Media interaction for Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs with the Indian Women's Press Corps (IWPC) delegation on 08 July 2023
- iv. Press briefing by the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. State Minister and senior officials of the Foreign Ministry on the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) meetings in Colombo on 14 September 2023.

2.4.7 SAARC Division

It is heartening to note that the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) had navigated through challenging times in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of consensus amongst member states on the Taliban change of government in Afghanistan in August 2021. Despite such setbacks, SAARC did not fall into a deadlock situation, having unanimously decided to appoint HE Mr. Md Golam Sarwar from Bangladesh as the next Secretary General of SAARC and not from Afghanistan (next in line), who assumed duties on 25 October 2023, as the 15th Secretary-General, showing the commitment of Members States for continuing the SAARC process forward. Thus, it is pleasing to note that SAARC technical and policy-level meetings, at a halt since April 2023, recommenced, but without Afghanistan (not invited by the SAARC Secretariat), with fourteen (14) meetings held this year, of which seven (07) were held in Sri Lanka—the venue chosen, due to the ease of travel and being a common likeable destination for all. One of the significant meetings held related to closer regional economic integration was the SAARC-ADB Fifth Special Meeting on Regional Economic Integration Study (Phase II) on the Reduction/Removal of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBS)/Para-Tariff Barriers (PTBs) held in Sri Lanka in June this year (2023) with the participation of 42 delegates from Member States. Another important event recently held was the first workshop on the SAARC-ADB Study

on 8-digit HS Tariff Lines of Member States, held in September this year (2023) in Sri Lanka, which would be vital to ease trade amongst SAARC states. The Division also facilitated the participation of Sri Lanka in the Workshop on updating the SAARC Regional Multimodal Transport Study in August this year (2023) held in Maldives, a study conducted to find ways to enhance transport connectivity between and among the Member States of SAARC, in order to promote intraregional trade and transport. Also, four (04) Governing Board meetings have been held in Sri Lanka since April 2023, and two (02) others of SAARC Regional Centers and Specialized Bodies were held this year (2023). Accordingly, one can say, as always, that Sri Lanka, an active member of SAARC, is hosting more SAARC activities than other member states. Some of the matters handled by the SAARC Division including trying to find a solution to the halted SAARC Cultural Centre project in Nawimana, Matara, for which the Division was actively involved with relevant stakeholders in finding a solution. Accordingly, a joint Cabinet Memorandum was signed by the 03 ministers of Cultural Affairs, Education and Foreign Affairs for several recommendations, including hosting the SCC permanently at the building which belongs to the Sri Lanka Film Corporation and handing over the partly constructed premises at Nawimana to the Ruhunu University. Further, the division revived the SAARC project by establishing SAARC Handicraft Development Centers in SAARC Member States, including Sri Lanka. Subsequently, the project proposal from the National Craft Council (NCC) was submitted to the SAARC Development Fund (SDF) for further action. The Division is also issuing Letters of Recommendation to the Department of Immigration and Emigration to obtain SAARC visas for Members of Parliament and immediate family members as well as other officials under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES) on requests made by the Parliament and Ministries/Departments, which had seen an increase during the past months with an upsurge in SAARC activity and travel to SAARC States. Accordingly, seventy (70) such letters were issued for 114 SAARC visas during the stipulated period. This division expects the Programming Committee to be held in the 1st quarter of 2024, and the SAARC Process will progress.

Enhancement of Cooperation between Sri Lanka and the Member States of SAARC through the Secretariat of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC): The SAARC Secretariat, with the concurrence of Member States, including Sri Lanka, facilitated the appointment of the 15th Secretary-General (from Bangladesh) to the SAARC Secretariat after the completion of tenure of the former SG in August 2023. The new Secretary General assumed duties on 25th October 2023, and the ministry facilitated his official visit to Maldives via Colombo to attend the Presidential Inaugural Ceremony held in Male on 17th November 2023. Coordinated Sri Lanka's involvement in the Virtual Meeting on the SAARC Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) Forum from 7-8 August 2023; the efforts extended to coordinating nominations from the Ministry of Agriculture for the Eighth Meeting of SAARC Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) Forum scheduled from 9-11 October 2023 in Dhaka, Bangladesh, with subsequent conveyance of the details to the Secretariat. Coordinating with the Department of Animal Production and Health, sent updated details, as requested by the Agriculture & Rural Development Division of the Secretariat, encompassing information on members of the SAARC Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) Forum, the National Focal Point for the SAARC Epidemiology Network, and the National Focal Point for the SAARC Laboratory Directors Forum (SLDF) and Lab Technical Advisory Group (Lab-TAG). Coordinated sending the views/comments on the SAARC Vaccine Bank and zero draft of the agreement on establishing the SAARC Gene Bank as received from the

Department of Animal Production and Health. A meeting was called by the Director General of the SAARC Division with representatives of SAARC Terrorists Offences Monitoring Desk (STOMD) and SAARC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk (SDOMD) on 27 September 2023 to discuss the progress of these two desks and their future activities.

Coordinated sending the concurrence of GoSL to the SAARC Secretariat for the proposal of the Embassy of Japan in Kathmandu, proposing to organise Japan – East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youth (JENESYS) - 2023 and the division coordinated sending the legal observations for the endorsement of South Asian Qualification Reference Framework (SAQRF) drafted by the Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka. Facilitated the finalisation of the payment of the annual share contribution of the GoSL for the SAARC Secretariat for the year 2023.

Recommending visas under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES): As of 31 December 2023, on requests made by the Parliament/Ministries, 70 letters of recommendation were issued by the SAARC Division to the Department of Immigration and Emigration for the issuance of visas under the above Scheme as follows:

- Ministers/Members of Parliament and dependents (under category A) - 84
- Officials from Ministries and dependents (under Category A) –30

India's proposal (circulated by the SAARC Secretariat) to add doctors and nurses required to travel during Health Emergencies under Category B of the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme is ongoing and awaiting concurrence from member states. Sri Lanka has proposed including other health categories but has some security concerns. Bangladesh has also proposed some additions to the proposed categories. In this regard, concurrence is awaiting from the member states (except Maldives).

2.4.7.1. Enhancement of Cooperation between Sri Lanka and the SAARC Regional Centers:

SAARC Cultural Centre (SCC) in Colombo, Sri Lanka: After end of tenure of the Director of SCC on 31st March 2023, this Division facilitated the appointment of the new Director to the SCC, in coordination with the Ministry of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs and the SAARC Secretariat. A courtesy call by the Director of the SCC on the Director General of the SAARC Division occurred at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 10th April 2023. The Ministry in liaison with the Ministry of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs, the Ministry is trying to find a solution to the halted SAARC Cultural project in Nawimana Matara. Accordingly, a joint Cabinet Memorandum was signed by the 03 ministers of Cultural Affairs, Education and Foreign Affairs for several recommendations, including housing the SCC permanently at the building which belongs to the National Film Corporation (NFC) and handing over the partly constructed premises at Nawimana to the University of Ruhuna. The Division participated in several events organised by the SAARC Cultural Centre (SCC) recently, including the SAARC Cultural Celebration held at the University of the Visual and Performing Arts, SAARC Film Day – 2023 (3rd quarter) held at National Film Cooperation screening of a Bangladeshi film named “Haldaa” at the ‘Tharanganee Theater’ of NFC, a special lecture titled “Word Heritage Sites and the United Nations Sustainable Development organised in collaboration with the National Library of Sri

Lanka, the SAARC painting exhibition named “Captivating Canvasses of the Vibrant Colours of Vibrant Colours of Culture” organized in collaboration with Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka and screening of a Bhutanese film screening named “Wind of Karma” at Tharanganee theatre and facilitated to hold the thirteenth meeting of the Governing Board (GB) of the SCC in collaboration with the Ministry of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs in Colombo from 28 - 29 November 2023 in hybrid mode. The Director General of the SAARC Division, the national focal point and ex-officio member attended the meeting and facilitated the finalisation of the payment of the share contribution of the GoSL for the SAARC Secretariat 2023.

SAARC Agricultural Centre (SAC) in Dhaka, Bangladesh: The Division facilitated holding the 15th Governing Board (GB) meeting of the SAC in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture from 15-16 November 2023 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The respective GB Member, Dr. W.A.R.T. Wickremaarachchi, the Director of the Horticultural Crops Research and Development Institute (HORDI), Department of Agriculture, Peradeniya, participated in the above meeting representing GoSL. They participated virtually in the inaugural session of the Policy round table meeting of the project on Consortium for Scaling-Up Climate Smart Agriculture in South Asia (C-SUSSeS) held on 27th October 2023 in Kandy, Sri Lanka.

SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC) in Gujarat, India: Assistant Director Diana Perera from the SAARC Division and two (2) officers from the Ministries of Health and Disaster Management participated in the Residential workshop on “Approaches to Socio-Economic Recovery from COVID-19”, organised by the SAARC Disaster Management Centre (SDMC) from 1-4 March 2023 in Gandhinagar, India which mainly focused on areas on overcoming challenges faced by COVID-19, developing a recovery framework, and a strategy to bounce back to normalcy. Coordinated the participation from GoSL for the virtual workshop titled “Integrated Flood Risk Management” from 8-11 December 2023, organised by the SDMC.

SAARC Energy Centre (SEC) in Islamabad, Pakistan: Facilitated the participation from GoSL for the Fifth Meeting of the SAARC Council of Experts of Energy Regulators (Electricity) from 14 – 15 November in Islamabad, Pakistan in collaboration with the Ministry of Power and Energy and conveyed the concurrence of the GOSL for the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between SAARC and International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) to the Secretariat.

Facilitated to hold the Sixteenth Meeting of the Governing Board (GB) of the SAARC Energy Centre (SEC) from 07-08 December 2023 in Colombo, in collaboration with the Ministry of Power and Energy.

SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre (STAC) in Kathmandu, Nepal: Coordinated the participation from GoSL for the Thirty-First meeting of the Governing Board (GB) of STAC in virtual mode to be held from 22-23 January 2024 in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and facilitated for the finalisation of payment of the annual share contribution of the GoSL for the STAC for the year 2023.

2.4.7.2. Enhancement of cooperation between Sri Lanka and the SAARC Specialized Bodies:

SAARC Development Fund (SDF) in Thimpu, Bhutan: The Division assisted in logistical arrangements for the 35th Meeting of the Board of Directors of SAARC Development Fund (SDF),

the 9th Meeting of the Board Project Appraisal Committee, and the 8th meeting of the SDF Counterpart Agencies held in Sri Lanka from 5-6 April 2023. The Division shared the details with the Ministry of Health regarding scholarships from the SAARC Secretariat for the 7th batch of the M.Sc. in Rehabilitation Science (2 years) Programme (Session 2023-24) funded by the SDF. Officials of the SAARC Division participated in the Meeting convened by the Secretary of the Ministry of Industries on 20 June 2023 at the Ministry of Industries, to discuss the revival of the SAARC project on the establishment of SAARC Handicraft Development Centers in SAARC Member States, including in Sri Lanka. The Division gave guidance in this regard, and the project proposal received was submitted to the SDF through the SAARC Secretariat. The Division guided the President of the Professional Business Coaches Association (PBCA) of Sri Lanka for the submission of a project proposal of JAT Holdings PLC to the SDF under its Economic & Infrastructure Window.

South Asian University (SAU) in New Delhi, India: Facilitated GoSL's participation in the Eleventh Meeting of the Governing Board (GB) of the South Asian University, held from 18 –19 December 2023 in Kathmandu, Nepal. Senior Prof. Sampath Amarathunga, Chairman of the University Grant Commission (UGC), and Mrs. T.P. Dharmasena, the Director General of the SAARC Division, participated in this meeting.

SAARC Regional Standards Organization (SARSO) in Dhaka, Islamabad: Coordinated sending the updated details of the GB members of SARSO received from the Ministry of Technology to the SAARC Secretariat.

SAARC Arbitration Council (SARCO) in Islamabad, Pakistan: Facilitated the Participation of GoSL in collaboration with the Legal Division of this Ministry for the following workshops (Virtual/Physical) organised by the SARCO:

- Webinar on 'The Arbitral Landscape in Afghanistan: Challenges & Opportunities' on 21st April 2023.
- Webinar on 'Arbitration in Nepal- Present & Future' on 8th May 2023.
- Webinar on Arbitration in Bangladesh: Navigating the Legal landscape and key institutional developments on 20 June 2023.
- Seminar on 'Amendment in the Arbitration Act: Are Changes Long Overdue' on 24th July 2023.
- Seminar on "Arbitration in Sri Lanka: Becoming an Arbitration Hub" organised by the SARCO in collaboration with the Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry of Sri Lanka (FCCISL) and relevant stakeholders was held in Colombo on 25 August 2023. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ali Sabry, participated in the seminar.
- "Safeguarding Maldivian Interest through Arbitration; Reflection and Preparation" on 9th November 2023.
- "Arbitration in Bhutan: New Beginnings" on 21 November 2023.
- "Dynamic Shifts in the Law and Practice of Arbitration in India: The Past Five Years" on 19 December 2023.

Facilitated the participation from GoSL for the “Twelfth Meeting of the Governing Board (GB) of SAARC Arbitration Council (SARCO)” held from 04-05 December 2023 in Thimphu, Bhutan. Mrs. Tilanie De Silva, Deputy Foreign Ministry's Legal Advisor, participated in this meeting.

Coordinated sending nominations from the GoSL to the Panel of Arbitrators of SARCO through the SAARC secretariat in consultation with the Legal Division of this Ministry. Facilitated the finalisation of the payment of the annual share contribution of GoSL for the SARCO for 2023.

2.4.7.3. Enhancement of cooperation between Sri Lanka and the SAARC Apex Bodies & Regional Bodies: A meeting was held between Dr Narendra Pinto, Director General of the Surgical Care Society Headquarters and the Director General of the SAARC Division, on 8 May 2023 to discuss the expiry of the status of recognition of Recognized Bodies. As per the request from the SAARC Women’s Association, the Director General of the SAARC Division convened a meeting with the representatives of the Association on 7 September 2023 to address their concerns on the expiry of the term of SAARC recognised bodies

2.4.7.4. Enhancement of cooperation between the SAARC International Organizations/Agencies: Coordinated the participation from Sri Lanka for the 17th Informal Meeting of the SAARC Finance Minister’s Meeting held on 5 May 2024 on the sidelines of the 56th Annual Meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in the Republic of Korea (ROK) from 2-5 May 2023 in the Republic of Korea. The Director General Ajith Abeysekera of the External Resources Department (ERD) participated in the above meeting. Coordinated the SAARC-ADB Fifth Special Meeting on Regional Economic Integration Study (Phase II) on the theme of the Meeting was “Reduction/ Removal of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs)/ Para Tariff Barriers (PTBs)” held from 5-6 June 2023 in Shangri-La Hotel, Colombo, with the financial and technical assistance of the ADB. Forty-two (42) delegates from Member States participated in the meeting. Coordinated with the Ministry of Transports & Highways and Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Aviation, the participation of Sri Lanka in the Workshop on updating the SAARC Regional Multimodal Transport Study (SRMTS) held from 1-2 August 2023 in the Maldives. Coordinated the SAARC-ADB workshop on a study on 8-digit HS Tariff Lines of Member States was held from 11-12 September 2023 at Shangri-La Hotel in Colombo, conducted by ADB Consultant Tharaka Seneviratne with the financial and technical assistance of the ADB. The workshop was the first in that study, and twenty-seven (27) delegates from Member States participated in the meeting. Coordinated sending the status of implementation of the Thimpu Statement of Climate Change at the national level.

2.4.7.5. Enhancement of cooperation between GoSL and SAARC Observer States: Coordinated the participation from Sri Lanka in the 14th ROK-SAARC Partnership Seminar held on 1 November 2023 in the Republic of Korea, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment.

2.4.8. United Nations and Human Rights Division

Sri Lanka’s Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York and Geneva and the Embassies/Permanent Delegations accredited to the affiliated agencies of the UN in Vienna, Paris, The Hague, Rome, Nairobi, and Bangkok are under the purview of this Division in the context of Sri Lanka’s engagement with the UN and its affiliated agencies.

78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), New York: H.E. the President addressed the 78th UNGA on 21 September 2023 and also delivered statements at the SDG Summit on 19.09.2023, High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development on 20.09.2023 and the UN Secretary General's Climate Ambition Summit on 20.09.2023. He was also a keynote speaker at the "Ocean Nations" Dialogue organised by the Carnegie Endowment and Sasakawa Foundation and at the Forum of the Business Council for International Understanding on Economic Opportunities in Sri Lanka and had 13 bilateral meetings.

The Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs delivered statements at the High-level meeting (HLM) on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response, Preparatory Ministerial Meeting for the Summit of the Future, High-level meeting on Global Development Initiative Cooperation outcomes, 18th ACD Ministerial Meeting, 47th Annual Ministerial meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the G77 and HLM on International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. He also participated in the Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting. The Hon. Minister deposited the instrument of accession to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and participated at a press conference on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), following SL's ratification of same on 25 July 2023 and had had 14 bilateral meetings.

Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs delivered a statement at the 13th Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT. H.E. the President, Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs held bilateral discussions with their counterparts on the sidelines of the UNGA and had one bilateral meeting with their counterparts from other Delegations and UN key officials.

Reconciliation and Human Rights: Sri Lankan missions overseas were continuously updated on the country's reconciliation and human rights developments so that they could apprise their interlocutors. Sri Lanka participated in the 52nd, 53rd, and 54th Sessions of the Human Rights Council (HRC). At every session, the national statement of Sri Lanka rejected the HRC Resolution 51/1 on Sri Lanka.

The Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Hon. Minister of Justice, Prison Affairs and Constitutional Reforms undertook a study visit to South Africa in relation to the South African model of the Commission for Truth, Unity and Reconciliation. Cabinet approval was obtained for the proposed Commission for Truth, Unity and Reconciliation of Sri Lanka and for establishing the Interim Secretariat. The Bill on the Commission for Truth, Unity and Reconciliation of Sri Lanka was gazetted on January 1, 2024.

- Sri Lanka submitted its 4th National Report to the Universal Periodic Review following extensive consultation with relevant government stakeholders and civil society. The SL delegation held a successful review in Geneva in February 2023.
- Sri Lanka participated in the 6th Periodic Review under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights following extensive consultations with the relevant stakeholders.
- Following extensive consultations, Sri Lanka submitted its responses to the List of Issues on the 9th Periodic Report to the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination

against Women and the 1st Periodic Review Report under the Convention on Enforced Disappearance to the Committee on Enforced Disappearance

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG): The Division has facilitated GOSL representations at several UN meetings/ conferences, including the UNESCAP that were held in relation to the SDGs, including the 10th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development of the UNESCAP (Hon. State Minister of Finance chaired the Session on Voluntary National Reviews), 79th Session of the UNESCAP (Sri Lanka- Vice Chair), High-level Committee of the 21st Session of the South-South Cooperation (Sri Lanka- Chair), UN SDG Summit 2023, which is a high-level political Forum on SDGs held on the sidelines of the 78th Session of the UNGA), UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Forum on Financing for Development (Hon. State Minister of Finance attended a panel discussion), 07th Asian Pacific Population Conference, 03rd Asian –Pacific Energy Forum (Sri Lanka- Vice Chair) and the 04th Session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction, and Financing for Development of the UNESCAP.

To extend collaborative support to achieving the SDGs, Sri Lanka, at the multilateral fora, has co-sponsored/ voted in favour of 19 resolutions adopted at the 02nd Committee of the 78th Session of the UNGA in 2023 in relation to various aspects of SDGs. The contribution of UN agencies towards SDGs in Sri Lanka is under the overall UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) signed between the UN Country Team and the GoSL in 2022, and the Division attends the meetings to review the progress of the implementation of the UNSDCF. The National Steering Committee meetings on the implementation of SDGs in Sri Lanka, chaired by the Hon. Prime Minister and Secretary to the Hon. Prime Minister, is the highest level platform to discuss and review the national progress and challenges in achieving SDGs, and the Division attends these meetings.

Disarmament: Dr Robert Floyd, Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), concluded a successful visit to Sri Lanka from 31 May to 5 June 2023. Sri Lanka ratified the CTBT and was selected to conduct the Integrated Field Exercise in 2025.

Multilateral engagement in Science and Technology: H.E. the President addressed the Heads of State and Government of the G77 & China Summit on the theme ‘Current Development Challenges: The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation’ in Havana, Cuba. H.E the President also held a bilateral meeting with the Cuban President on 14 September 2023 to further political, economic and developmental cooperation between Sri Lanka and Cuba. Sri Lanka participated in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Ad Hoc Committee to elaborate on a UN Cybercrime Convention and the 76th World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland.

Multilateral engagement in the Socio-Economic sphere: Sri Lanka participated at the Forum on Financing for Development and Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters in New York, organised by the Economic and Social Council and at the 10th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development in Bangkok, 79th session of the Commission in Bangkok, and 406th Advisory Committee on Permanent Representatives and other Representatives Meeting in Bangkok organised by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

H.E., the President, met the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Audrey Azoulay, on 22 June 2023 in Paris, on the sidelines of the Summit for a New Global Financial Pact.

The Division coordinated the work related to UN Vesak Day 2023 celebrations with Sri Lanka missions in New York, Paris, Bangkok, and Geneva.

Candidatures: The Division continued to coordinate Sri Lanka's efforts to maintain friendly relationships with UN Member States by supporting candidatures proposed by other States for various positions at the UN and other International Organizations.

Sri Lanka was elected to the UN Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families at the election held on 27 June 2023 at the United Nations in New York and to the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for the term 2023-2027 during the 42nd General Conference of the intergovernmental organisation on 15 November 2023 in Paris.

Credentials: The number of credentials issued from January to December 2023 is 60.

Visas: No. of visas facilitated during January to December 2023 is 220.

2.5. Performance Overview: Territorial Divisions

2.5.1. Africa Affairs Division

The Africa Affairs Division is responsible for coordinating bilateral relations with 54 countries in the region. The division also handles matters related to the African Union through 5 Sri Lanka Missions that are based in the countries of Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Seychelles, and South Africa.

The meeting between H.E., the President of Sri Lanka, and African Envoys: The Africa Affairs Division facilitated the sessions parallel to the 75th Independence Day celebrations. The High Commissioners, Ambassadors, CDAs, and representatives from the countries on the African continent participated.

Visit of the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs to South Africa and Mauritius: Facilitated the visit of the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs to South Africa in March 2023 and November 2023. Meetings of H.E. the President with his counterparts in African countries were facilitated by the Division (Eg, Rwanda, Ghana, and Kenya)

Meetings of Hon. Foreign Minister and other high-level officials: In 2023, the Africa Affairs Division facilitated meetings between Hon. MFA, SFA and DG/Africa Affairs with Ambassadors /High Commissioners of African Countries, i.e. Egypt, Angola, Djibouti, Sudan, Malawi, Cote d' Ivorie, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Seychelles.

Facilitated the visits of the Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka to Morocco (October 2023), the Governor - of Uva Province to Rwanda (November 2023), the Hon. Speaker to Ghana

(September 2023), the Navy delegation to Kenya (October 2023) and the Special Representative / Envoy of H.E. the President to Ghana (December 2023)

Bilateral Relations: The Third Session of the Political Consultation between Sri Lanka and Egypt was held in Colombo (July 2023). Steps were taken to keep the 3rd Joint Economic Commission between Sri Lanka and Egypt (first quarter of 2024). Issued a stamp to commemorate 66 years of diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and Egypt. (December 2023)

Expansion of Sri Lanka's Diplomatic Relations in the African Continent: Obtained Cabinet Approval for establishing formal Diplomatic Relations with Comoros and Sao Tome & Principe and coordinated with respective governments to establish diplomatic relations with Chad, Central African Regent, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Cape Verde and Niger, the process of which is moving forward.

2.5.2. East Asia Division

During the review period, the East Asia Division continued to strengthen Political, Economic, Socio-cultural, and people-to-people relations with countries in the region while providing consular assistance and labour welfare to Sri Lankan nationals living in respective countries through residential Missions in Australia, China, Japan, and South Korea and their concurrent accreditations.

China: Coordinated the visit of H.E. the President to China to address the High Level Forum "Green Silk Road Forum for Harmony for Nature" at the 3rd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF) in Beijing, China. During the visit, the President held bilateral discussions with the President of China, H.E. Xi Jinping, and Vice Premier H. E. Ding Xuexiang. On the sidelines of the 3rd BRF meeting, the President held bilateral meetings with the Heads of State of Indonesia, Vietnam and Pakistan, addressed an Investment, Trade & Tourism Forum and engaged in discussions with several Chinese investors and potential investors and coordinated the visit of the Hon. Prime Minister to attend the 7th China-South Asia Exposition and the 27th China Kunming Import and Export Fair as the Chief Guest. The Prime minister held bilateral discussions with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of China, Hon. Wang Yi, on the sidelines of the 7th China-South Asian Expo in Kunming. Coordinated the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Ali Sabry, to China at the invitation of the State Councilor and Foreign Minister of China, Hon. Qin Gang, to engage in bilateral discussions and to attend the World Economic Forum held in Tianjin.

Japan: Coordinated the visit of H.E. the President to Tokyo, Japan to attend the Nikkei Future Asia Conference from 25-26 May 2023. During this visit, H.E. the President held a Summit Meeting with Prime Minister Hon. Fumio Kishida and called on Hon. Yoshimasa Hayashi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Coordinated and facilitated the official visit of Hon. HAYASHI Yoshimasa, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, to Sri Lanka from 28-29 July 2023, where he had courtesy calls with H.E. the President, Hon. Prime Minister and held successful bilateral talks with his Sri Lankan counterpart Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Australia: Facilitated the visit of Hon. Tharaka Balasooriya, State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, to Adelaide, Australia, to attend the 8th Bali Process Ministerial Meetings in February 2023.

Korea: Coordinated and facilitated the visit of Hon. Lee Jung Sik, Minister of Employment and Labour of South Korea, to Sri Lanka from 15-17 September 2023. During the visit, Hon. Lee had a courtesy call with the Hon. Prime Minister and held bilateral meetings with the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Hon. Minister of Labour and Foreign Employment. The division had continuous consideration with the RoK mission in Colombo to expedite the visa for the Sri Lankan government to RoK.

New Zealand: Processing a MoU between the International Centre for Migration Policy Development of New Zealand and the State Ministry of Foreign Employment Promotion and Market Diversification of Sri Lanka.

2.5.2.1. Signing of MoUs

MoUs with China:

01. Fisheries Protocol on Inspection, Quarantine and Veterinary, Sanitary requirements for wild fishing aquatic products to be exported from Sri Lanka between the General Administration of Customs of China and the Ministry of Fisheries of Sri Lanka,

02. Protocol of Phytosanitary Requirements for Export of Ceylon Cinnamon from Sri Lanka to China between the General Administration of Customs of China and the Ministry of Plantation Industries of Sri Lanka,

03. Memorandum of Understanding on Jointly Accelerating the Formulation of the Cooperation Plan on the Belt and Road Initiative between the National Development and Reform Commission of China and the Ministry of Finance, Economic, Stabilization & National Policies of Sri Lanka,

04. Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation between the National Development and Reform Commission of China and the Ministry of Finance, Economic Stabilization & National Policies of Sri Lanka,

05. Memorandum of Understanding between the National Development and Reform Commission of China and the Ministry of Finance, Economic, Stabilization & National Policies of Sri Lanka Concerning Cooperation on Green and Low-Carbon Development.

MoUs with Australia: MoU between Australian Border Force and Sri Lanka Customs in the Mutual Assistance on Customs Matters. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Government of Australia and Sri Lanka on Cooperation in Sports.

MoUs with Japan: Memorandum of Cooperation on the Agriculture and Other fields between Ehime Prefecture, Japan and the Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment of Sri Lanka

MoUs with the Republic of Korea: MoU between the Ministry of Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Councils and Local Government and the Saemaul Foundation.

MoUs with New Zealand: Establishment of a Migrant Resource Center managed by the

International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) funded by the Government of New Zealand.

Diplomatic Consultations: Sri Lanka and China successfully concluded the 12th round of Diplomatic Consultations in Colombo on 30th May, 2023. The consultations were co-chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, Aruni Wijewardane, and Sun Weidong, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

Sri Lanka and Australia successfully concluded the 04th Round of Senior Officials Talks on 11 July 2023 in Colombo. Ms. Yasoja Gunasekera, Additional Secretary/ Bilateral (East), and Mr. Gary Cowan, First Assistant Secretary, North and South Asia Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, led the delegations of each side.

2.5.3. Latin America and Caribbean Division

Latin America and the Caribbean Division is responsible for coordinating Sri Lanka's bilateral relations with 33 countries in Central and South America, the Caribbean and South America, including Mexico, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The Division monitors the political and socio-economic developments in these countries through four Sri Lankan Diplomatic Missions located in the US (Washington, New York), Cuba (Havana), and Brazil (Brasilia). Sri Lanka's bilateral representation in Latin America and the Caribbean is managed by the Sri Lanka Embassy in Brasilia, Brazil, and the Sri Lanka Embassy in Havana, Cuba.

The Division actively promotes and strengthens Sri Lanka's relationship with the aforementioned countries through various mechanisms, programs and tasks, including high-level and official visits and Annual Partnership dialogues. It also acts as the first point of contact for communication with resident Missions of Latin American countries based in Colombo on bilateral matters. The Division collaborates with line agencies of the Government of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka Missions overseas, and resident Diplomatic Missions in Colombo to coordinate and take initiatives forward.

Progress and the Future Outlook of Latin America and the Caribbean 2023: The Sri Lanka Embassy in Brazil engaged with concurrently accredited countries in South America, namely, Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Guyana, Surinam, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. Sri Lanka Embassy in Brazil signed a MoU between the National Chamber of Commerce in Sri Lanka and the Association of Commerce, Industries and Services of the State of Goias on 1st February 2023 and with the support of the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, the Embassy participated at the EXPO Tourism Goias 2023 and promoted Sri Lanka Tourism, Trade, Cuisines and Culture, as well as the International Food & Culture Bazaar in Brazil. The Sri Lanka Ambassador met the owner

of "Noah Spa" to promote Sri Lanka as a single country to medical practitioners in Brasilia and promote Sri Lankan tradition, cuisines, Ceylon Tea, etc.

The Sri Lanka Embassy in Brazil and the Federation of Trade in Goods, Services and Tourism of Goias have agreed to enter into an MoU for trade, tourism, and investment promotions. The Mission also coordinated with agencies and trade promotional institutions of Sri Lanka, such as EDB and National Gem and Jewellery Authority, to facilitate market entrance for Sri Lankan companies related to Gem & Jewellery, spices, coffee, sportswear and leisurewear. The Embassy also facilitated individual Sri Lankan exporters to participate in the AnuFood 2023 Brazil and APAS Brazil events held in 2023. Further, in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Tea Board, the Embassy organised a 'Sri Lanka pavilion' with the participation of 12 Sri Lankan tea exporting companies at the Espacio Food Service EXPO in Santiago, Chile, in September 2023. Discussions were held with the Sao Paulo State Government's International Affairs Secretary to strengthen bilateral economic cooperation relations between Sri Lanka and Sao Paulo. The Ambassador discussed with the CEO of the Sao Paulo Supermarket Association and the Vice President of Sales and Marketing of the Brazilian Supermarket Association entering into the supermarkets in Sao Paulo and Brazil.

The Ambassador also met with the officials of the Brazilian Geological Survey to establish cooperation with the Sri Lankan Geological Survey Bureau. The Embassy has participated in the Bazar de Comida e Cultura International 2023 (International Food and Cultural Bazar 2023) as well as promoted Sri Lanka Tourism, Cuisines and Ceylon Tea at the Annual Bazar of the Asian & Oceania countries held at Museu de Art de Brasilia. Further, during a meeting held between the Ambassador and the Mayor of the state of Goias, accepted the proposal to enter into a "Sister City" project between the Municipal Council of Goiania and a leading Municipal Council in Sri Lanka. Further, the Mission organised a media interview under the theme of 'Promote Sri Lanka in Latin America' with a renowned TV presenter in Brazil at the William Mondo.

The Director General of Latin America and the Caribbean Division had meetings with the Ambassadors of Brazil and Cuba to Sri Lanka to discuss progress on pending Agreements as well as MoUs between both countries and to facilitate the visit of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) and Brazilian Agricultural Research Company to Sri Lanka for technical cooperation, some possible areas of collaboration in the Coconut Industry and Health and Pharmaceutical sector etc. respectively. The Division coordinated with the Brazilian Cooperation Agency, the Federal University of Vicosa, the Federal University of Sao Carlos, the Brazilian Embassy in Colombo, and the Sri Lanka Embassy / Brasilia to facilitate the ABC Visit to Sri Lanka in June 2023. Held a review meeting with stakeholders at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss the visit and prepare a draft project proposal to strengthen the Dairy and Sugar Sector of Sri Lanka. The Text of the MoU on Diplomatic Training between the Bandaranaike International Diplomatic Training Institute (BIDTI) of Sri Lanka and the Rio Branco Diplomatic Training Institute (IRBr) of the Ministry of External Affairs of Brazil on Mutual Cooperation between the two academic institutions has been approved by the two institutions and due to sign in Brasilia in 2024.

The Embassy had fruitful discussions with the relevant officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil and with the respective Ambassadors/senior officials of the concurrently accredited

countries to obtain their support/reciprocal support to the Sri Lankan Candidatures, namely Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW). It lobbied with Ambassadors of Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay to seek constructive intervention at the forthcoming (53rd) HRC Session in Geneva, as well as requested unilateral or reciprocal support arrangements to Sri Lanka's candidature at the Executive Board of UNESCO for the term of 2023-2027 held in Paris in November 2023.

The Sri Lanka Embassy in Washington and the Mexican authorities concurred on expediting the conclusion of the Agreement concerning the establishment of bilateral Political Consultations between respective Foreign Ministries, which aims to facilitate comprehensive discussions, agreements, and subsequent implementations of mutually beneficial activities/programmes, etc., between the two countries on multiple fronts. Accordingly, the agreement was signed on 19th October 2023 during the visit of H.E. the Ambassador of Washington to Mexico. Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Washington discussed with the Mexican Business Council in October 2023 opportunities in sectors such as cinnamon, tea, porcelain and apparel for enhanced trade relations and joint ventures.

The Sri Lanka Embassy in Cuba appointed two Honorary Consuls in the Dominican Republic and Panama in 2023. It is in the process of appointing Honorary Consuls for El Salvador and Honduras. The Embassy has settled the visa issue of employees in the Dominican Republic. It has made arrangements to facilitate transit for nearly 40 Sri Lankan employees in the Caribbean region with the support of Cuban and Turkish authorities during 2023. The Ambassador in Cuba visited Camaguey University and met with relevant officials and the Sri Lankan Student community in order to settle several issues of Sri Lankan students with the support of Camaguey University. The Sri Lanka Embassy in Cuba facilitated a Buddhist programme at the Embassy in July with the backing of the Cuban Buddhist Association. In addition, the Sri Lanka Embassy has identified relevant authorities who could be contacted to proceed with investment opportunities for Sri Lankan coconut-related industries in Jamaica.

During the visit of H.E. the President to Havana, H.E. the President had a bilateral meeting with the Cuban President, and it was decided to enhance cooperation in the health sector between the two countries. H.E. the President has agreed to extend Sri Lanka's support to improve Cuba's coconut related industries through trainings, awareness programs etc. The Director General of the Division and the Cuban Ambassador to Sri Lanka visited the Coconut Research Institute in Lunuwila in November 2023 as a part of the briefing and the programme for donating coconut seeds to the Cuban side to develop their coconut industry. Communication was sent to the relevant Ministry on SL's decision to donate two coconut oil expellers to the Cuban side as a part of Sri Lanka's assistance to Cuba.

The Sri Lanka Embassy in Cuba connected Euro Asia Tea Company to the Panamanian market through the Honorary Consul in Panama City. In addition, the Embassy in Cuba has successfully obtained the support of Cuba and the accredited countries at international foras and the UNHRC.

2.5.4. Middle East Division

The Middle East Division covers and coordinates all bilateral political, economic, and multilateral issues pertaining to the Middle East region.

Progress and the Future Outlook: The official visit of Hon. Ali Sabry, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the KSA from 22 -27 January 2023, and had a fruitful meeting with his counterpart. The Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation with Saudi Arabia was signed during the FM's visit. Hon. Minister undertook an official visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran from 04 -08 August 2023 on an invitation extended by H.E. Dr. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. During the visit, he paid a courtesy call to H.E Dr Ebrahim Raisi, the President of Iran and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran. Hon. Tharaka Balasuriya, State Minister of Foreign Affairs and a delegation visited the KSA from 21 -24 May 2023 and held the 1st Joint Commission with Saudi Arabia, during which 20 categories were identified for cooperation. MoU on Political Consultations was signed during the visit.

The Division, in coordination with SLEMB/Oman, successfully conducted the 3rd Round of Political Consultations between Sri Lanka and Oman at the level of Foreign Ministries on 11 April 2023.

The Division facilitated the signing of the MoU between Takamol of the KSA and the Tertiary and Vocational Educational Commission of Sri Lanka, facilitating more employment opportunities for semi-skilled and skilled workers in the KSA. Also, the division facilitated the finalisation of the MoU on Political Consultations between Sri Lanka and Jordan, the MoU on Tourism between SL and Oman, the MoU on Agriculture between SL and Oman, the MoU on Bilateral Consultations with Kuwait, the Prisoner Transfer between Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia, a protocol for Air Services Agreement with the United Arab Emirates.

2.5.5. Europe and North America Division

2.5.5.1. Political Diplomacy

The successful conclusion of bilateral consultations: Since January this year, the Division coordinated bilateral consultations with eight countries. The inaugural Sri Lanka- UK Strategic Dialogue was held in London on 18 April 2023, chaired by Mrs Aruni Wijewardena, Secretary/ Foreign Affairs and Sir Philip Barton, Permanent Under-Secretary of the FCDO. 02nd Round of Bilateral Political Consultation between Sri Lanka and Georgia was successfully convened on 19 June 2023 in Tbilisi, Georgia. Hon. Tharaka Balasuriya, State Minister of Foreign Affairs, led the Sri Lanka delegation. The third round of Bilateral Political Consultations between Sri Lanka and Poland was held on 14 June 2023 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw, co-chaired by Hon. Tharaka Balasuriya, State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka & Hon. Paweł Jabłoński, The Undersecretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland. The 05th Round of Political Consultations between Sri Lanka and Romania was held on 26 June 2023 in Colombo and was led by Hon. Tharaka Balasuriya, State Minister of Foreign Affairs. The

inaugural Bilateral Political Consultations between Sri Lanka and Canada was held in Colombo on 05 July 2023. DG/Europe and North America led the Sri Lankan side, and the Director General of the South Asia Division and Global Affairs of Canada chaired the Canadian side. The 02nd Expert Level Meeting on Migration Partnership between Sri Lanka and Switzerland was completed on 16th May 2023 at the Ministry; the Sri Lanka delegation was led by the Director General of Europe and North America, Ms Shobini Gunasekara, and the Swiss delegation was led by Ambassador Vincenzo MASCIOLI - Director of International Cooperation, State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP) of Switzerland. The first round of Bilateral Political Consultations between Sri Lanka and Sweden, co-chaired by Additional Secretary/Bilateral (West) and Mr. Oscar Schlyter, Head of the Department for Asia, the Pacific region and Latin America in the Swedish Foreign Ministry, was convened virtually on 09 November 2023. The First Round of Bilateral Political Consultations between Sri Lanka and France was convened on 25 October 2023 in Colombo. DG/Europe and North America led the Sri Lankan and French sides, led by Mr. Benoît Guidée, Director of Asia and Oceania of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France.

2.5.5.2. Facilitation of High-level inward and outward visits -Facilitated outward/inward visits by providing substantive briefs/inputs and arranging logistical arrangements.

Outward Visits: Presidential visits: Visit of H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe, President, to a) Paris on 22 – 23 June 2023 to attend the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact, on the invitation of French President Emmanuel Macron. The President took part in a high-level panel on “Debt and SDR Channelling” moderated by Ms. Nadia Calviño, the Chair of the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Vice President of Spain on 22 June 2023. President Wickremesinghe also had several high-level bilateral engagements on the sidelines of the Summit. As a follow-up, Sri Lanka joined the Paris Agenda for People and the Planet, which is an outcome document of the Summit; b) United Kingdom from 4-6 May 2023 to attend the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and held a meeting with Secretary General of the Commonwealth, President of the Republic of Ghana, President of the Republic of Rwanda; c) Working visit to Berlin from 27-30th September 2023, and participation at the Berlin Global Dialogue, and held meetings with German Chancellor, President of World Economic Forum, Friedrich-Ebert Foundation (FES), President of the European Council, President of Kazakhstan, South Asian Parliamentary Group and other MPs at German Parliament (Bundestag), Association of German Chambers of Commerce & Industry (DHIK), Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF).

Ministerial and other visits; Visits of Hon. M.U.M. Ali Sabry, Minister of Foreign Affairs to a) Sweden to take part in the 2nd EU-Indo Pacific Foreign Ministers Forum in May 2023 which marked a VIP visit to Sweden from Sri Lanka after six years, held meetings with Hon. Tobias Billstrom, Foreign Minister of Sweden, Hon. Jean Asselborn, Foreign Minister of Luxembourg, Hon. Catherine Colonna, Foreign Minister of France, Hon. Alexander Schallenberg, Foreign Minister of Austria, Hon. Wopke Hoekstra, Deputy Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Hon. Joseph Borell Fontelles, EU High Representative, Hon. Andreas Norlen, Speaker of the Swedish Parliament and Hon. Jean Asselborn, Minister of Immigration and Asylum of Luxembourg.

Visits of Hon Tharaka Balasuriya, State Minister of Foreign Affairs, to a) Romania with a

delegation from 16 – 17 June 2023, and met with State Secretary Labour and Social Solidarity of Romania and the Tech Venture Bank in Romania b) Poland from 14-15 June 2023 and held discussions with Secretary of State of the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, Hon. Paweł Jabłoński/Hon. Grzegorz Piechowiak, Secretary of State for Economic Development Technology of Poland and meetings with the Lot Polish Airlines senior officials. c) Georgia on 19 June 2023 for the Political Consultation. During the visit, the Hon. State Minister had discussions with Gela Geladze, Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, Georgia's Innovation Technology Agency (GITA) and the National Tourism Administration and also visited a state-of-the-art coffee manufacturing plant.

Visit of Hon. Mahinda Yapa Abeywardana, Speaker of Sri Lanka Parliament, to represent H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe, President of Sri Lanka, at the Inauguration Ceremony of the President of Türkiye which was held on 03rd June 2023.

Visit of Hon. Dr. Keheliya Rambukwella, Minister of Health, to attend the 05th Global Ministerial Summit on Patient Safety 2023 on 23-24 February 2023 in Montreux, Switzerland; Visit of Hon. Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe, Minister of Justice, to attend the 13th International Congress of Justice Ministers on 01 March 2023 in Italy. A parliamentary delegation comprising MP Diana Gamage, State Minister of Tourism, MP Angajan Ramanathan, Deputy Chairman of Committees in Parliament, and Mrs Kushani Anusha Rohanadeera, Chief of Staff and Secretary-General of Parliament, attended the 71st Westminster Seminar from 13-17 March 2023 in the UK. Visit of Hon. Susil Premjayanth, Minister of Education, to attend the 'Education World Forum' from 06 – 11 May 2023 held in the UK. Visit of Hon. Ramesh Pathirana, Minister of Plantation Industries, to attend International Tea Day 2023 on 19 May 2023 in Italy. Visit of Hon. Mahinda Amaraweera, Minister of Agriculture, to attend the 19th Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources and the UN Food Systems Stocktaking Moment held at the (FAO) headquarters from 17-26 July 2023 in Rome, Italy. Visit Hon Pramitha Bandara Tennakoon, State Minister of Defence of Sri Lanka, to participate at the 16th International Defence Industry Fair (IDEF) from 25th to 28th July 2023 in Istanbul, Türkiye. Visit of Hon. Jagath Pushpakumara, State Minister of Foreign Employment, to Italy from 26th July to 1st Aug 2023. Visit of Hon. Mohan Priyadarshana De Silva, State Minister of Agriculture, to attend the FAO Global Conference on GAMC in Italy from 26–30 September 2023. The Hon. Minister of Education, Dr Susil Premajayantha, met with the Hon. Minister of Education Italy & Executive Director of the World Food Program during his visit to Italy from 20th-23rd October 2023. Visit of Dr. P. Nandalal Weerasinghe, Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka to participate in the event "Inflation Kills Democracy", organised by the German Finance Ministry on 21st November 2023, Berlin. During the visit, he delivered a keynote speech. Also, he held a bilateral meeting with Mr Heiko Thoms, Secretary of State at the Finance Ministry in charge of European policy, international financial policy and financial market policy and attended a high-level official dinner with the German Finance Minister Mr Christian Lindner, European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde, State Secretary Mr Heiko Thoms and Heads of Departments in the German Finance Ministry.

Inward Visits: France: a) French President Emmanuel Macron visited Sri Lanka on 28 July 2023, marking the first visit by a French President to the country. The brief visit of a few hours entailed a comprehensive and lengthy bilateral meeting between the Sri Lankan and the French Presidents, covering a range of bilateral issues encompassing political, economic, and cultural

ties, Indian Ocean and maritime cooperation, regional geopolitics, and Sri Lanka's debt restructuring process & support of the Paris Club. b) Visit of H.E. Jean-Claude Brunet, Ambassador and Special Envoy for Regional Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Zone at the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, to participate in the IORA Council of Ministers Meeting from 10-12 Oct 2023. He met with the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

United Kingdom: a) Visit of Sir Philip Barton, Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development office of the United Kingdom on 17 January 2023 - meeting held with Secretary/ Foreign Affairs. b) Visit of Mr. Ben Mellor, Director India and Indo Pacific Ocean Directorate of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development office of the United Kingdom, 25 May 2023 – meeting held with Secretary/ Foreign Affairs; c) Visit of a delegation from the UK's Department for Health and Social Care to Sri Lanka for discussions on the Fleming Fund on 21-22 August 2023. d) Visit of a UK Irregular Migration Scoping Team, led by Mr Gerhard Wheeler, FCDO scoping lead, took place from 4-16 September 2023. e) Visit of the Rt Hon Anne Marie Trevelyan, Minister for Indo-Pacific at FCDO, to participate in the IORA Council of Ministers Meeting from 10-12 Oct 2023. She had high-level meetings with H.E. the President and Foreign Minister, and visited Jaffna.

USA: a) Visit of the U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen in August 2023. Senator Van Hollen met H.E. the President and Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs. b) Visit to the U.S. Under Secretary for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland in February 2023. Under Secretary Nuland met H.E. the President and Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs. c) Visit of the Senior Director for South Asia, National Security Council, White House, Rear Admiral Eileen Laubacher in January 2023. Senior Director Laubacher met H.E. the President and Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs. d) Visit of the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, Elizabeth Horst, in May 2023. e) Visit of the US State Department Coordinator on Global Anti-Corruption Richard Nephew in August 2023.

Canada: Director General of South Asia Division/Global Affairs of Canada Marie Hannan visited Sri Lanka for the inaugural Bilateral Political Consultations between Sri Lanka and Canada, which was held in Colombo on 05 July 2023

Germany: a) Dr. Peter Ramsauer, Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the German Bundestag (In Charge of Bilateral Relations with Sri Lanka), visited Sri Lanka in February 2023. Dr. Ramsauer paid a courtesy call on H.E. the President and met with the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Hon. State Minister of Foreign Affairs. b) Visit of Mr. Erik Kurzweil, Ambassador, Director Indo-Pacific Policy, South Asia and Afghanistan at the German Federal Foreign Office visited Sri Lanka from 22-25 March 2023; c) Ms. Ria Schröder is a member of the Bundestag's Parliamentary Friendship Group for South Asia visited Sri Lanka in July 2023 and met with the Hon. State Minister of Foreign Affairs, and also paid a courtesy call on H.E. the President.

The Netherlands: a) Hon. Gunay Uslu, State Secretary for Culture and Media of the Netherlands visited Sri Lanka from 27-31 August 2023 and signed two Legal instruments of transferring ownership of 06 cultural artefacts. Upon a request made by the GoSL, the Dutch Government returned 06 artefacts that had been taken from the country during Dutch colonial rule to Sri Lanka. The handing-over Ceremony was held on 05 December 2023 in Colombo.

Türkiye: a) Visit of Mr Beşir Uğur, Honorary Consul of Sri Lanka in the Mediterranean Region (Adana), Türkiye, to Sri Lanka on 27th July 2023. b) Visit of Mr. Mert Barış, Regional Coordinator of the Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), Türkiye, to Sri Lanka on 10-11.04.2023 and met with the Department of National Planning, Ministry of Tourism and Lands, Ministry of Plantation Industries, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education.

Mr. Mert Barış, TIKA, concluded a follow-up visit to Sri Lanka on 04 December 2023 and held meetings with the Ministry of Agriculture and Plantation Industries/Department of National Planning/ Ministry of Tourism & Land/ Ministry of Public Administration, Home Affairs, Provincial Councils, and Local Government.

Switzerland: Visit of Swiss Migration Partnership team led by Ambassador Vincenzo MASCIOLI - Director of International Cooperation, State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP) -14th May 2023

Commonwealth: Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC, Commonwealth Secretary-General (CWSG), visited Sri Lanka to commemorate the 75th National Day event on 04 February 2023. Hon. CWSG met with Hon. Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Justice and Opposition Leader of Sri Lanka Parliament during her visit. She also delivered a guest lecture at the Geopolitical Cartographer on the invitation by H.E. the President and also appeared in a television interview conducted by the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation under the “Diplomatic Faces” interview series aired on 11th February 2023.

Austria: The visit of Mr. Sven Wagner, Senior Advisor to the Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Austria, who met with the Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 13 January 2023. The interest of both parties in initiating bilateral political consultation was reiterated. The visit of Mr. Yannick Shetty, a member of the Austrian Parliament who met with Hon. MFA on 07 June 2023. Mr. Shetty is a leading European affairs expert who is strongly interested in the South Asian region.

Moscow: Mr. Nikolai Patrushev, Defence Secretary of the Russian Federation, visited Sri Lanka from 06-08 December 2023 with a delegation to discuss defence-related discussions and had sidelines line agencies related to defence and security.

EU: The 11th Inter-Parliamentary consultations between Sri Lanka and the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with the Countries of South Asia (DSAS) were convened on 31 October 2023 at the Sri Lanka Parliamentary premises.

Facilitation of high-level meetings/interactions: The Division also facilitated key engagements/interactions for H.E. the President, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Foreign Secretary with their counterparts on the sidelines of the 78th UN General Assembly Session in New York and during other key conferences/meetings. These interactions have paved the way for renewed commitment from both sides to enhance bilateral relations.

On the sidelines of the 78th UNGA in New York, H.E. the President held discussions with the President of the United States, the Secretary General of the Commonwealth, and the USAID Administrator. Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs met with his counterparts from Romania,

Bulgaria, Georgia and Actg. Deputy Secretary of State & USG for Political Affairs, USA. The Foreign Secretary met with the French Minister of State for Development, Francophonie and International Partnerships.

The High Commission in London organised a Ceylon Tea event at the Parliament during the visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Sabry to the UK. Minister for International Trade Nigel Huddleston, representatives of the APPG for Sri Lanka, and a cross-section of Parliamentarians were in attendance.

The meeting between Hon. Tharaka Balasuriya, State Minister of Foreign Affairs, with Mr. Francisco Andre, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal, on the sidelines of the 5th UN Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDC5) in Doha, from 5-7 March 2023.

Bilateral meeting between Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Hon. Tanja Fajon, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovenia, on 2-4 March 2023 in New Delhi on the sidelines of the Raisina Dialogue-2023.

The High Commission in London organised a networking reception for Mrs. Aruni Wijewardena, Secretary/ Foreign Affairs, with a cross-section of UK Parliamentarians on 18 April 2023.

Facilitated a telephone conversation between Hon Foreign Minister and Hon. Ivica Dacic, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, on 5 June 2023, where views were exchanged on strengthening bilateral relations.

Foreign Secretary Aruni Wijewardane and Secretary General of the French Foreign Ministry Anne-Marie Descotes had a productive meeting at the Foreign Ministry in Paris on 22 June 2023 during the Presidential visit in June 2023.

Representation and coordination of Sri Lanka's positions on concerns related to Sri Lanka raised by international partners;

- The Ministry closely monitored and responded to issues of key importance pertaining to Sri Lanka in Canada in coordination with the High Commission in Ottawa and Consulate in Toronto, especially related to the statements issued by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on 23 July 2023 on the 40th Anniversary of Black July and on 18 May 2023 on Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day containing claims of genocide relating to the conflict in Sri Lanka.
- The Sri Lanka Embassy in Paris took steps to engage three MPs who expressed detracting views on Sri Lanka at the parliamentary session, primarily influenced by the anti-Sri Lanka diaspora lobby in France.
- The Sri Lanka Embassy in Paris provided an update on peace, reconciliation, and development in Sri Lanka to Hon. Aurélien Taché (Democratic and Republican left party), Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly; Hon. Jean-Paul Lecoq (Democratic and Republican left party), Vice-Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee; and

Hon. Nadège Abomangoli (La France Insoumise party), Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

- The Ministry, represented by the Division, actively participated in the National Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force meetings to finalise the GoSL submission to the US State Department Trafficking in Persons Report 2023 and responses to the follow-up questions. The Mission in Washington D.C. also consulted with the Department of State and contributed to the GoSL submissions.

Celebration of 75th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations: The year 2023 also marks the celebration of the 75th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations with several countries in Europe and North America. In coordination with other agencies and the respective foreign governments, the Ministry has organised a series of events to commemorate this momentous occasion with France, Turkey, the USA, and the UK. With France, a joint commemorative stamp was issued on 27th October 2023. A series of activities have been designed throughout the year, including high-level visits (in the first quarter of 2024), signing of 04 MoUs currently being negotiated, business/investment fora, receptions, cultural events and exhibitions by the Sri Lanka Embassy in France to mark the occasion. A joint commemorative stamp was issued to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Sri Lanka and Türkiye Diplomatic Relations on 08 December 2023. The Sri Lanka Mission in Washington D.C. organised a series of events at the Embassy premises under the patronage of the Hon. Foreign Minister on 27th September 2023.

Agreements/MoUs signed: The Division coordinated the finalisation and signing of 11 MoUs/Agreements with countries in Europe in several areas, ranging from employment to enhancing service sectors (tourism and air services), cooperation in the judicial sector, capacity building and training, cultural cooperation, etc. Two key MoUs signed were regarding the transfer of ownership of six cultural objects from the Netherlands to Sri Lanka and the respective loan agreement.

- i. An MOU between the Ministry of Plantation Industries of Sri Lanka and KSAPA, a Limited Liability Company in France, was signed on 05.01.2023 at the Embassy of Sri Lanka in France, with the objective of capacity building of the Rubber Smallholders in Sri Lanka.
- ii. A MoU between the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) of Sri Lanka and the Ombudsman Institution of Türkiye (KDK) was signed on 11 January 2023 in Ankara during the International Conference held from 11 to 12 January 2023.
- iii. The Air Services Agreement between Sri Lanka and the Netherlands was signed on 22 February 2023 in The Hague, Netherlands.
- iv. On 28 August 2023, Sri Lanka and the Netherlands signed an “Acknowledgement of Transference” to transfer the ownership of six cultural objects. The same day, a loan agreement was signed between the Department of the National Museum of Sri Lanka and the Rijksmuseum of the Netherlands.
- v. Agreement between Sri Lanka and the Czech Republic for Eliminating Double Taxation signed on 03 February 2023 in Colombo.

- vi. Exchange of Instruments of Ratification of the Treaty between the Czech Republic and Sri Lanka on Transfer of Sentenced Persons and attended the event on the exchange of instruments in Prague on 10 March 2023.
- vii. The MoU on Bilateral Consultations between Sri Lanka and Luxembourg was signed on 13 May 2023 in Stockholm, Sweden.
- viii. The High Commission in London facilitated the signing of an Agreement between Agincare International Limited and Pulse Academy on Training and Placement of care workers in the UK on 7th June 2023
- ix. MoU between the Levan Mikeladze Diplomatic Training and Research Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia and the Bandaranaike International Diplomatic Training Institute (BIDTI) between Sri Lanka and Georgia was signed on 27 September 2023 in Tbilisi, Georgia.
- x. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in the Field of Tourism between Sri Lanka and Georgia was signed on 27 September 2023 in Tbilisi, Georgia.
- xi. Agreement on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons between Sri Lanka and Latvia has been finalised and is ready for signing.

2.5.5.3. Multilateral Diplomacy

Commonwealth: On the invitation of H.E. the President, the Commonwealth Secretary-General visited Sri Lanka to attend the celebration of the 75th Anniversary of Independence event on 04 February 2023.

Initiated preparations for convening a “Marlborough House Dialogue – Engaging All to Accelerate Sri Lanka’s Sustainable Development” with the Commonwealth Secretariat to foster engagement with the diaspora, encouraging them to be partners in Sri Lanka’s development. Facilitation of Sri Lanka’s participation at the Commonwealth meetings - a) 22nd and 23rd Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meetings (CFAMM) held from 12-16 March 2023 in Marlborough House, London and 21 September 2023 in United Nations Headquarters in New York, USA respectively, with Sri Lanka delegation led by Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs. b) The Meeting of Commonwealth Youth Ministers was held from 11-15 September 2023 in London, with a Sri Lanka delegation led by the Hon. Minister of Youth and Sports. c) The 66th Session of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, from 30th Sep to 6th Oct 2023, Ghana, led by the Hon. Speaker, with the Sri Lanka delegation. Hon. Speaker attended the April CPA mid-year Executive Committee Meeting in Gibraltar and the UK. d) A parliamentary delegation comprising MP Kokila Gunawardena and Dr. Harini Nireka Amarasuriya attended the CPA UK Women in Trade Workshop from 19-23 June 2023. e) Foreign Minister Ali Sabry attended a number of events commemorating the Commonwealth Day on 13 March 2023. g) Hon. Nalin Fernando, Minister of Trade, Commerce and Food Security, attended the Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting from 5-6 June 2023. Actg DG Ms Gilma Dissananayake attended the Senior Trade Officials Meeting.

As per President Wickremesinghe's proposal, the Commonwealth Leaders Event was convened on 5 May 2023 on the sidelines of the Coronation of HM King Charles III, and President Wickremesinghe attended.

Support for Commonwealth Gender initiatives - First Lady Prof Maithree Wickramasinghe addressed the Fireside Chat on cervical cancer organised for the spouses on the sidelines of the Leaders event. She has also accepted the Secretary-General's invitation to Champion Commonwealth 'Says No More', a pan-Commonwealth initiative to address gender-based violence, gender equality, women empowerment, and education and health priorities for women and girls.

The European Union: Foreign Minister Ali Sabry visited Sweden, leading Sri Lanka's delegation to the EU-Indo Pacific Ministerial Forum, an event that brought together the European Union and 'Indo-Pacific' countries, which was an excellent opportunity to project Sri Lanka's importance in the Region's context. Hon. Foreign Minister co-moderated Roundtable I with the Swedish Foreign Minister, focusing on "Building more sustainable and inclusive growth". Meeting with the IORA Secretary General and Hon. Minister was important as Sri Lanka took over the Chairmanship of the Group in October 2023.

EU-Sri Lanka Working Group on Trade and Economic Relations Cooperation was convened virtually on 25 April 2023. EU- Sri Lanka Working Group on Development Cooperation was convened on 08 May 2023. 25th Session of the EU -SL Joint Commission was convened on 09 May 2023 and reviewed bilateral relations ranging from reconciliation, human rights, trade, development cooperation, climate change & environment, sectoral cooperation, international security cooperation and cooperation in multilateral fora.

IORA Council of Ministers Meeting: The Division coordinated high-level participation at the 23rd IORA Council of Ministers Meeting in Colombo on 11 - 12 October 2023. Accordingly, France was represented by H.E. Jean-Claude Brunet, Ambassador and Special Envoy for Regional Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Zone at the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France and the UK was represented by The Rt Hon Anne Marie Trevelyan, Minister for Indo-Pacific at Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

The EU obtained a dialogue partnership with the IORA under Sri Lanka's chairmanship during the 25th Committee of Senior Officials, which convened on October 9-10, 2023. The EU will sign the letter of acceptance in due course.

2.5.5.4. Economic Diplomacy

In countries under the purview of this Division, the relevant missions have taken the following initiatives to facilitate economic cooperation;

Trade concession mechanisms:

- The UK's new Developing Country Trading Scheme (DCTS) was implemented in June 2023. Sri Lanka will benefit under the DCTS Enhanced Preferences Scheme with 92% of tariff lines for market access. Continuous representations of the High Commission in London with the UKBT and engagements with Sri Lankan authorities enabled achieving this. Sustained engagement with the UK authorities to raise issues related to the Rules of Origin criterion under DCTS that affects Sri Lankan exports.

- The Ministry is continuously monitoring the adoption process of the new EU GSP regulation. Due to the stalemate of the ongoing triologue discussions, it has been decided to extend it until 2027.
- The Mission in Ottawa facilitated meetings for Brandix representatives with Global Affairs Canada officials to benefit from the Canadian Preferential Tariff Programme (GTP). A submission for further tariff reduction for Sri Lankan Apparel was made.

Expanding connectivity:

- Facilitated meetings between Hon Harin Fernando, Minister of Lands and Tourism with ITA and NEOS airlines, General Manager and Director General of ASTOI, Association of Tour Operators in Italy representing over 90% of the Italian tour operators in February 2023, to initiate direct flights from Milan and Rome to Sri Lanka, and to promote increased tourist arrivals from Italy.
- One outcome of the Third session of bilateral political consultations concluded on 14 June 2023 with Poland is initiating official communications to establish direct shipping and port cooperation between Sri Lanka's Colombo Port and Poland's Gdańsk/Gdynia Ports. This cooperation will streamline containerised cargo operations between Poland and Sri Lanka and generate and increase direct exports and imports. Such collaboration will also result in Polish investments in warehousing and cold-chain development in Sri Lanka.
- The Ministry and the Mission in Moscow, in consultation with the relevant Government institutes, coordinated with the Russian government authorities to increase the direct flights from Russia to Sri Lanka.
- Mission in Stockholm to engage with FINNAIR to build upon the current codeshare and increase frequency, continuing to Sri Lanka.
- Swiss airline Edelweiss commenced seasonal flights to Sri Lanka for the winter tourism season.
- Discussion with Mr. Stanislav Zeman, General Director of Čedok, a leading provider of travel services in the Czech Republic, was held to discuss possible future modalities to strengthen air connectivity between Sri Lanka and the region. Accordingly, Čedok plans to expand its long-haul destinations with direct charter flights between Prague, Colombo, Bratislava, and Colombo from October 2023.

Employment initiatives:

- The High Commission in London closely engaged with the representatives of the UK healthcare industry, including Care England, a leading representative body for small, medium and large care providers in England and NHS Trusts to promote Sri Lanka as a sourcing country of health and adult care professionals for the UK market. The High Commission in

London, in collaboration with the SLBFE, initiated measures to introduce a caregiver's training programme in Sri Lanka exclusively for the UK care sector.

- The Mission in Moscow facilitated hiring 58 Sri Lankan migrant workers to Russian garment factories under direct employment contracts by 2 Russian employers.
- In order to identify the human resources needs of the UK adult care sector and for matchmaking with the Sri Lankan trainers/providers of adult healthcare professionals, facilitated the signing of an Agreement between Agincare International Limited and Pulse Academy on Training and Placement of care workers in the UK on 7th June 2023.
- The High Commission in London continues to engage with the Department for Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) to obtain designated status for Sri Lanka and recognise the Sri Lankan Driver's Licence in the UK. The Mission is following up with the DVLA to sign a reciprocal exchange agreement for licences to drive cars, motorcycles, and larger vehicles (buses and lorries).
- Continued discussions on the conclusion of the renewal of the Bilateral Agreement for the Mutual Recognition of Driving Licences between Italy and Sri Lanka.
- Observations of Sri Lanka for the reformulated text of the MoU on Labour Cooperation between Sri Lanka and Romania have been shared with the Romanian side on 06th November 2023.

2.5.5.5. Cultural Diplomacy and People-to-People Relations: Mission officials actively participated in cultural and religious events organised by the Sri Lankan expatriate community and religious establishments. The Missions also held discussions with the Office for Overseas Sri Lankans Abroad (OOSLA) to obtain maximum support from overseas Sri Lankans for the national development agenda, such as addressing priorities and urgent national requirements.

2.5.5.6. Science and Technological Diplomacy: The Mission in Washington D.C. discussed with more than eight universities possible STEM and other educational partnerships with Universities in Sri Lanka. It also assisted collaborations between NSBM Green University and other Sri Lankan universities with universities in the US. The Mission also discussed the proposed collaborative project on the Development of Vegetables and Livestock Sectors in Sri Lanka between the Ministry of Agriculture and Michigan State University. The initial MoU was signed between the University of Illinois in the US and the University of Peradeniya in the field of veterinary science and agriculture with the assistance of Sri Lankan-origin scholars.

The Mission in Ottawa discussed with the University of Saskatchewan to explore avenues for research collaboration in Agriculture, Public Health, and Community Health. On 30 August 2023, the International Association of Diaspora Academics of Sri Lanka—Canada Chapter was established. The Mission in Moscow is in the process of establishing the Association of Sri Lankan and Russian Universities of Medical and Allied Sciences. It has also facilitated the establishment of 3 Russian Language Centers in Sri Lanka in collaboration with Russian Universities.

2.5.6. South Asia Division

The year under review witnessed Sri Lanka's reinvigorated engagement with South Asian countries. These engagements included outgoing and incoming high-level visits, joint commissions, bilateral instrument signings, and greater people-to-people contacts.

The year 2023 marked notable diplomatic engagements between Sri Lanka and India, as well as Sri Lanka and Maldives. H.E. the President undertook an official visit to New Delhi on 20–21 July, resulting in the signing and exchange of several bilateral instruments. The outcome document of this visit, 'Promoting Connectivity, Catalysing Prosperity: India-Sri Lanka Economic Partnership Vision', provided a strong foundation for future Indo-Lanka cooperation through enhanced connectivity between the two countries. Following this, H.E., the President, visited Maldives from November 16 to 18, where he participated in the inauguration ceremony of the newly elected President of Maldives, Dr. Mohamed Muizzu. In December, a 17-member Sri Lanka Parliamentary delegation, led by the Hon. Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, visited India, fostering parliamentary ties. The Hon. M.U.M. Ali Sabry, Minister of Foreign Affairs, also participated in the 8th edition of the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi from 02-04 March, highlighting Sri Lanka's commitment to regional dialogue and cooperation.

In 2023, several high-profile visits from South Asian countries to Sri Lanka took place. Finance Minister of India, Hon. Nirmala Sitharaman, visited Sri Lanka from 01-03 November. During her stay, the Finance Minister of India visited Anuradhapura, Kandy, Trincomalee, and Jaffna. Indian External Affairs Minister Hon. Dr. S. Jaishankar attended the 23rd Council of Ministers Meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in Colombo on October 11, and the Hon. Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, also participated in the same event. Further incoming visits included the visit of the Hon. Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Speaker of the Parliament of Bangladesh, to Sri Lanka from 14-19 September. Notably, on February 4, dignitaries such as the Hon. V. Muraleedharan, Minister of State for External Affairs of India and representatives from Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, Bhutan, and Pakistan visited Sri Lanka as honoured guests to celebrate the 75th Independence Day. The External Affairs Minister of India undertook another bilateral visit to Sri Lanka from 19-20 January.

The 4th Round of the Sri Lanka-Maldives Joint Commission took place in Colombo from 06-07 June with the Sri Lanka delegation led by the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Maldives delegation headed by Hon. Abdulla Shahid, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Maldives. Subsequently, the inaugural session of the Sri Lanka-Nepal Joint Commission at the Ministerial level was held in Kathmandu, Nepal, from 21-22 December. The Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs led the Sri Lanka delegation, and the Hon. Narayan Prakash Saud, Foreign Minister of Nepal, led the Nepal delegation.

In 2023, 11 Memoranda of Understanding were signed between Sri Lanka and South Asian Countries. Six were with India, four were with the Maldives, and one was with Nepal.

During the period under review, ten military and unique aircraft, 14 naval ships, and one naval submarine from South Asian countries visited Sri Lanka, and the South Asia Division facilitated their diplomatic clearance.

2.5.7. South East and Central Asia Division

2.5.7.1. Economic Diplomacy: Facilitation of business-to-business interactions between prospective buyers/ investors in the accredited countries and business partners in Sri Lanka through the respective Sri Lanka Missions/ Posts abroad.

SLEMB/ Bangkok: Facilitated negotiation of Sri Lanka - Thailand FTA from January 2023 to December 2023. The Mission and TICA drafted the two-year implementation plan for Sri Lanka and Thailand (2023-2024). TICA has identified 06 projects under the 02-year plan, i.e. Project on Community-Based Tourism in Wathupola Village, Puttalam, Project on OVOP Development, Training and Expert Service on Maritime Ornamental Fish Breeding, Project on Elephants of Welfare and Rehabilitation, Annual International Training Course and Thailand International Postgraduate Programme. The speedy implementation of the MoU on Agricultural Cooperation and MoU on Cooperation on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures were also discussed. The 05th Sub Committee Meeting on Trade Related Matters between Sri Lanka and Thailand was held on 12.10.2023 in Colombo. The Mission took part in the sectoral meetings held for the 05th Sub Committee Meeting, and the Mission's observations/ recommendations were made during these meetings. The Mission has submitted proposals received from the line agencies in Sri Lanka to the Department of Trade negotiations to be included in the Joint Action Plan. State Minister of Finance of Sri Lanka, Hon. Shehan Semasinghe, led the Sri Lanka Delegation to the 04th Session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Finance for Development from 01- 03 November 2023 at the UNESCAP in Bangkok. Facilitate the visit of Senthil Thondaman, Governor of the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka, to Bangkok from 24-29 November 2023 to attend the World Hindu Congress 2023. During the Official visit of Hon. M.U.M. Ali Sabry, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, for the inaugural BIMSTEC Foreign Minister's Retreat, held on 11th June 2023, an investment promotion event was organised by the Mission in collaboration with the Federation of Thai Industries on 18.07.2023 at the Federation of Thai Industries.

SLEMB/ Jakarta: Subsequent to the fact-finding visit of the delegation led by Dr. R.H.S. Samarasinghe, the Senior Economic Advisor to H.E. the President of Sri Lanka (Economic Stabilization, Recovery and Growth) to Jakarta on 12 and 13 June 2023, a letter of Intent to enter Sri Lanka into Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement was forwarded to ASEAN Secretariat on 28 June 2023/A delegation from Chamber of Young Lankan Entrepreneurs (COYLE) visited Jakarta from 19 to 24 September 2023 to foster economic collaborations.

SLHC/ Kuala Lumpur: The Mission had a productive discussion with the Chairman of Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) Malaysia in order to secure employment opportunities for Sri Lankan workers in the plantation sector in Malaysia and further renegotiated with the Ministry of Human Resources of Malaysia to increase the employment quota for Sri Lanka by

10,000./ The Mission has facilitated the participation of Sri Lanka IT companies in the IT Show in Malaysia and created opportunities for them to do business in Malaysia.

SLEMB/ Yangon: On 12 May 2023, the Ambassador and the top management of Myanmar Airways International (MAI) held an official meeting to establish direct air connectivity between Yangon and Colombo. The Mission also arranged a number of business meetings for some Sri Lankans who wish to invest in Myanmar.

SLEMB/ Manila: The Mission took action to promote trade and investment opportunities for the leading Sri Lankan companies in the Philippine retail market by disseminating the information with stakeholders and arranging a virtual meeting. The Mission promoted Sri Lankan exports at trade fairs in the Philippines, stakeholders and private sector companies to explore potential investors and opportunities for partnership. The Embassy successfully facilitated the Familiarization Tour of nine (9) Filipino Travel Agents to Sri Lanka from 29 March to 6 April 2023 in coordination with the SLTPB. The Embassy promoted trade fairs showcasing the Sri Lankan exports in the Philippines stakeholders and private companies to explore potential investors and opportunities for partnership – 1. Sri Lanka Apparel (JAAFSL), 2. National Industry Exhibition 2023, 3. FACETS 2024, 4. Digital Investment Forum and International Mineral and Mining Forum.

SLHC/ Singapore: Facilitated the visit of a business delegation from the Sri Lanka Singapore Business Council by arranging networking sessions with the members of the Singapore Business Federation, Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce, Singapore Malay Chamber of Commerce and Singapore Sri Lanka Business Association. Facilitated Sri Lanka's participation at the Singapore International Jewellery Expo 2023 in collaboration with the National Gem and Jewellery Authority. Facilitated the visit of Hon. Nimal Siripala De Silva, Minister of Ports, Shipping and Aviation, by arranging meetings with the Singapore investors. The High Commission Organized a tourism, fashion and investment promotion programme, "An Ode to Ceylon", in collaboration with a Sri Lankan entrepreneur in Singapore. Coordinated the visit of Hon. Chamara Sampath Dissanayake, State Minister of Primary Industries, to Singapore and arranged a comprehensive programme including meeting with the State Minister of Trade and Industry of Singapore, President of Singapore Jewellery Association, President of Gem Traders Association and the President of Diamond Exchange of Singapore. Organised a Sri Lanka Business and Investment forum, "Sri Lanka Way Forward", in collaboration with the Singapore Business Council in July 2023. Sri Lanka exported 112 Mn US\$ worth of goods to Singapore from January to November 2023 and the FDI from Singapore to Sri Lanka was valued at US\$ 41.19 Mn from January to September 2023. 9,500 Singapore tourists visited Sri Lanka in 2023, a 150% increase compared to the previous year.

SLEMB/ Hanoi: In a hybrid format, a discussion on "Bilateral Trade & Investment between Vietnam and Sri Lanka" was organised in collaboration with the National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka (NCCSL) on 14th March 2023. The Embassy had over 50 significant meetings with the Vietnamese and Sri Lankan governments, trade chambers, leading global corporations, FDI captains, and directors and CEOs of large companies. Promoted nearly 20 Trade & Tourism Fairs and Trade Promotional Events in Vietnam among Sri Lankan companies to bring outward

delegation to Vietnam. A media briefing on Sri Lanka Tourism was organised on 4th April 2023 at the Embassy. A Media FAM Tour was organised with the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB) from 7th to 14th May 2023 for five Vietnamese media personnel. In collaboration with the Export Development Board (EDB), the Embassy arranged the participation of Sri Lankan businesses at the Viet Nam Expo from 07 to 9th December 2023 in Ho Chi Minh City.

The SLEMB/Moscow (accredited to Kazakhstan): Has proposed and facilitated the resumption of direct flights from Kazakhstan to Sri Lanka by Air Astana. The Embassy officials met with Mr Yerzhan Yerkinbayev, the Vice-Minister in charge of the Tourism Industry at the Ministry of Culture and Sport of Kazakhstan, regarding cooperation with the Tourism sector. The Ambassador met with Mr. Kanat Tumysh, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs on the collaboration in tourism, trade, education, culture, science and high technology.

SLHC/Islamabad (accredited to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan): The Mission met with the Honorary Consul of Sri Lanka to the Kyrgyzstan Republic to promote trade activities and find a new market for exporting Ceylon tea to Central Asian countries.

2.5.7.2. Political Diplomacy

Revitalisation of bilateral cooperation through enhanced political consultations with accredited destinations:

- Prepare to hold the 1st Round of Foreign Office Consultations with Malaysia, the 4th Round of Joint Commission of Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation with Vietnam, and the 1st Round of Foreign Office Consultations with Singapore. 05th Round of Bilateral Political Consultations with Thailand was held successfully in Colombo on 28th August 2023 at the Foreign Secretaries Level.

SLEMB/ Bangkok: The Hon. Prime Minister visited Thailand and made a courtesy call on Most Ven. Prof. Dr. Phra Brahmapundit, President of ICDV, assisted and coordinated the 05th Round of Bilateral Political Consultations at the Foreign Secretary Level on 28.08.2023 in Colombo.

SLEMB/ Jakarta: Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs visited Jakarta for the 30th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) on 14 July 2023 and had 14 meetings, including bilateral meetings with ARF Member countries, Indonesian Minister of Finance, the Head of National Agency for Combating Terrorism (BNPT) and with the members of Sri Lankan Business community. Hon. State Minister of Foreign Affairs attended the AIS Forum on 10th October 2023, in Bali, Indonesia.

SLHC/ Kuala Lumpur: The High Commissioner had a Courtesy Call with the H.E. Governor of Malaka State and requested to increase the employment opportunities for Sri Lankans in the State of Malaka. Both parties also agreed to work on tourism, trade and investment sectors between the countries, focusing on Malaka. A bilateral meeting with the Governor of Malacca was conducted to advocate for Sri Lanka's Bid for RECEP, laying the groundwork for potential economic collaboration. The Mission orchestrated a successful official visit by the Malaysian Foreign Minister to Sri Lanka in October 2023, culminating in active participation for IORA. The Mission is continuously working on the proposed State Visit to Malaysia by the President of Sri Lanka and holding Foreign Office Consultations.

SLEMB/ Yangon: Ambassador had bilateral meetings with the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs/ Deputy Prime Minister and the Union Minister for Home Affairs/ Union Minister for Immigration and Population of Myanmar/ GoSL donated consignment of 1 metric ton of Ceylon tea to Myanmar, as humanitarian assistance for the people affected by the Ceylon MOCHA in May 2023.

SLEMB/ Manila: Facilitated the working visit of the Hon. Minister of Health of Sri Lanka and the Ministerial delegation to the Philippines from 21 to 24 March 2023./it Facilitated the working visit of the Hon. State Minister of Health and a delegation participating in Asia Pacific Social Protection Week 2023 in the Philippines from 26 September to 29 September 2023./ Action was taken to coordinate with the DFA/ Philippines to conduct the 3rd Round of Political Consultations./ The Mission participated in the State of the Nation Address (SONA) of H.E. Ferdinand R Marcos, President of the Philippines, on 24 July 2023 and submitted a summary report of the post-SONA Philippine Economic Briefing to the Ministry./ Facilitate the visit of the Parliament of Sri Lanka to Participate at the 4th APEA Conference in Manila hosted by the Asia Pacific Evaluation Association (APEA) held from 03rd to 08th December 2023.

SLHC/ Singapore: The High Commission has coordinated the visit of H.E. the President to Singapore from 22nd to 23rd May 2023 and the Working Visit of H.E. the President from 21st to 22nd August 2023. During the visit in May, H.E. the President interacted with the Minister for Home Affairs and the Minister for Law of Singapore. During the Working Visit, President Wickremesinghe held a range of bilateral discussions with the Singapore President, Prime Minister and Minister for Defence of Singapore and Minister of Sustainability and the Environment of Singapore, aiming at augmenting bilateral relations by prioritising the economic, defence, and environmental cooperation between the two countries. Both parties signed a MoU or collaboration under Article 06 of the Paris Agreement between Sri Lanka and Singapore. The High Commission is following up with the MFA, Singapore, and the MFA, Sri Lanka on scheduling the 01st Round of Foreign Office Consultations in the second half of 2024.

SLEMB/ Hanoi: Comprehensive bilateral meetings were held with the President of Viet Nam, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Public Security, education, and leaders of the Communist Party of Viet Nam, as well as a number of select Ambassadors based in Ha Noi, amongst others.

SLEMB/Moscow (accredited to Kazakhstan): The Embassy has initiated discussions to explore the possibility of holding Political Consultations between the Foreign Ministers of Sri Lanka and Kazakhstan during the first quarter of 2024. The Embassy facilitated a bilateral meeting between the Presidents of Sri Lanka, H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe, and Kazakhstan, H.E. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, on the margins of the Berlin Global Dialogue Forum in Germany on September 29, 2023.

The SLEMB/Teheran: The Embassy has attempted to finalise the draft text of the Cooperation Program between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, enabling the two countries to hold the proposed Political Consultations at the level of Deputy Foreign Ministers as soon as possible.

SLHC/ Islamabad (accredited to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan): Ambassador-designate for Sri Lanka to the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan met the Ambassadors of both countries to strengthen cordial bilateral relations with Sri Lanka and extend their support at regional forums./ The Ambassador-designate has requested the H.E., the Ambassador of Tajikistan in Islamabad, to recommend suitable persons to nominate a person for the Honorary Consul of Sri Lanka to the Republic of Tajikistan, which is under consideration by their side./ During the meeting, the Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan requested that the draft of 12 agreements in the areas of cooperation be expedited.

2.5.7.3. Multilateral Relations: Frequent engagement with UN agencies, ASEAN, ARF, CPSC, UNESCAP, RCEP and RECAP and building partnerships to complement the government's development agenda.

SLEMB/ Bangkok: Hon. Naseer Ahamed, Minister of Environment, delivered the keynote speech at the side event "Connecting Local, National and Regional Strategies to Achieve Carbon Neutrality in Asia and the Pacific and made the country statement at the special session on "Catalyzing Climate Finance and Investment". Sri Lanka supported all ten (10) candidates at the election or re-election to the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Center for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) for the period 2023-2026 of the regional institution during the 79th session.

SLEMB/ Jakarta: The Indonesian Government supported Sri Lanka's candidature to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CWS), candidature of Sri Lanka for the member of the UN Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW) for the period of 2024-2027, candidature of Sri Lanka as a member of Executive Board UNESCO for the period 2023-2027.

SLEMB/ Manila: The Philippines Government extended support to Sri Lanka at the 54th Session of the Human Rights Council on 11 September 2023 and its candidature to the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW) for the term 2024-2027 at the election held on 27 September 2023.

SLHC/Singapore: The High Commission met with the Senior officials of the Foreign Ministry of Singapore and briefed them on the progress made by Sri Lanka in relation to human rights and reconciliation and the GOSL position on Resolution 51/1 and requested to make an intervention recognising Sri Lanka's efforts under challenging circumstance, during the oral update on Sri Lanka at 53rd Session of the HRC scheduled on 21st June 2023. The High Commission lobbied with the Foreign Ministry of Singapore to intervene in the 4th UPR of Sri Lanka at the 42nd session of the UPR Working Group, Geneva, recognising Sri Lanka's efforts under challenging circumstances.

SLEMB/ Hanoi: The Mission was proactively engaged with the Foreign Office of Viet Nam in order to secure the support of Viet Nam to Sri Lanka on human rights issues.

SLHC/Islamabad (accredited to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan): Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan extended their support to Sri Lanka during the UN HRC periodical review held in Geneva and

have informed that both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have expressed their support for the candidature of Mr. Prasad Kariyawasam for the upcoming elections to the UN Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW) for the term 2024-2027./ The Mission has coordinated with the Embassies of the Kyrgyzstan Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan in Islamabad to extend their support for Sri Lanka's candidature to the UNESCO Executive Board for the term 2023-2027 from Group IV held during the 42nd General Conference in November 2023.

The SLEMB/Moscow (accredited to Kazakhstan): The Ambassador met with Ms CHI Fang, the Deputy Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), to discuss possible areas of cooperation.

Consular Diplomacy and Migrant Labour Welfare:

SLEMB/ Bangkok: 07 Sri Lankans were deported from Thailand during the 04th quarter, and a total of 29 were deported up-to-date from Thailand and facilitated the deportation of 06 Sri Lankan from Cambodia.

SLEMB/ Yangon: Five Sri Lankan fishermen who were sentenced to jail in Myanmar were pardoned by the Government of Myanmar on 28 March 2023. Thirty-two stranded Sri Lankans who were considered victims of human trafficking were rescued/released and repatriated by the Mission.

SLEMB/ Manila: The Mission conducted a virtual awareness session on Human Trafficking on 28 February 2023 in collaboration with the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) of the Philippines and with the participation of the Sri Lankan migrants domiciled in the Philippines.

SLHC/Singapore: The High Commission's discussions with the Building Construction Authority of Singapore resulted in the recognition of the Sri Lankan National Vocational Qualification. This marked Singapore's first recognition of a foreign construction qualification, and the High Commission arranged the deployment of nurses to Singapore public sector hospitals. The first batch of 36 nurses was successfully deployed to Singapore's public sector hospitals. This was marked as Sri Lankan nurses were recruited in Singapore for the first time. In 2023, the Labour Section made significant progress in facilitating employment opportunities for Sri Lankan migrant workers, particularly in Singapore. 2,631 Sri Lankan migrant workers were deployed to Singapore, generating an annual income of SGD 485,023.10.

SLEMB/ Hanoi: The Mission coordinated with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Viet Nam to issue Temporary Travel Documents (TTDs) and facilitate the repatriation of 126 Sri Lankan stranded migrants from Ba Ria Vung Tau province to Sri Lanka.

SLHC/Islamabad (accredited to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan): Has identified employment opportunities in the textile sector in Kyrgyzstan and will support the recruitment agencies in Sri Lanka to send Sri Lankan workers to Kyrgyzstan. The recruitment process commenced in July 2023 through M/s Aspiration International. High Commission has been approached by Sri

Lankans stranded in Kyrgyzstan during their transit/visits. The High Commission coordinates with the Honorary Consul of Sri Lanka in Bishkek to extend possible consular services for those stranded Sri Lankans.

SLEMB/Moscow (accredited to Kazakhstan): Assisted Sri Lankans stranded/ detained/ imprisoned in the countries of accreditation (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan) and facilitated their return to Sri Lanka.

2.5.7.4. Cultural Diplomacy

SLEMB/ Bangkok: Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, delivered the keynote speech of the 18th United Nation's Day of Vesak Celebrations 2023 by International Council for Day of Vesak on 01.06.2023 assisted and coordinated the visit of the more than 74 members of delegates for the 18th United Nation's Day of Vesak Celebrations 2023. Temple to Temple links between Sri Lankan Buddhist temples and leading Buddhist temples in ASEAN countries.

SLEMB/ Jakarta: To promote Cultural Diplomacy and people-to-people contacts, the Embassy organised 2 Sahabat Sri Lanka programmes for a targeted group of young Indonesians/ the Ambassador had discussions with undergraduates from 7 Universities in Indonesia.

SLHC/ Kuala Lumpur: The Mission represented Sri Lanka at the International Cultural and World Conference (ICWC) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, one of the most significant cultural and tourism exhibitions. It displayed Sri Lanka Tourism, Ceylon Tea, spices, and cashews and exposed cultural diplomacy.

SLEMB Yangon: Six Sri Lankan Buddhist Monks were conferred with honorary religious titles "Agga Maha Panditha" and "Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru" by the Government of Myanmar on 05 March 2023./ In commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Independence of Sri Lanka, Mission organised a cultural show followed by a Diplomatic Reception on 03 February 2023./ A delegation of Sri Lankan Buddhist Monks attended the consecration ceremony of the World's tallest Maravijaya Buddha Image in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, on 01 August 2023./ A cultural delegation of Sacred Shwedagon Pagoda in Myanmar visited Sri Lanka from 25 August to 01 September 2023 to witness the Esala Perahera of Sri Dalada Maligawa.

SLHC/ Singapore: The High Commission, in partnership with the Asian Film Archive in Singapore, conducted the Sri Lanka Film Festival and screened two internationally acclaimed Sri Lankan films from 10-11 March 2023. The High Commission supported a joint initiative by the diplomatic corps to showcase art from countries on the topic "Tropical," which commenced in November 2023 at the National Gallery of Singapore. The exhibition showcased the work of two Sri Lankan artists (Lionel Wendt and Barbara Sansoni).

SLEMB/ Hanoi: The Mission, in coordination with the Bai Dinh Pagoda in Viet Nam, brought a sampling of Sacred Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi from Anuradhapura and planted it in Bai Dinh Pagoda on 25 March 2023. / The Mission facilitated the visit of the Viet Nam Buddhist Sangha (VBS) delegation from 8-11 May 2023 to Sri Lanka. During the visit, VBS met with high-level political

dignitaries in Sri Lanka, including the Hon. Prime Minister, the Hon. Actg: Foreign Minister and the Hon. Minister of Buddha Sasana.

2.5.7.5. Defence & Security Cooperation

SLEMB/ Bangkok: The importance of implementing the Intelligence sharing Agreement between Sri Lanka and Thailand during and requested to arrange an online discussion with Thai and Sri Lankan intelligence authorities. Establish cooperation among the defence establishments/ coordinate the participation of military officers in the capacity-building programmes offered by the respective accredited destinations and facilitate a study tour by a delegation of Defence Services from 04th to 13th September 2023.

SLHC/ Kuala Lumpur: The Mission facilitated the “Overseas Study Tour” of the Defence Services Staff College Students of Sri Lanka to Malaysia.

SLEMB/ Jakarta: Undergraduates of Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) Sri Lanka completed the 'International Collaboration Study Visit' to Indonesia from 04 to 14 September 2023.

SLEMB/ Manila: Follow-up action was taken to finalise the proposed MoU on Defence Cooperation, which provides a broader engagement on sharing experience on many fronts, from counterinsurgency to fighting radicalisation and violent extremism.

SLHC/ Singapore: Coordinated the visit of Vice Admiral Priyantha Perera, Commander of Sri Lanka Navy to the 13th International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (IMDEX) Asia 2023 held in Singapore from 3rd to 5th May 2023/ Coordinated the visit of Mr. Sagala Ratnayaka, Chief of Staff to the President and National Security Advisor (NSA) for the 20th IISS Shangri-La Dialogue, Asia’s premier Security Summit held in Singapore from 2 – 4 June 2023. Chief of Defence Staff General Shavendra Silva also attended with NSA to the Shangri-La Dialogue/NSA paid a courtesy call to Singapore’s Foreign Minister and met with the Secretary of the Department of Defence of Australia, the Commander of the United States Indo-Pacific Command, the Deputy National Security Advisor of India, the Chairman, Joint Chief of Staff Committee of Pakistan Armed Forces and the Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific of the ICRC

2.5.7.6. Public Diplomacy

SLEMB/ Bangkok: Deputy Permanent Secretary H.E. Busadee Santipitaks of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand launched the new website of the Mission on 06th December 2023.

SLEMB/ Jakarta: The Mission, in collaboration with the Sri Lankan community, organised the Ifthar celebration, Vesak and Poson celebrations, Paduru Party, and Sahabat Sri Lanka programme for Indonesian youth.

SLEMB/ Manila: The Embassy celebrated Sri Lanka's 75th Independence Day in February 2023 at the ambassador's official residence, with the Participation of the Sri Lankan Community.

SLHC/ Singapore: To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and Singapore, the High Commission Singapore, in collaboration with the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) of the National University of Singapore (NUS) has launched a joint research publication “Singapore and Sri Lanka at 50: Perspectives from Sri Lanka on 29th September 2023 at the National University of Singapore (UNS) attended by the diplomatic corps, academics and Sri Lankan expatriate community.

2.5.7.7. Science and Technology Diplomacy

SLEMB/Bangkok: AIT President Prof. Kazuo Yamamoto and the courtesy call with Hon Ali Sabry, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sri Lanka in February 2023, International Training Programme on Modern Automotive Technology for Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka at the Asian Institute of Technology on 18.04.2023 the study project on “Opportunity and Limitation of Financial and Technical Assistance of NEDA in Sri Lanka, Chulabhorn Graduate Institute has offered 05 scholarships to Sri Lanka.

SLEMB/ Manila: The Embassy of Sri Lanka in the Philippines facilitated the collaboration of the Rotary Club of Makati Circle of Friends, Rotary Club of Colombo- Reconnections and CIE Global Colleges Inc.. for the Five Hundred (500) IT Scholarships Programme for Sri Lankans. The first batch of scholars started the online ICT course on 6th March 2023.

SLHC/ Singapore: From January to September 2023, the Mission, in coordination with the Technical Cooperation Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was able to secure scholarships/training Projects on Development, Sustainable Waste Management and Smart Urbanization in the Face of Climate Change, Empowering Persons with Disabilities, Urban Health Security, Green Economy, Public-Private Partnerships and Project Finance, Fintech and Urban Development Towards a Smart Nation Vision

2.6. Performance Overview: Operational Divisions

2.6.1. Consular Affairs Division

The Consular Affairs Division provides services to the public in compliance with the Consular Functions Act No. 04 of 1981 and the subsequent amendment in Act No. 18 of 2006. The Division coordinates and collaborates with its Regional Consular Offices (RCOs) located in Jaffna, Matara, Kandy, Trincomalee and Kurunegala, as well as all Sri Lankan Diplomatic Missions and Posts abroad, in the provision of consular services to the public both in Sri Lanka and overseas. Consular services provided to the public by the Division are structured into five main sections: Document Authentication, Repatriation, Coordination of Compensation Abroad, Coordination of Deaths Abroad and Miscellaneous consular matters.

The Consular Division and Regional Consular Offices (RCOs) generated LKR's total revenue during the corresponding period. 673,391,000.00 by authenticating 615,352 documents for 277,308 applicants. Among these Regional Consular Offices, RCO Jaffna generated LKR— 38,946,600.00 by authenticating 31,977 documents for 15,798 applicants. The RCO Matara collected LKR 27,079,800.00 through authenticating 23,533 documents for 16,094 applicants. The RCO Kandy contributed LKR 29,353,800.00 by authenticating 25,102 documents for 16,026

applicants, while the RCO Trincomalee generated LKR 17,485,200.00 by authenticating 15,022 documents for 9,248 applicants. Furthermore, RCO Kurunegala raised LKR—38,674,800.00 by authenticating 32,872 documents for 20,570 applicants.

The Consular Affairs Division, in partnership with the Department of Examinations, has introduced an online authentication system for GCE O/L & GCE A/L certificates from August 2023. This new system enables applicants to apply for online authentication for their GCE O/L & A/L Certificates without physically visiting the Consular Division in Colombo. This initiative marks a significant step towards digitising document authentication services offered by the Consular Division to the public. GCE O/L & A/L certificates make up the majority of documents authenticated daily, accounting for approximately 30-40% of the total. As of 31st December 2023, over 23,000 certificates have been authenticated by the Division.

The Consular Division initiated further enhancements to the Electronic Document Authentication System (e-DAS) to integrate the system with other key government entities, including the Registrar General's Department, the Department of Motor Traffic, Sri Lanka Police, local universities, etc. The system integration with the Registrar General's Department Division has been initiated to enable online authentication for birth, death and marriage records through e-DAS, with the full public launch scheduled by mid-April 2024. Once the integration with these key government departments is accomplished, it is foreseen that over 80% of the documents authenticated by the Division daily will be processed online.

The Cabinet of Ministers relocated the Ministry's Consular Affairs Division to Suhurupaya, Battaramulla. The relocation will be completed by April 2024.

During the year 2023, there were a total of 635 reported deaths of Sri Lankan nationals abroad. The Division assisted in repatriating the human remains of 369 deceased individuals, while 205 were buried in foreign countries, and 60 were cremated overseas, with the consent of the NOK. The Death Section handled 232 requests for registration of Consular Death Certificates made by NOK of Sri Lankans who passed away aboard. Also, the personal belongings of 35 deceased Sri Lankans were handed over to the NOK in Sri Lanka during the corresponding period.

During the period under review, the Compensation Section coordinated the receipt of approximately LKR. Four hundred sixty-one million in compensation (Disburse through Public Trustee LKR. 421,987,655.54 + direct payment from employer to the NOK: LKR. 39,348,226.54), blood money and various other entitlements for Sri Lankan citizens, due to their demise, accident, injuries, retirement benefits, while overseas. The established procedures subsequently distributed this compensation among 138 family members and victims. The highest sum, amounting to LKR. 62, 173, 302, 06 (KD 58,455.053) were received through the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Kuwait.

Further, during the corresponding period, the Division received 358 fresh compensation requests, all directed to the Sri Lankan Missions abroad for processing. The Division has also formulated a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlining the management of compensation cases by the Sri Lankan Mission and Posts aboard.

During the review period, the Repatriation Section handled 725 repatriation requests comprising 219 Jail cases and 506 standard cases initiated by the NOKK. The Section coordinated and facilitated the repatriation of a total of 1332 Sri Lankans who were stranded in foreign countries for various reasons. In terms of regional distribution, 738 Sri Lankans were repatriated from the Middle East, 256 from Asian countries, 154 from Europe and 28 from African region. Furthermore, 27 from BIOT and 129 from Re-Union Island were repatriated during the corresponding period.

The Repatriation Section handled 48 cases concerning stranded fishing vessels during the period under review. The Section also repatriated 163 crew members and 25 fishing vessels. The Division also developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to guide the provision of consular assistance and ensure the well-being of Sri Lankan citizens detained or imprisoned in foreign countries.

During the review period, the Division regularly attended scheduled meetings of the Special Task Force on Fisheries at the Ministry of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources Development, actively engaging in discussions pertaining to Sri Lankan fishermen-related issues.

The Division also played an active role in the meetings of the National Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force (NAHTTF), providing valuable information for the preparation of the Interim Report for the US Trafficking in Persons Reports 2023, which covers the period from 1 April 2022 to 21 January 2023.

The Consular Division arranged the First Session of the Joint Committee for Consular Affairs between Sri Lanka and the UAE at the Ministry on 22 February 2023.

During the corresponding period, the Miscellaneous Section of the Division was engaged in issuing and distributing 534 original birth certificates to individuals born outside Sri Lanka. Further, it facilitated the issuance of 23 citizenship certificates and handled 207 passport-related matters. This Section also coordinated the acquisition of 186 foreign police clearance certificates of Sri Lankans domiciled in foreign countries. Further, it verified 100 foreign degree certificates of government officials in coordination with Sri Lankan Missions and Posts. The section also recommended conducting 32 consular mobile services by Sri Lankan Missions and Posts aboard during the corresponding period. Furthermore, the Section handled 169 cases related to Sri Lankan travel documents in coordination with the Department of Immigration and Emigration during the corresponding period.

The Section also coordinates with foreign missions based in Sri Lanka to obtain information for various inquiries and investigations as required by Sri Lanka's law enforcement authorities. Further, it coordinated with Sri Lankan Missions to locate the whereabouts of Sri Lankan nationals who lost contact with their families in Sri Lanka. The section also attended a series of labour-related issues in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE).

The Consular Affairs Division participated in two mobile services organised by the Ministry of Justice, Prison Affairs and Constitutional Reform, which provided services to Sri Lankan returnees from Tamil Nadu in Trincomalee and Batticaloa from 26-27 May 2023. The Regional Consular Office in Jaffna participated in the GLOCAL Fair 2023 event organised by the Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment in Muttraveli, Jaffna, from 15-16 July 2023.

2.6.2. General Administration Division

The General Administration Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for a broad area of Administrative Policy Planning and implementation, all operational and maintenance affairs, Human resource planning and development of Officers in all island services, Development Officers, Management Service Officers, Primary services, and Departmental services except Sri Lanka Foreign Service. Similarly, on the guidance of the Secretary, Foreign Affairs prepares Cabinet Memoranda, answers to Parliament questions, and answers to Parliamentary Committees and Consultative committees, which the Administration Division does.

A summary of particular tasks performed by the General Administration Division (GAD) in addition to the routine duties for the period from 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 are as follows;

Human Resource Management: The Department of Management Services approved increasing the Development Officer's cadre by 60 posts. To fulfil the urgent service requirement for this Ministry's Protocol officers, an institutional cadre of 12 posts was created for the Executive Assistant (Protocol), MN4. Further, the cadre for the Protocol Assistants (MN1) post was increased by 05.

To carry out the divisions' duties more efficiently with a sufficient number of secondary-level staff, competent officers of the Development Officers service were identified to serve in the Ministry through a qualification review process. The details of the selected officers were shared with the Director General of Combined Services so they could be transferred to this Ministry.

Amendments to the Recruitment scheme for the Legal Advisor and Legal Officer posts were sent to the Public Service Commission.

Training programs were organised to enhance employee performance and boost productivity in English Language/ Spoken English and Information Technology to strengthen the Ministry's human resources. A residential training program on VIP services and related protocols was conducted for the officers of the Driver's service to improve their skills and educate them on delivering the expected services more professionally.

Developments in Information Technology: Expansion of Electronic Document Attestation system counters to accommodate more customers who require document attestation from the Consular Division.

Consular: The IT division has initiated the implementation of Google Workspace solutions for

internal needs. Consequently, internal resources have been leveraged to deploy a system to monitor and manage treaties with another line Ministries.

The IT Division has taken the initiative to deploy in-house open-source solutions for internal requirements when feasible. As a result, in-house resources have been utilised to deploy the Asset Management System, Email Backup Solution, and Document Tracking Solution.

The IT division has consistently offered technical support for high-level virtual and hybrid meetings. Between January and December 2023, the division provided technical assistance for over 300 virtual meetings conducted within the Ministry.

Parliamentary affairs: The submission of 67 Cabinet Papers and the Hon. Minister's observations regarding numerous Cabinet Memoranda were efficiently coordinated with the Cabinet Office. Answers to the Parliamentary questions and reports to the Ministerial Consultative Committee and the Committee on Public Petitions were also coordinated.

Procurement and Maintenance: Performed all the procurement activities according to the applicable regulations, whereby a total volume of procurement worth Rs. 12.5 million was made for requirements in Sri Lankan Missions, while another Rs. 94.2 million was incurred for purchases for local necessities up to 31st December 2023.

Regular and proper maintenance of the Republic Building was continued while preserving its archaeological value and elegance, and Rs. 7.5 million was incurred for the same up to 31.12.2023. Further, the premises used by the Cabinet Office were also vested to this Ministry, and refurbishment works on the 1st floor were carried out at Rs. 6 million.

Further, office space on the 7th Floor of the Ceylinco Building was renovated for Rs. 9.5 million to establish the Secretariat for the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and coordinate its work for coming years, as Sri Lanka was handed over the chairmanship of the said Association this year.

In addition, 27 official quarters were maintained, including relevant repairs, for Rs. 2.9 million. As per the Cabinet decision, initial steps were taken to design and prepare layouts for the project to relocate the Consular Affairs Division to the Suhurupaya Building.

Logistics Services: A component has been developed under the Asset Management System (AMS) to maintain vehicle records and vehicle-related maintenance. A fleet of 85 vehicles was efficiently utilised, with a comparable number of drivers. Considering the public financial constraints, the Ministry has taken appropriate measures to pursue the existing vehicle fleet with adequate investments for run-time maintenance without causing an extra burden to purchase new vehicles.

Translation unit: The Translation Unit translates official documents in the technical and legal categories, including media releases, MOUs, cabinet memoranda and other documents related to Parliamentary Affairs, gazette notifications, annual reports, and letters of the various divisions of the ministry.

2.6.3. Human Resources and Mission Management Division

The main responsibility of the HR & MM Division is to ensure that adequate human resource facilities required by Sri Lankan diplomatic Missions abroad are provided in a timely manner. Further, the division is empowered to provide necessary policy directives to all Sri Lankan diplomatic Missions abroad to manage the human resources and related administrative requirements of each Sri Lankan mission abroad.

The composition of the sixty - (61) Sri Lanka Missions/Posts abroad is as follows;

- High Commissions - 12
- Embassies - 35
- Permanent Missions to the United Nations - 2
- Deputy High Commissions - 1
- Consulate General Offices - 10
- Representative Offices - 1

2.6.3.1. Significant Achievements

Establishment of Diplomatic Missions: The Embassy of Sri Lanka in Romania was established on 03.09.2023. The Cabinet of Ministers has approved the establishment of resident Sri Lankan Missions in Wellington/New Zealand and Astana/Kazakhstan and the re-opening of the Missions/Posts in Baghdad/ Iraq, Nicosia/Cyprus, and Frankfurt/Germany.

Appointment of New Heads of Mission/ Heads of Post: With the directives of the Foreign Secretary processed and facilitated appointments of twenty-two (22) Heads of Mission/Heads of Post for the Sri Lanka Missions abroad including the Heads of Mission to Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Israel, Italy (Milan), Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Nepal, New Delhi, Pakistan, Philippine, United Arab Emirates (Abu Dhabi and Dubai), United Kingdom, Vietnam and Switzerland (Geneva).

The Division also attended related formalities at the conclusion of the tours of duty of eleven (11) Heads of Mission/Post, including the Ambassador/High Commissioner/Consul General of Sri Lanka to Austria, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Belgium, China, India, Pakistan, Israel, Kuwait, Singapore, and South Africa.

Transfers of Foreign Service Officers: A total of seventeen (17) officers from the Sri Lanka Foreign Service (SLFS) were transferred out to the selected Sri Lanka Missions abroad for diplomatic appointments under two (02) SLFS Transfer cycles, i.e. SLFS Transfer Board 2022/2023. The HR & MM Division facilitated seeking medical and security clearance, particularly while attending matters of their domestic assistants, substantive and local ranks, salary and allowances at the post, etc.

Promotion and Retirement of Foreign Service Officers: The HR & MM Division processed necessary procedural elements related to the promotion of twenty (20) officers from SLFS to the next grade in the service.

Further, necessary formalities related to the retirement processes of six (06) SLFS officers have been done.

Promotion of SLFS Grade I Officers to Special Grade: Eight (08) applications related to the payment of salary arrears of the retired SLFS officers who have been promoted to the Special Grade of the service have been processed.

Appointment of Non-SLFS Public Sector Officers for Diplomatic Posts: Accordingly, twenty-four (24) non-SLFS officers in the public service representing the Department of Commerce (10 officers), the Ministry of Defence (08 officers), one (01) officer from the Department of Labour, two (02) officers (SLAS) from the Ministry of Public Administration, two (02) from the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE), one (01) from the Sri Lanka Tea Board were posted to the selected SL Missions abroad.

Appointment of Additional Secretaries (SLFS): During the period under review, the HR & MM Division took timely initiatives to appoint six (06) Additional Secretaries in acting capacity to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Technical & Administrative Staff of SL Missions abroad: Taking into consideration numerous interventions made by interested parties, the HR & MM Division took the initiative to address the appeal made by members of the Management Service Officers (MSO) and Personal Assistants in the Ministry who had previously worked for Sri Lanka Missions abroad requesting permission once again for them to sit for the upcoming open competitive examination for the selection of suitable candidates for the filling vacancies in the Management Service Officers (MSO) cadre. Accordingly, the proposals were subsequently processed and the final decision is at the final stage.

Appointment of Home Recruited Contractual (HRC) Staff: The HR & MM Division coordinated and facilitated the appointment of two (02) drivers and one (01) home-based KKS to respective Sri Lanka Missions abroad during the period under review.

Similarly, a selection process for filling the vacancies of Drivers and KKSs in the Home Recruited Contractual (HRC) employee category of the Sri Lanka Missions abroad has been done. Accordingly, nine (09) KKS and two (02) Driver posts in SL Missions abroad were filled.

Facilitating official visits: The HR & MM Division coordinated and facilitated 165 official visits in 2023.

Controlling Public Expenditure: The HR & MM Division also participated in various initiatives of the Ministry introduced to manage the affairs of SL Missions/Posts abroad by curtailing expenditures and limiting the staff allocated to each Mission, reviewing the approved cadre provisions of each Mission, and implementing proactive initiatives to limit Mission expenditures.

Accordingly, the most viable measures were taken in consultation with respective Heads of Mission/Heads of Post to secure special permissions/approvals under given circumstances to recruit the essential staff of SL Missions abroad on a local basis as casual recruitments.

Further, the Representational Allowance (RA) was suspended for all Diplomatic Officers attached to the SL Missions for the year's first half. However, considering the representational requirements, the RA was restored.

Reporting and Monitoring Obligations: The HR & MM Division made every effort to accurately and in a timely manner attend to all requirements related to the preparation of reports on matters related to staffing in SL Missions abroad and payment of allowances, together with any clarification about expenditure procedures, etc. of the SL Missions abroad.

The Division also responded to queries from the Presidential Secretariat, Auditor General, Secretary General/Parliament, the Hon. Attorney General, and the Presidential Commissions, among others.

Responses to RTI queries, parliamentary questions, and complaints against diplomatic and Non-diplomatic officers attached to SL Missions abroad were coordinated in a timely and confidential manner with relevant authorities and heads of mission/heads of post.

All relevant matters and ongoing activities that fall under the purview of the HR & MM Division were carried out as per the directives of the Secretary/Foreign Affairs in line with the established regulations/procedures and with the consents/observations/recommendations from relevant authorities/divisions to ensure the division's expected productivity.

Each supervising officer regularly evaluated the progress of implementing matters under the HR & MM Division to ensure effective human resource management of the Sri Lanka Missions abroad while taking remedial measures to address matters adequately in consultation with pertinent authorities/parties concerned.

2.6.4. Internal Audit & Investigation Division

This division's key responsibility includes monitoring and evaluating the internal control mechanism of the Ministry, Sri Lanka Missions / Posts abroad, and other institutions under the Ministry's purview and providing the strategic apex with guidance on overall performance and compliance.

- The division has raised 20 audit queries for the Ministry, other institutions under its purview, Regional consular offices, and Missions/posts abroad.
- Follow-up actions have been taken regarding the matters discussed at the COPA meeting held on March 6, 2019, in coordination with the respective divisions and parties.
- Actions were taken to conduct the Audit and Management Committee Meetings, and follow-up actions were taken for its decisions.

- Coordination for compilation of replies to the 15 General Audit Queries out of 16.
- Representing the ministry and providing information for two high court cases related to the Rome mission.

2.6.5. Legal Division

The primary function of the Legal Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is to furnish legal advice on matters of International Law to the Minister through the Ministry's Secretary, to other Divisions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the Sri Lanka Missions abroad, to the Foreign Missions in Sri Lanka as well as to different Ministries/Departments. The Legal Division is also the Treaty depository of the Government of Sri Lanka. The Legal Division advises on legal aspects of all policy decisions, particularly international issues arising from time to time, such as territorial claims and boundaries, terrorism-related issues, recognition of treaty relations, diplomatic immunities and privileges, sanctions regime of UN, and unilateral sanctions. Officers of the Legal Division also represent the Ministry in different expert Committees. During the time frame of 01.01.2023-31.12.2023, the Legal Division has provided legal observations/ Legal Clearance for approximately 290 MoUs/Agreements in terms of Circular No: PS/SP/SB/Circular/06/2019 issued by the Presidential Secretariat. In addition to the above, the Legal Division has made the following significant key performances.

Law of the Sea: The work of the National Oceanic Affairs Committee (NOAC) is coordinated by the Legal Division. The Sub-Commission appointed by the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf of Sri Lanka (UNCLCS) accepted that Sri Lanka had fulfilled the four criteria required to establish Sri Lanka's Continental Margin.

Consideration of the submission has been put on hold by the subcommittee based on the objection lodged by India. Dates for bilateral discussion have been requested from India.

Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) for Granting Diplomatic Clearance to Foreign Seaborne Vessels Arriving in Sri Lanka, Foreign Military or State aircraft operating into Sri Lanka and Overflying Sri Lankan Territory, and Clearance for Weapons, Ammunition & Communication Equipment during a VVIP/VIP Visit: The SOP was finalised with the office of the Chief of National Intelligence, and the approval of the Cabinet has been taken to the text.

Negotiation of Free Trade Agreements (FTA): Legal Division is involved in negotiating the FTAs and also serves in the Working Groups negotiating the Investment, Legal and Trade Remedies Chapters of FTAs. The Legal Division legally vetted all fourteen (14) chapters of the FTA before signing the FTA with Thailand. ETCA negotiations with India are ongoing, and the Legal Division is involved in negotiating the Investment Chapter

Further, the Legal Division also engage with the National Trade Negotiating Committee with regard to setting the way forward for discussions on the following;

1. FTA with China
2. Review of the Singapore FTA

Investment: Certain Articles of the IPPA with the UAE are being renegotiated. The New Investment Model of Sri Lanka is being reviewed, taking into account the ongoing negotiations on FTA investment chapters.

Anti-Terrorism Bill: The Legal Division represents the Ministry in the committee appointed to draft comprehensive legislation relating to anti-terrorism and assisted in addressing most of the international concerns about the Bill, which is to be tabled in Parliament for approval in due course.

Inter-Governmental Negotiations on the proposed Internationally Legally Binding Instrument on Marine Bio-Diversity beyond Areas of National Jurisdiction (BBNJ): The Legal Division represented the GoSL at those discussions and secured Sri Lanka's interest in this connection.

The legal Division is in the process of completing the internal procedures for signing the BBNJ treaty.

Immunities and Privileges: Action has been taken to gazette the immunities and privileges granted to the following organisations and table them in Parliament in terms of the Diplomatic Privileges Act no. 9 of 1996.

Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)

International Centre for Research in Argo Forestry (ICRAF)

Asia Pacific Group (APG) on Anti Money Laundering and Combatting the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT): The 2025 Mutual Evaluation of Sri Lanka by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) will be in March 2025 where an Institutional wise time bound Action Plan is given to the Foreign Ministry. The legal Division is working with the FIU to prepare for the APG Evaluation.

The Legal Division is presently involved in fulfilling the main Action Points, i.e. amending the existing regulations on UN Security Council Resolutions 1373, 1267, 1540 and the related UNSC resolutions regulated on Iran and DPRK and the promulgation of UNSCRs on Foreign Terrorist Fighters and on Violent extremism where technical assistance was requested from the UNODC.

The Legal Division actively participates in the TFS committee chaired by the Secretary of Defence and liaises with the Ministry of Defence and the financial intelligence unit to combat money laundering and finance terrorism and proliferation.

Readmission: Negotiations on the EU Readmission Protocols were finalised with Italy, France and the Netherlands on behalf of the Benelux, and the Protocols could be finalised for signature. Presently liaising with the Netherlands and France to finalise the Protocols for signature. Negotiations on a new Readmission Agreement were finalised with Georgia in 2018 and are yet to be agreed upon on specific reformulated provisions to be signed. The readmission agreement with Russia is to be finalised soon for signature.

Agreements on Avoidance of Double Taxation: The Legal Division actively negotiated the

proposed Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with Austria, while the DTAA and its Protocol with Saudi Arabia were signed in January 2023. The second round of negotiations on the DTAA with Maldives was also held virtually with the Legal Division's participation in February 2023.

International Humanitarian Law Matters

- Two IHL Committee meetings were convened with the participation of National IHL Committee members.
- This Ministry, in collaboration with the ICRC, co-hosted the 12th South Asian Conference in Sri Lanka and the legal Division, as the chair of the NIHL Committee, actively participated in the conference in sharing Sri Lanka's national experience with regard to the domestic implementation of IHL in Sri Lanka
- The Ministry of Justice gazetted the Prohibition of Anti-Personal Mines Act no. 3 of 2020 was drafted by the National IHL Committee members with the ICRC's technical assistance.
- As the National IHL Committee, coordinate and follow up with regard to the enactment of domestic legislation on Cluster Munitions (Oslo Convention) with the Ministry of Defence.

Air Services Agreements

- Legal Division is a Government Bilateral Negotiation Team member for Air Services.
- The Air Service Agreement with the Netherlands has been signed, and actions are being taken to bring the Air Services Agreement into force with the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Aviation
- Protocol to the Air Services Agreement with Israel has been finalised and is ready for signature.
- The Legal Division has initiated action for the Renewal of the MoU between the National Search and Rescue Agency of Indonesia and the Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka on Search and Rescue Cooperation.
- The agreement between the Governments of Sri Lanka and India for cooperation on Aeronautical Search and Rescue Services is being finalised.
- As requested by the Civil Aviation Authorities of Sri Lanka, the Legal Division has taken action to pursue the request with the requested countries (Kuwait, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and Singapore) to Designate Fits Air.
- Coordinated in facilitating the designation of FITS air for South Africa & Israel countries.
- Air Services negotiations with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were held on the 04th and 05th of September in Colombo to review aviation relations for further developing the regulatory framework for air services between the two countries and Legal Division as the member of the Government Bilateral Negotiation Team.

BIMSTEC

- Sri Lanka ratified the following BIMSTEC agreements/documents, signed in Colombo during the BIMSTEC Summit 2022.
- The BIMSTEC Charter was ratified on 28 February 2023, and the necessary instructions were given to the Economic Affairs Division to deposit the same with the BIMSTEC Secretariat.
- The BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters was ratified on 28 January 2023, and the Economic Affairs Division was advised to deposit the same to the BIMSTEC Secretariat.
- Memorandum of Association for the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility was ratified on 28 February 2023 and advised the Economic Affairs Division to deposit the same with the BIMSTEC Secretariat
- The Legal Division attended the 23rd Legal Division participated at the 23rd Session of the BIMSTEC Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) and the 19th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting (MM), which were held virtually in Bangkok/ Thailand on March 08 and 09, 2023. The Legal Division observed the Note and the proposed MoU between the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the BIMSTEC Secretariat.
- Legal Division provided observations on the proposed MoU between the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Techni Multi-Sectoral Cooperation (BIMSTEC)
- Legal Division has cleared the Draft text on the BIMSTEC Convention against Trafficking in Persons.

IAEA Matters: The Legal Division represented the Ministry at the IAEA Interregional Workshop on the International and National Legal Frameworks for Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), which was held in Vienna / Austria from 28 August – 01 September 2023, which was held in Vienna / Austria from 28 August to 01 September 2023. The Legal Division also represents the Ministry in the Committee formed to develop national legal frameworks for isolation.

Cabinet observations: One hundred and six (106) Cabinet observations of the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs were prepared by the Legal Division from 01.01.2023 to 31.12.2023.

Full Powers: Forty-nine (49) Full Power instruments have been prepared by the Legal Division and submitted for Hon. M/FA's signature from 01.01.2023 to 31.12.2023.

Foreign summons

- Legal Division facilitated the Service of 387 Summons in foreign countries in coordination with the Ministry of Justice, Prison Affairs and Constitutions Reforms, relevant Courts and the Missions abroad.
- The Legal Division facilitated 20 Court cases to obtain testimony from the relevant Parties living abroad through audio-visual linkage to assist the Protection of Victims of Crime and Witness Act no. 4 of 2015 as amended by Act 27 of 2017.
- The Legal Division facilitated 170 Number of Requests from foreign countries to deliver their summons to Sri Lanka.

Credentials: The Legal Division clears all credentials drafted by the UN Division to be signed by the Hon. M/FA

Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA), Extradition and Transfer, and Transfer of Offenders (PTA) requests: 38 MLA requests, 19 Extradition requests, and 12 Transfer of Offenders requests were facilitated between 1 January and 31 December 2023.

Virtual Negotiations on PTA with Latvia and Saudi Arabia were finalised. Negotiations on MLA and extradition will be convened with the Philippines and Saudi Arabia.

Signed Agreements and MoUs: 36 Agreements/MoUs were signed and deposited in the Treaty Depository of the Legal Division from 1st January to 31st December 2023.

Providing Legal Opinions: More than 250 Legal opinions have been furnished to the Foreign Secretary, to other Divisions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the Sri Lanka Missions abroad, to the Foreign Missions, Sri Lankan missions abroad, to Foreign Missions in Sri Lanka, and the Legal Division is appointed as Members of following specific Committees appointed by the Cabinet.

- Committee on developing Comprehensive Counterterrorism Legislation.
- The National Ocean Affairs Committee.
- The Legal Committee on Strategic Trade Control (STC) is finalising the draft laws on STC.
- The Financial Intelligence Unit and National Coordinating Committee carry out all ministry work related to the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG) and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).
- The National Risk Assessment Committee conducted by the Financial Intelligence Unit is required for the APG mutual evaluation.
- Targeted Financial Sanctions (TFS) Committee chaired by the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence.
- 1373 (Regulation NO:1 of 2012) Listing Committee
- National Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force to amend the Existing Atomic Energy Act No. 40 of 2014.
- Committee on repealing the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Act No.02 of 1996
- Committee appointed by the Minister of Justice to develop national legislation on nuclear laws.
- Technical Advisory Committee on the Standard Operating Procedure chaired by the CDS.
- Committee on National Hydrographic Council
- New Nuclear Act Reviewing Committee

Right to Information Requests and Agreements/MoUs: Right to Information issues—32 RTI requests were received under the RTI Act No. 12 of 2016 from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023. Out of the 46 requests, 32 requests have been facilitated.

Two appeals were made to the RTI Commission, and one was resolved upon proper written submission to the Commission.

One appeal was partially solved, and working for the submission of remaining part.

During the period up to the 31st December 2023, Legal Division has cleared approximately 31 December 2023, the Legal Division cleared approximately 650 Agreements/MoUs and s: The Legal Division has provided observations for 24 Agreements/MoUs in the field of “Higher Education and Research”.

According to the records in the Treaty Depository of the Legal Division, 25 agreements/MoUs have been deposited in the areas of Defence Cooperation, Development Cooperation, Double Taxation, Visa Exemptions, Diplomatic Relations, Cultural Cooperation, Tourism, Education and Entertainment, and the Health Care Sector.

2.6.6. Overseas Asset Management and Development Division

The Overseas Asset Management and Development Division played a pivotal role in establishing the SL-Embassy in Bucharest/Romania, which involved establishing the SL-Embassy in Bucharest/Romania, providing office equipment, and providing administrative and logistical support to the Chancery and Home-Based staff.

Additionally, the Division oversaw the maintenance and renovation of GoSL-owned properties in New Delhi, Geneva, Paris, and Cairo to ensure efficient utilisation. Furthermore, the Division has initiated a renovation project for the former Official Residence in Canberra, with the State Engineering Corporation selected as the local consultancy agent and related processes currently underway.

The Division also takes on responsibilities such as approving the purchase of office and household equipment, obtaining and renewing vehicle and building insurance, and acquiring and renewing home-based staff's maintenance contracts and rental agreements. It also provides facilities for heating and air conditioning charges at the request of the Missions/Posts while diligently taking measures to curtail overall Ministry costs for Missions/Posts abroad.

Concurrently, the Division facilitates the acquisition of Diplomatic/Official passports, visas, and air passage, including heavy baggage, for officers posted to Sri Lanka Missions abroad. Additionally, it assists in obtaining vehicle permits for officers returning from Missions.

2.6.7. Protocol Division

The work of the Protocol Division can be categorised as coordinating ceremonial functions, facilitating and monitoring diplomatic immunities and privileges extended to foreign Diplomatic Representations, the UN and its specialised agencies and international organisations accredited to Sri Lanka, facilitating arrangements for Heads of Mission accredited to Sri Lanka (Based in Colombo and concurrent accreditations from other Missions.) and facilitating logistical and protocol arrangements for international conferences held in Sri Lanka.

Ceremonial Functions: Inward Visits: The Division facilitated Fifty Four (55) inward visits, which included Four (4) visits of Heads of State/Government, Fourteen (14) visits of Foreign Ministers, Twenty (20) visits of Speakers and other Ministers and Sixteen (17) visits of other foreign dignitaries and conference, during the period under review. **Outward Visits:** Twelve

(12) Presidential visits to the United Kingdom, Japan/Malaysia/Singapore, France, India, Singapore, Cuba, United States of America, Germany, China, Maldives and Dubai, one (1) Hon. Prime Minister visit to Thailand, Sixteen(16) Foreign Ministerial visits and five (5) visits of Hon. State Minister of Foreign Affairs were facilitated by this Division, during the reporting period.

3rd Meeting of the IORA working Maritime safety, 14th ASEAN Regional The 3rd Meeting of the IORA working group on Maritime safety, the 14th ASEAN Regional Forum Intersession Meeting on Nuclear Proliferation and discernment, and the IORA Ministerial Conference were s- 2,000 certificates were issued to Foreign Missions (40 Books containing 50 certificates) and 400 certificates were issued to International Organizations (8 Books containing 50 certificates) **Customs Facilities - Imports:** (1740-for Foreign Missions and 320 for other International Organizations) **Customs facilities - Exports:** (160-for Foreign Missions and 30-for other international organisations) **Vehicles (DPL / UN and other Organizations):** Sale of vehicles-429, Registration of vehicles-95, Issuance of revenue licenses-798, Issuance of Driving licenses-234, Issuance of petrol coupon books-320. **Visas:** Visas for Foreign Missions - 980, Visas for Foreign Missions - Residence visas- 1460, Visa for International Organizations - 143 entry visas and 515 residence visas. **Airport Passes:** 60 permanent passes and 21 temporary passes were issued, 163 permanent passes were renewed, and 20 temporary passes were renewed. **VIP lounge Permits** 3,400 Foreign Passengers and 3,800 local passengers. **Diplomatic Clearances:** 165 approvals for foreign aircraft and ships (Military & State-owned), 36 approvals for Foreign Ships (Military & research), 05 military exercises and 21 weapon clearances. Identity Cards (DPL / UN and other Organizations): 680 Airport passes, 181 National Day felicitation messages and 31 National Day receptions.

Appointments of Heads of Mission/Honorary Consuls: The Protocol Division is responsible for arranging ceremonies for the Presentation of credentials for foreign Ambassadors/High Commissioners accredited to Sri Lanka and seeking Agreement for Sri Lankan Ambassadors/High Commissioners appointed to countries that Sri Lanka has established resident Missions. The Protocol Division is also responsible for appointments of Honorary Consuls of Sri Lanka and appointments of Honorary Consuls of other countries in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, six credential ceremonies, 40 appointments of Foreign Heads of Mission to Sri Lanka, and 24 appointments of Sri Lankan Heads of Mission abroad were facilitated by this Division during the reporting period. Twenty-one appointments of Honorary Consuls of Sri Lanka and 32 extensions of the tenures of service were facilitated in addition to 4 Honorary Consuls in Sri Lanka.

Arranging meetings: Courtesy call for H.E. the President 46, Hon. Prime Minister 45, Hon Minister of Foreign Affairs 83, Hon. State Minister of Foreign Affairs 38, Secretary/Foreign Affairs 43 and other Ministers 63

Arranging Official lunches 22 and dinners

2.7. Significant Events – 2023



H.E. the President of Sri Lanka had bilateral discussions with Cuban President H.E. Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermudez, during his visit to Cuba



H.E. the President of Sri Lanka addressed the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the G77 & China in Havana, Cuba in September 2023



H.E. the President of Sri Lanka undertook an official visit to New Delhi on 20-21 July 2023.



President Ranil Wickremesinghe's Address at the UNGA: Sri Lanka's Journey to Rebuild Trust and Global Solidarity



Hon. Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh undertook an official visit to Sri Lanka to participate in the event of 75th Anniversary of Independence Day celebration on 04.02.2023



Hon. Jai Bir Rai, Minister for Education and Skills Development of Royal Government of Bhutan undertook an official visit to Sri Lanka to participate in the event of 75th Anniversary of Independence Day celebration on 04.02.2023



Hon. Abdulla Shahid, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Maldives undertook an official visit to Sri Lanka to participate in the 4th Round of the Sri Lanka-Maldives Joint Commission held in Colombo from 06-07 June 2023.



Hon. Hina Rabbani Khar, State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan undertook an official visit to Sri Lanka to participate in the event of 75th Anniversary of Independence Day celebration on 04.02.2023



Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka undertook an official visit to Nepal to participate in the Inaugural Session of the Sri Lanka-Nepal Joint Commission at Ministerial level which was held in Kathmandu, Nepal from 21-22 December 2023



Sri Lanka accedes to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)



Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia Dato' Seri Diraja Dr. Zambry Abd Kadir undertook an official visit to Sri Lanka from 08 - 12 October 2023.



Sri Lanka Donates Consignment of Apparel to Earthquake Victims in Türkiye



Hon. Tharaka Balasuriya, State Minister of Foreign Affairs signed MoU on Political Consultation between Sri Lanka and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during the 1st session of the Joint committee from 21-24 May 2023.



State Minister of Foreign Affairs re-affirms Sri Lanka's commitment to collective actions to face common challenges at the NAM Ministerial Meeting in Azerbaijan



Foreign Secretary Aruni Wijewardane delivers Keynote Address at High-Level Segment of Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBTO) 3rd Science Diplomacy Symposium, Vienna



25th Meeting of the IORA Committee of Senior Officials (CSO), 9-10 October 2023 in Colombo



BIMSTEC Expert Group on Public Health (EGPH) on 26-27 July 2023



Newly appointed nine (9) Heads of Mission are with Foreign Minister Ali Sabry and Foreign Secretary Aruni Wijewardane



SAARC-ADB Fifth Special Meeting on Regional Economic Integration Study (Phase II) from 5-6 June 2023 in Colombo, Sri Lanka



Forum on Expanding Sri Lanka's Business Ties with the African Region



Sri Lanka concludes Fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the UN Human Rights Council, UPR Working Group, Geneva



23rd IORA Meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM), 11 October 2023 in Colombo



Deliberations at the 3rd Meeting of the IORA Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security (IORA-WGMSS) in Colombo, 20th March 2023



Inauguration Ceremony of the 3rd Meeting of the IORA Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security (IORA-WGMSS) in Colombo, 20th March 2023



13th Governing Board (GB) Meeting of the SAARC Culture Centre (SCC) from 28-29 November 2023 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.



Inauguration Ceremony of the Workshop on Comparative Study on the Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in IORA Member States and the Regional Maritime Dialogue on Law Enforcement in Mirissa, 30th October 2023



11th Governing Board (GB) meeting of the South Asian University (SAU) from 18-19 December 2023 in Kathmandu, Nepal.



CHAPTER-3- FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

3.1 Statement of Financial Performance

Statement of Financial Performance for the period ended 31st December 2023

Revised Budget Allocations 2023 Rs.	Note	2023 Rs.	Actual 2022 Rs.	
Revenue Receipts				
-	Income Tax	1	-	} ACA-1
-	Taxes on Domestic Goods & Services	2	-	
-	Taxes on International Trade	3	-	
-	Non Tax Revenue & Others	4	-	
-	Total Revenue Receipts (A)		-	
Non Revenue Receipts				
-	Treasury Imprests		11,508,887,742	ACA-3
	Deposits		2,104,922,230	ACA-4
35,000,000	Advance Accounts		61,860,671	ACA-5
	Other Main Ledger Receipts		-	
35,000,000	Total Non Revenue Receipts (B)	14,632,253,188	13,675,670,643	
35,000,000	Total Revenue Receipts & Non Revenue Receipts C = (A)+(B)	14,632,253,188	13,675,670,643	
	Remittance to the Treasury (D)		339,634,673	
35,000,000	Net Revenue Receipts & Non Revenue Receipts E = (C)-(D)	14,632,253,188	13,336,035,970	
Less: Expenditure				
Recurrent Expenditure				
11,335,035,000	Wages, Salaries & Other Employment Benefits	5	9,971,076,490	} ACA-2(ii)
5,907,335,000	Other Goods & Services	6	5,503,599,005	
1,193,865,000	Subsidies, Grants and Transfers	7	1,144,954,892	
-	Interest Payments	8	-	
44,700,000	Other Recurrent Expenditure	9	6,476,738	
18,480,935,000	Total Recurrent Expenditure (F)	16,626,107,125	14,704,722,442	
Capital Expenditure				
309,900,000	Rehabilitation & Improvement of Capital Assets	10	166,643,828	} ACA-2(ii)
179,165,000	Acquisition of Capital Assets	11	169,098,076	
1,000,000	Capital Transfers	12	155,250	
-	Acquisition of Financial Assets	13	-	
5,000,000	Capacity Building	14	3,437,760	
24,000,000	Other Capital Expenditure	15	12,064,988	
519,065,000	Total Capital Expenditure (G)	351,399,902	93,632,956	
Deposit Payments				
40,000,000	Advance Payments		37,023,921	ACA-5
Other Main Ledger Payments				
40,000,000	Total Main Ledger Expenditure (H)	2,675,519,823	2,030,690,929	
19,040,000,000	Total Expenditure I = (F)+(G)+(H)	19,653,026,850	16,828,946,327	
(19,005,000,000)	Balance as at 31st December J = (E-I)	(5,020,773,662)	(3,492,910,357)	
Balance as per the Imprest Adjustment Statement				
	Imprest Balance as at 31st December		(6,031,263,080)	ACA-7
			1,010,489,418	ACA-3
			(5,020,773,662)	

3.2 Statement of Financial Position

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2023 දෙසැම්බර් 31 දිනට
මූල්‍ය තත්ත්වය පිළිබඳ ප්‍රකාශනය

සටහන	තත්‍වය	
	2023 (රු.)	2022 (රු.)
මූල්‍ය නොවන වත්කම්		
දේපළ, පිරිසිදු හා උපකරණ	13,519,280,038	12,734,553,377
මූල්‍ය වත්කම්		
අත්තිකාරම් ගිණුම්	93,951,036	101,349,648
මුදල් හා මුදල් සමාන දෑ	1,010,489,418	1,686,663,361
මුළු වත්කම්	14,623,720,492	14,522,566,386
ලද්ද වත්කම් / ස්කන්ධය		
භාණ්ඩාගාරය වෙත ලද්ද වත්කම්	(196,940,663)	(400,043,205)
දේපළ පිරිසිදු හා උපකරණ සංවිනය	13,519,280,038	12,734,553,377
කුලී හා වැඩ අත්තිකාරම් සංවිනය		
ජංගම වගකීම්		
තැන්පතු ගිණුම්	290,891,699	501,392,853
අග්‍රිම ලේඛණ	1,010,489,418	1,686,663,361
මුළු වගකීම්	14,623,720,492	14,522,566,386

පිටු අංක..06..සිට ..65.. දක්වා ඒ සිට 1 සිට ඒ සිට 7 දක්වා වූ ආකෘති පත්‍රවලින් ඉදිරිපත් කෙරෙන ගිණුම් තොරතුරු සහ ඇමුණුම් පිටු අංක ..66.. සිට ..139.. දක්වා ඇතුළත් ගිණුම් සටහන් විස්තර ද මෙම අවසන් ගිණුම්වලින් අන්තර්ගත කොටස් වේ. මෙම මූල්‍ය ප්‍රකාශන පිළියෙල කිරීම පොදුවේ පිළියත් ගිණුම් මූලධර්මවලට අනුකූලව සිදුකර ඇති අතර මෙහිදී මූල්‍ය ප්‍රකාශනයන්හි සටහන් මගින් හෙළිදරව් කර ඇති පරිදි වඩාත් සුදුසු ගිණුම්කරණ ප්‍රතිපත්ති භාවිත කර ඇත. ඉහත අවසන් ගිණුමෙහි සඳහන් සංඛ්‍යා, ඊට අදාළ ගිණුම් සටහන් හා අනෙකුත් ගිණුම් තොරතුරු භාණ්ඩාගාර ගිණුම් පොත් සමඟ සැසඳීම කර ඇති බවටත් ඒවා එම සංඛ්‍යා සමඟ එකඟ වන බවටත් මෙයින් සහතික කරමු.

මූල්‍ය පාලනය සඳහා එල්දායි අභ්‍යන්තර පාලන පද්ධතියක් වාර්තාකරණ ආයතනය කුල පවතින බවත් මූල්‍ය පාලනය සඳහා අභ්‍යන්තර පාලන පද්ධතියේ සවිලකාවය අධීක්ෂණය කිරීමටත් ඒ අනුව එම පද්ධති එල්දායි ලෙස ක්‍රියාත්මක කිරීමට දැඩි ධනාත්මක පරිදි වෙනස් කිරීම් සිදුකිරීමට වරින් වර සමාලෝචන සිදුකරන බවත් මෙයින් සහතික කරමු.

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 දිනය : 2024.02.27

. Secretary/Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Colombo

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 දිනය : 2024.02.27

Actg. Secretary/Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Colombo 02

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 නම :
 දිනය : 2024.02.27

P. D. L. Kularathna
Chief Financial Officer
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Colombo 1.

3.3 Statement of Cash Flow

Statement of Cash Flows for the Period ended 31st December 2023

	Actual	
	2023 Rs.	2022 Rs.
Cash Flow from Operating Activities:		
Total Tax Receipts	-	-
Fees, Fines, Penalties and Licenses	-	-
Profit	-	-
Non Revenue Receipts	-	-
Revenue Collected on behalf of Other Revenue Heads	6,519,490,799	5,300,032,911
Imprest Received	10,473,152,543	10,499,585,815
Recoveries from Advance	54,186,998	69,985,852
Deposit Received	2,427,994,748	2,104,196,970
Total Cash generated from Operations: (A)	19,474,825,088	17,973,801,548
Less - Cash disbursed for:		
Personal Emoluments & Operating Payments	15,467,347,531	13,947,288,855
Subsidies & Transfer Payments	1,144,954,892	730,970,638
Expenditure incurred on behalf of Other Heads	522,091,493	208,262,003
Imprest Settlement to Treasury	-	339,634,673
Advance Payments	37,554,192	58,604,194
Deposit Payments	2,638,495,902	1,978,566,577
Total Cash disbursed for Operations: (B)	19,810,444,010	17,263,326,940
NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES (C) = (A)-(B)	(335,618,922)	710,474,608
Cash Flow from Investing Activities:		
Interest	-	-
Dividends	-	-
Divestiture Proceeds & Sale of Physical Assets	10,844,881	9,102,522
Recoveries from On Lending	-	-
Total Cash generated from Investing Activities (D)	10,844,881	9,102,522
Less - Cash disbursed for:		
Capital Expenditure	351,399,902	42,215,696
Total Cash disbursed for Investing Activities: (E)	351,399,902	42,215,696
NET CASH FLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES (F) = (D)-(E)	(340,555,021)	(33,113,174)
NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING & INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES (G)=(C) + (F)	(676,173,943)	677,361,434
Cash Flow from Financing Activities:		
Local Borrowings	-	-
Foreign Borrowings	-	-
Grants Received	-	-
Total Cash generated from Financing Activities: (H)	-	-
Less - Cash disbursed for:		
Repayment of Local Borrowings	-	-
Repayment of Foreign Borrowings	-	-
Total Cash disbursed for Financing Activities: (I)	-	-
NET CASH FLOW FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES (J) = (H)-(I)	-	-
Net Movement in Cash (K) = (G) + (J)	(676,173,943)	677,361,434
Opening Cash Balance as at 01 st January 2023	1,686,663,361	1,009,301,927
Closing Cash Balance as at 31 st December 2023	1,010,489,418	1,686,663,361

3.4 Notes to the Financial Statements

Basis of Reporting

1) **Reporting Period**

The reporting period for these Financial Statements is from 01st January to 31st December 2023.

2) **Basis of Measurement**

The Financial Statements have been prepared on historical cost modified by the revaluation of certain assets and accounted on a modified cash basis, unless otherwise specified.

The figures of the Financial Statements are presented in Sri Lankan rupees rounded to the nearest rupee.

3) **Recognition of Revenue**

Exchange and non exchange revenues are recognised on the cash receipts during the accounting period irrespective of relevant revenue period.

4) **Recognition and Measurement of Property, Plant and Equipment (PP&E)**

An item of Property, Plant and Equipment is recognized when it is probable that future economic benefit associated with the assets will flow to the entity and the cost of the assets can be reliably measured.

PP&E are measured at a cost and revaluation model is applied when cost model is not applicable.

5) **Property, Plant and Equipment Reserve**

This reserve account is the corresponding account of Property Plant and Equipment.

6) **Cash and Cash Equivalents**

Cash & cash equivalents include local currency notes and coins in hand as at 31st December 2023.

* In cases where there are transactions which are specific to a particular reporting entity, relevant information can be entered in and revisions can be made as needed in the formats and the disclosure required for those specific transactions may be included under "Reporting Basis"

* Only the accounting policies relevant to the reporting entity should be disclosed under the reporting basis.

3.5 Performance of the Revenue Collection

LKR'000

Revenue Code	Description of the Revenue Code	Revenue Estimate 2023		Collected Revenue (As of 31 Dec. 2023)	
		Original	Final	Amount	as a % of Final Revenue Estimate
2002-01-01	Rent on Government Building & Housing	3,000	3,000	4,066	136%
2002-02-99	Other Interest	8,500	4,000	7,355	184%
2003-02-07	Fees of Passports, Visas & Dual Citizenship	3,200,000	3,900,000	3,809,454	98%
2003-02-13	Examinations & Other fees	40	65	48	74%
2003-02-14	Dept. of Motor Traffic	26,000	31,000	32,112	104%
2003-02-99	Consular Fees	1,200,000	2,000,000	2,257,648	113%
2003-99-00	Other Receipts	215,000	325,000	373,215	115%
2004-01-00	Social Security Contributions - (Central Government)	30,000	34,000	34,962	103%
2004-02-00	Social Security Contributions - (Provincial Councils)	600	675	631	93%
2006-02-01	Sale of Capital Assets (Vehicles)	6,000	6,000	10,630	177%
2006-02-02	Sale of Capital Assets (Other)	200	200	215	107%
Total		4,689,340	6,303,940	6,530,336	104%

3.6 Performance of the Utilization of Allocation

LKR '000

Type of Allocation	Allocation 2023		Actual Expenditure (As of 31 Dec.2023)	Allocation Utilization as a % of Final Allocation (as of 30 Dec.2023)
	Original	Final		
Recurrent	18,600,000	18,480,935	16,626,107	90%
Capital	400,000	519,065	351,400	68%
Total	19,000,000	19,000,000	16,977,507	89%

3.7 In terms of F.R 208 grant of allocations for expenditure to the Ministry

LKR '000

Serial No (Head No)	Allocation Received from Which Ministry/ Department	Purpose of Allocation	Allocation		Actual Expendit ure	Allocation Utilization as a% of Final Allocation
			Original	Final Allocation		
001	Presidential Secretariat	VVIP Vist	384,853	384,853	373,809	97%
002	Prime Minister's Office	VVIP Vist	114	114	113	99%
101	Ministry of Buddhasasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs	Expenses of Dutugamunu retirement Hall in Nepal Lumbini Viharaya and Religious activities	2,789	2,789	2,704	97%
102	Ministry of Finance	Allocation for VVIP Visits	1,160	1,160	1,160	100%
103	Ministry of Defence	Expenses of Defense Attaché	1,988	1,988	1,908	96%
110	Ministry of Justice, Prison Affairs & Constitutional Reforms	Allocation for VVIP Visits	2,930	2,930	2,938	100%
116	Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Food Security	Commonwealt h Trade Minister's and Senior Trade Officials Meetings	619	619	619	100%
118	Ministry of Agriculture	Payment of Annual Contribution for FAO	3	3	4	112%
111	Ministry of Health	5th Global Ministerial Summit	742	742	330	44%
		76th World Health Assembly and Health Minister's Meeting	1,186	1,186	1,199	101%

126	Ministry of Education	Payment of Annual Contributions to UNESCO & ICCROM, Educational Allowances to students studying in Cuba and Payment of compensation to Mrs. Dilum Gunawardane	66,001	66,001	65,609	99%
194	Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs	Payment for contributions to the Commonwealth Youth Programme	24,523	24,523	24,470	100%
222	Sri Lanka Army	Excess baggage by Sea and Official vehicle allocation to Military Defense Attaché	14,452	14,452	12,256	85%
223	Navy Head Quarters	Exemption Allocation for settlement of Payments	2,016	2,016	2,016	100%
225	Police Head Quarters	Annual Financial Contribution – INTERPOL General Secretariat	22,823	22,823	22,823	100%
295	Department of Commerce	Trade Promotional Activities	9,064	9,064	8,115	90%

3.8 Performance of the Reporting of Non-Financial Assets

LKR'000

Asset Code	Code Description	Balance as per Board of Survey report as of 31 Dec. 2023	Balance as per Financial Position Report as of 31 Dec.2023	To be accounted	Reporting progress as a %
9151	Building and Structure		10,555,257		Survey
9152	Machinery and Equipment		1,906,120		100%
9153	Land		1,010,362		100%
9154	Intangible Assets		47,540		100%
9155	Biological Assets		-		-
9160	Work in Progress		-		
9180	Lease Assets		-		-

3.9 Overall Financial Performance for the year – 2023

LKR'000

Category	Estimated 2023	Actual (As of 31.12.2023)	Deficit/ Surplus	*Major reasons for variances
Revenue (if relevant)	6,303,940	6,530,336		01. Increase in consular fee revenue 02. Increase in income from the sale of capital assets (vehicles)

Total Expenditure	19,000,000	16,977,507		
Recurrent	18,480,935	16,626,107		Expenditure is being controlled as per the directions given by the Treasury.
Capital	519,065	351,400		01. Expected expenditure not being done for renovation work in Overseas Missions 02. Expenditure being controlled as per the Directions given by the Treasury

*Major reasons for the significant variances in revenue and expenditure should be briefly stated here.

CHAPTER - 4 - KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

4.1. Overall Achievement of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) of the Ministry

The Summary of the Output of the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Used by the Ministry based on the Action Plan-2023 for Strengthening and Enhancing Sri Lanka's National This chapter elaborates on the summary of the output of the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) used by the Ministry based on the Action Plan-2023 for strengthening and enhancing Sri Lanka's national Interests abroad through bilateral, regional, and multilateral engagement national.

The performance of the Ministry in 2023 focused on the recovery of the economy of Sri Lanka, which has been adversely affected by most subsequent global crises. In this context, the Sri Lanka Missions/Posts abroad extensively promoted Sri Lanka tourism, employment, trade and investment through their bilateral and multilateral engagements. The Sri Lanka Missions/Posts abroad performed their duties and functions with a due focus on the following priority areas:

- Economic Diplomacy (Bilateral/Multilateral)
- Political Diplomacy (Bilateral/Multilateral)
- Multilateral Diplomacy
- Cultural Diplomacy and people-to-people relations
- Defence & Security Cooperation
- Public Diplomacy
- Consular Assistance and Migrant Labor Welfare
- Science Diplomacy
- Human Resources, Mission Management, Overseas Assets Management & Development
- Other

The overall performance of the Ministry through its KPIs based on the Action Plan-2023 is shown in the table-IV below.

Table IV- Key Performance Indicators

#	Priority Focus Areas/Key Performance Indicators	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected output		
		100-70	70-40	Below 40
1.	Representation of Sri Lanka in the Multilateral Fora			
2.	Engagements with Regional Organizations			
3.	Number of high-level visits			
4.	Number of Bilateral Political Consultations/Joint Committees/ meetings/ discussions			

5.	Engagements with Overseas Sri Lankans			
6.	Cooperation under Health Diplomacy			
7.	Number of initiatives under the Ministry's strategic communication approach			
8.	Number of Agreements and MoUs initiated/finalised			
9.	Engagements with media (effectiveness of public diplomacy to promote and safeguard Sri Lanka's national interests abroad)			
10.	Number of trade promotional events			
11.	Number of tourism promotional events			
12.	Number of export promotional events			
13.	Number of investment promotional events			
14.	Number of initiatives taken under the Economic Diplomacy Programme of the Ministry			
15.	Defence and security cooperation engagement			
16.	Number of cultural promotional events			
17.	Number of scholarship opportunities for Sri Lankans/Engagements with foreign education authorities			
18.	Cooperation in the science and technology sector			
19.	Number of initiatives taken under consular services and labour welfare			
20.	Number of initiatives taken under Human Resources, Mission Management, Overseas Asset Management & Development			

4.2. Achievement of Key Performance Indicators: Divisions with Cross-cutting Areas

4.2.1 Economic Affairs Division

Priority Area	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected output		
	100%- 90%	89%- 75%	74%- 50%
Economic Diplomacy (Bilateral/Multilateral/ Technical Cooperation) 1. Implement and execution of the Economic Diplomacy Program (EDP) of the Ministry a) Trade - To increase export earnings, find new markets, strengthen existing markets, and diversify exports. b) Investment - To secure foreign direct investment to the country based on Sri Lanka's actual needs, in coordination with the line agencies c) Tourism - To successfully carry out tourism promotion campaigns in coordination with the line agencies d) Foreign Employment - To increase foreign employment opportunities for Sri Lankans based on priority areas identified by the relevant line agencies e) Promotional Activities and enhancement of the image and profile of the country 2. Implementation of MoUs /Agreements and participation in Joint Commissions on Economic Cooperation (JCEC) 3. Engagement with Regional Organizations to Strengthen Cooperation 4. Engagement with Multilateral Organizations to Strengthen Cooperation on specific areas (WIPO, UNCTAD, WTO, WEF, ACD IOM, Colombo Process) Abu Dhabi Dialogue, GFMD - Increase cooperation and engagement with Multilateral Organizations to seek more technical and capacity-building opportunities for Sri Lankans 5. Harmonization of Sri Lankan vocational and technical qualifications with foreign qualification frameworks	90%	80%	75%

Strengthen the efforts of the Government to seek more semi-skilled and skilled foreign employment opportunities.			
6. Global Compact on Migration Effective implementation of the priority objectives of the GCM		75%	
7. Trade Dispute Resolution and Visa Facilitation - To assist local and international business parties in resolving trade matters and facilitating visas for trade fairs and business engagements.	80%		
8. Enhance foreign employment opportunities for Sri Lanka in line with the Economic Diplomacy Programme	100%		
9. Tourism, Travel Advisories - Inform the Tourism authorities of the travel advisories enabling necessary action	100%		
10. Business Forums and Promotional Events	90%		
11. Procurement & Tender - To assist local agencies to publish their Procurement & Tenders	100%		

4.2.2. Human Resources Development, Research and Training Division

Priority Area	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected		
	100%-90%	89%-75%	74%-50%
Promotional Matters of the SLFS Officers		75%	
Amendments to the Service Minute of the SLFS	100%		
Reports and Publications		75%	
Recruitments and Transfers	100%		
Capacity Development Programs	100%		

4.2.3. International Security Cooperation Division

Priority Area	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected output		
	100%-90%	89%-75%	74%-50%
LTTE related activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain listing of the LTTE as a terrorist organisation in 32 countries • Action on cases related to LTTE members abroad • Report on the ongoing cases related to revamping activities 	✓		
Support counter-terrorism efforts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a communications strategy to address the terrorist content and other messaging that promotes terrorist activities and violent extremism • Coordination of sharing information related to CT • Facilitate coordination with foreign countries in CT matters • Support local law enforcement agencies in training, funding and technical needs 		✓	
Counter-terrorism legal framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support SL's contribution to CT at the International level • Establish/develop regional coordination in CT efforts • Develop the formal framework on bilateral coordination re. CT and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)/ Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) • Support domestic efforts 	✓		
Support countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with bilateral partners and international organisations on projects related to PVE/CVE • Support the domestic inquiries 	✓		

4.2.4. Ocean Affairs, Environment and Climate Change Division

Priority Area	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected		
	100%-90%	89%-75%	74%-50%
<p>Economic Diplomacy (Bilateral/Multilateral)</p> <p>I. Reviving the pending MoU between the GoSL and Seychelles on cooperation in the Blue Economy: <i>-Number Of communications follow-up actions with line Agencies</i></p> <p>II. Finalizing the MoU between the GoSL and the UK on the Blue Planet Fund Ocean Country Partnership Programme (BPF-OCPP): <i>-Number of communications follow-up actions with line Agencies</i> <i>-No. Of meetings (In-person and Virtual) held</i></p> <p>III. Joining the Agriculture Innovation Mission (AIM) for Climate <i>-Number Of communications follow-up actions taken</i></p>	95%		70%
<p>Multilateral Diplomacy</p> <p>I. Hosting the 3rd meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Working Group on Maritime Safety & Security: <i>- Number of communications follow-up actions with line Agencies</i> <i>- Number of discussions held (In-person and Virtual) with the Max Planck Foundation in organising the meeting</i> <i>- Number Of Workshops organised in collaboration with the Max Planck Foundation and the United Nations Office of Drugs & Crime (In-person and Virtual)</i></p> <p>II. Coordinating and organising the event to celebrate the inaugural World Seagrass Day: <i>- Number of communications follow-up actions with line Agencies and Diplomatic Missions based in Sri Lanka</i> <i>- Number of Discussions held (In-person and Virtual) with the local stakeholders</i></p> <p>III. Sri Lanka's participation at the Commonwealth Blue Charter All-Champions meeting of the Commonwealth Mangrove Ecosystem Livelihood Action Group (MELAG) as the Champion Country of the MELAG: <i>- Number Of communications follow-up actions with line Agencies</i></p>	100%		

<p>IV.Sri Lanka's participation at the 28th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC – COP28) held in Dubai, UAE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Number of communications follow-up actions taken</i> - <i>Number of bilateral meetings arranged for H.E. the President and Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs</i> - <i>Number of Discussions/meetings were held (in person and virtually) with the presidential secretariat, our missions, other local stakeholders, and the missions/diplomatic corps based in Colombo.</i> <p>V.Sri Lanka's participation at the 6th Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) held in Dhaka, Bangladesh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Number of communications follow-up actions taken</i> - <i>Number Of bilateral meetings arranged for Hon. State Minister of Foreign Affairs</i> 	<p>100%</p> <p>100%</p>		
<p>Green Financing Sector</p> <p>I. Finalizing the Host Country Agreement regarding the Legal Status and Privileges and Immunities of the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) between the GoSL and the GGGI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>Number Of communications follow-up actions taken</i> -<i>Agreement signed</i> <p>II. Partnership with the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>Number of communications follow-up actions taken</i> -<i>Number of discussions held (In-person and Virtual) with the Presidential Secretariat and the GGGI</i> -<i>Number Of brainstorming sessions held</i> <p>III. Facilitated signing of the MoU between Sri Lanka and Singapore on collaboration under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>Number of communications follow-up actions taken</i> -<i>MoU Signed</i> 	<p>100%</p> <p>100%</p> <p>100%</p>		

<p>IV. Finalizing the Agreement for Cooperation on Climate Change between the Government of the Republic of Korea and the GoSL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of communications follow-up actions taken -Number of discussions held (In-person and Virtual) with our Mission and other local stakeholders -Agreed Minutes signed <p>V. Initiated action to institutionalise the partnership with the Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance (ORRAA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number Of communications follow-up actions taken 	<p>95%</p> <p>85%</p>		
<p>Other</p> <p>I. Mangrove Alliance for Climate (MAC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number Of communications follow-up actions taken - Briefing sessions held <p>II. Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS)</p> <p>Actively engaged in addressing the issue raised by the INGOs to the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on the shifting of the existing Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) located at Dondra Head</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of communications follow-up actions taken - Number Of discussions/meetings held (In-person and Virtual) with the Presidential Secretariat/ our Mission and other local stakeholders <p>Took action to expedite the process of accreditation of the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in London as the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the IMO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number Of communications follow-up actions taken <p>Assisted in establishing the Interagency Task Force to oversee and manage maritime affairs and strengthen the Merchant Shipping Secretariat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of communications follow-up actions taken - Number Of discussions/meetings held <p>III. Capacity building programmes/ symposiums conducted for line</p>	<p>100%</p> <p>100%</p> <p>100%</p>		

Ministries/Agencies dealing with ocean governance and maritime affairs in collaboration with the High Commission of Australia in Colombo - <i>Number of communications follow-up actions taken</i> - <i>Number Of discussions/meetings held</i>			
IV. Coordinated to host the 2 nd Sri Lanka – Australia Strategic Maritime Dialogue <i>Number of communications, follow-up actions taken</i>	100%		

4.2.5. Performance Review & Implementation Division and Emergency Response Unit

Priority Area	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected		
	100%-90%	89%-75%	74%-50%
Timely preparation of the Annual Action Plan	100%		
Timely preparation of the Annual Performance Report	100%		
Preparation of Secretaries' Performance Agreement and reporting progress	100%		
Implementation of the Agreements, MoUs and other instruments signed with the foreign countries		75%	

4.2.6. Public Diplomacy Division

Priority Area	Actual output as per percentage (%) of the expected output		
	100%-90%	89%-75%	74%-50%
Public Diplomacy (Media Releases and Social Media Posts)	100%		

4.2.7. SAARC Division

Priority Areas	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected output		
	100%-90%	89%-75%	74%-50%
<p>Multilateral Diplomacy – Engagement with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)</p> <p>As per the Action Plan 2023, actions were promptly taken to complete the tasks assigned to this Division in collaboration with the SAARC Secretariat and line Ministries/Agencies of Sri Lanka in the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Enhancement of Cooperation between Sri Lanka and the Member States of SAARC through the Secretariat of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) ii. Recommending visas under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES) iii. Enhancement of Cooperation between Sri Lanka and the SAARC Regional Centers iv. Enhancement of cooperation between Sri Lanka and the SAARC specialised bodies v. Enhancement of cooperation between Sri Lanka and the SAARC Apex Bodies and Recognized Bodies vi. Enhancement of cooperation between SAARC International Organizations/Agencies vii. Enhancement of cooperation between GoSL and SAARC Observer States 	95%		

4.2.8. United Nations and Human Rights Division

Priority Area	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected output		
Multilateral Diplomacy	100-90%	89-75%	74-50%
A. Human Rights			
UN Human Rights Council (HRC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of meetings/events attended; • Number of statements (written/oral) delivered; 	100%		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of resolutions/joint statements supported; • Number of meetings held with relevant stakeholders to present an accurate narrative on SL • Number of consultations held with Line Ministries to respond to reports • Number of interventions made in support of other countries • Number of resolutions/joint statements supported • Number of like-minded events attended 			
<p>Treaty Bodies (TB)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of consultations held with Line Ministries to prepare/review Reports/responses; • Number of Reports/responses submitted • Number of consultations held with the TB • Number of statements delivered • Number of meetings held with Line Ministries to discuss implementation and follow-up work 	100%		
<p>Special Procedures Mandate Holders (SPMH)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of visits facilitated • Number of meetings attended where SPMH made presentations; • Number of statements delivered outlining SL's position on specific issues • Number of consultations held with Line Ministries to review their reports/communications 	100%		
<p>Universal Periodic Review (UPR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of consultations convened • Submission of Sri Lanka's National report under the UPR 4th Cycle • Number of statements delivered at the UPR sessions 	100%		
B. 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)			
<p>High-level segment (HLS) of the session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful participation of the delegation at the session • Number of statements delivered at the session • Number of bilateral meetings held during the session 	100%		
Committee stage of the Session	100%		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of meetings/events attended • Number of statements (written/oral) delivered • Number of resolutions/joint statements supported 			
C. United Nations Security Council (UNSC)			
UN Security Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of meetings followed and statements delivered • Number of consultations held with members of the UNSC • Number of resolutions supported 	100%		
D. UN Peacekeeping Missions			
UN peacekeeping Missions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely rotation of troops and delivery of supplies • Number of engagements with the DPKO on bilateral matters related to PK deployments • Number of engagements at the multilateral PK dialogues 	100%		
E. Matters related to Humanitarian Affairs			
Humanitarian Affairs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of interactions held and outcome for UNHCR and ICRC 	100%		
F. Sri Lanka at the other like-minded groupings			
Like-minded Groupings NAM/G77 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful participation of the delegation at the meetings • Number of statements delivered at the meetings • Number of initiatives supported by Sri Lanka 	100%		
G. Candidatures			
Candidatures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of candidatures of other countries supported by Sri Lanka contributing to deepen bilateral cooperation with UN Member States • Updating Candidature database • Number of initiatives taken to promote SL's candidatures • Number of reciprocal arrangements secured for Sri Lanka's candidatures 	100%		
H. Facilitation of Sri Lanka's representation at UN Meetings/ Conferences			
SL's representation at International For a <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of letters of credence processed and issued 	100%		
I. Disarmament and non-proliferation			
Disarmament and non-proliferation	100%		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Meetings where Sri Lanka was represented • Number of interventions made by Sri Lanka • Number of initiatives made by Sri Lanka • Number of initiatives supported by Sri Lanka to strengthen bilateral engagement with other UN Member Countries (Co-sponsoring, voting) • Number of Annual Reports submitted • Number of follow-ups made on each legislation measure • Enactment of the national legislation • Number of donor assistance secured • Number of sponsorships secured for Sri Lankans • Number of training programmes, workshops, seminars organised/ facilitated 			
J. Global Health			
<p>WHO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of meetings facilitated • Number of interventions made • Number of positions/policies coordinated and sent instructions to Sri Lanka Missions. • Number of meetings attended. • Number of statements delivered. • Number of resolutions co-sponsored/supported. 	100%		
K. Combatting drugs and crimes (Trafficking, Cyber, Corruption etc)			
<p>Combatting drugs and crimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of coordination of SL's participation at UNODC meetings • Number of SL interventions made at UNODC meetings • Interventions made at the AHC on Cybercrime 	100%		
L. Sustainable Development Goals			
<p>ECOSOC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of meetings attended by GoSL • Number of interventions made • Number of meetings coordinated • Number of capacity-building programmes 	100%		
M. Promoting capacity-building rural heritage values			
<p>UNESCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events, initiatives and reports • Number of submissions coordinated • Number of nominations coordinated 	100%		
N. Processing of visas			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of visas processed 	100%		

O. Monetary Contributions to UN, UN Agencies, Peacekeeping Missions & Convention			
• Number of contribution payments made	100%		

4.3 Achievement of Key Performance Indicators: Territorial Divisions

4.3.1 Africa Affairs Division

Priority Area	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected output		
	100%-90%	89% - 75%	74% -50%
Political Diplomacy (Bilateral/ Multilateral)			
Enhance Diplomatic engagements with all 55 states in the African region.			
Number of communications/ actions /interactions regarding rationalisation of concurrent accreditations		80%	
Number of discussions by SL envoys in African countries with the envoys of African countries	90%		
Selection of suitable candidates for Honorary Consul posts in Africa region	90%		
Number of Communications/Follow-up actions with relevant SL Missions and Protocol Division	90%		
Holding Bilateral Consultations with the countries where Sri Lanka has signed MoUs/Agreements			
Number of Bilateral Consultations held in 2023		80%	
Number of Communications/Follow-up actions with line Agencies and relevant SL Missions.	90%		
Conclude /pending Agreements/MoUs on Joint Commissions and Bilateral Consultations, etc			
Number of engagement made with the respective stakeholders with regard to the finalisation of Agreements/MoU.		85%	
Number of discussions by SL envoys in African countries with their counterparts.	95%		
Greater engagement with Africa.			
Number of communications/ actions /interactions on establishment of Missions		70%	
Number of visits to African countries		80%	
Number of high-level meetings arranged.	90%		
Number of follow-up actions	90%		
Enhance Cooperation with Regional and International Organizations in Africa.			
Number of delegations from Sri Lanka		80%	

Number of / meetings/ interactions with high-level officials of Regional organisations by our Ambassadors.	90%		
Coordinate with SL Missions to get invitations for essential events at regional organisations.	90%		
Number of discussions by SL envoys in African countries with their counterparts	90%		
More significant interaction with African Human Rights Council (HRC) member states.			
Number of Meetings/telephone conversations/interactions with HRC members in the Africa region	90%		
Number of Visits by Hon. Foreign Minister to Member States	90%		
Number of communications to SL Missions and follow-up actions.		85%	
Ensure support for Sri Lanka's candidature at the multilateral forum from African states.			
Number of Meetings/ telephone conversations/interactions with African states on candidature-related issues.		85%	
Number of communications to SL Missions and follow-up actions.		85%	
Number of discussions by SL envoys in African countries with their counterparts.	90%		

4.3.2. East Asia Division

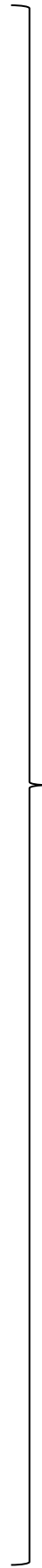
Priority Area	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected output		
	100%-90%	89%-75%	74%-50%
Political Diplomacy (Bilateral/Multilateral) E.g., Enhance Diplomatic engagements <i>Number of communications/ actions/ interactions regarding the rationalisation of concurrent accreditations</i> - Number of discussions by SL envoys - Signed MoUs / Agreements - Number of Bilateral Consultations/Follow-up actions <i>with line Agencies</i> - Number of Policy analyses prepared with regard to Agreements/MoU		85%	
Science & Technology Diplomacy	92%		

4.3.3. Latin America and the Caribbean Division

Priority Area	Actual Output as a percentage (%) of the expected output		
	100% - 90%	89% - 75%	74% - 50%
<p>Economic Diplomacy(Bilateral/Multilateral)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake trade promotional visits to major Mexican cities to promote Sri Lankan commercial interests in Mexico - Enhancing bilateral trade & economic cooperation in Cuba - Number of meetings held - Number of Communications, follow-up actions taken - Number of discussions by SL envoys - Number of Quarterly reports on exports, investments, and tourist arrivals from respective destinations <p>Brazil</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussed initiating a strategic partnership between the Brazilian Association of Diamonds, Gems and Minerals (ABDGM) and the companies of the Gem & Jewellery segment of Sri Lanka. The embassy requested an online meeting between ABDGM and the National Gem & Jewellery Authority (NGJA) of Sri Lanka, and the Sri Lankan side postponed it and is awaiting a meeting from the Sri Lanka side. - Organized B2B meetings with the following companies; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. M/s. Emjay International (Pvt) Ltd, M/s. Brandex Lanka Ltd and Ms. Romina Torres, International Sourcing Manager M/s Uni Co Group; ii. Ramya Agro Pvt Ltd and M/s Energy Company; iii. M/s Esna Holidays Pvt Ltd with M/s Sou Viajante and M/s The Guia Do Turismo Brasil companies. iv. M/s Associated Motor Ways (Pvt) Ltd., M/s Laughs Rubber Co. Ltd, M/s Atire (Pvt) Ltd 	<p>100%</p>		<p>60%</p>

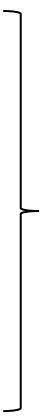
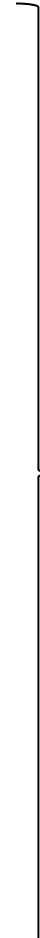
<p>and M/s Samson Rubber Products (Pvt) Ltd with M/s Kro penus</p> <p>v. M/s Global Rubber Industries (Pvt) Ltd, M/s Samson Rubber Products (Pvt) Ltd and M/s Associated Motor Ways (Pvt) Ltd. with M/s Pntanal Penurs.</p> <p>vi. with M/s CEAT Sri Lanka and M/s Ferentino Tyre Corporation(Pvt)Ltd with M/s GG10 Group of Brazil</p> <p>- Signed an MOU between the National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka (NCCSL) and Association of Commerce, Industries and Service of the State of Goiás (ACIEG) Brazil virtually on 01st of February 2023, to cooperate</p> <p>- with each other to widen economic cooperation through commerce, trade, and investment between the respective business communities.</p> <p>- Attended 13 trade inquiries received from Sri Lanka and submitted lists of importers and buyers for the respective products. The investigation was published on the Sao Paulo Chamber of Commerce website to enable interested members of the Chamber to contact the companies directly. The mission provided Portuguese translation for their brochures, enabling M/s Atire Sri Lanka company to prepare them in Portuguese.</p> <p>- M/s Versatile Business Solutions (Pvt) Limited, one of the companies catering to the Sri Lankan government agency in the sector of dairy, has requested information on the Girolando Bulls to import five numbers of bulls from Brazil for breeding. The Mission has contacted the Associação Brasileira dos Criadores de Girolando and provided a list as requested. It asked for additional information and certifications from Brazil to make a decision, but it has not succeeded due to delays in Sri Lankan procurement procedures.</p>	<p>100%</p>		
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provided a report on “Explore Export opportunities for Sportswear and Leisurewear” to EDB; provided an industry overview to inform NGJA of the background of the Brazilian Gem and jewellery sector. Provided necessary clarification on environmental labelling requirements – Triman Logo with consultation with the Brazilian Health Regulatory Agency (ANVISA) and the Association of Brazilian Packaging Industry (ABRE). - Requested information from the Brazilian authorities on exporting live bovines to Sri Lanka, which needs clarifications/ approval from the Department of Animal Production and Health of Sri Lanka. - Taken the initiative to organise an online meeting between the EDB/SLASSCOM and FECOMERCE-GO to discuss in detail the available opportunities and how to do the match-making in the IT sector. - Had an online meeting with the officials of the Food Ingredient Exhibition organiser in São Paulo to seek the possibility of making arrangements to have the Sri Lanka pavilion at the exhibition next year. The Embassy recommended Sri Lanka’s participation at the `Anuga Select Brazil 2024` exhibition to SLEDB and SLTPB for their consideration. Sent a list of trade fairs held in Brazil and Chile to Industrial Development Board for their consideration. - With the support of the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB), the Embassy participated in the EXPO Turismo Goiás 2023. - Met with the Vice President and Senior Officials of the Federation of Trade in Goods, Services and Tourism of the State of Goiás (Fecomércio-GO), and both sides agreed to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding 	100%		
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<p>(MoU) on Trade, Tourism and Investment promotions between the Federation of Trade in Goods, Services and Tourism of the State of Goiás (Fecomércio-GO) and a leading Chamber of Commerce in Sri Lanka for which the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Brazil undertook to make preliminary arrangements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Embassy officials had an online meeting with the Association of Tyre Importers of Brazil (ABIDIP) and shared information on the rubber sector in Sri Lanka. As a result, ABIDIP sent a list of tyre importers in Brazil for consideration. - Attended one trade complaint in Brazil, but the Sri Lankan company could not contact. - Preliminary arrangements were made to organise a single-country exhibition in Brasilia in January 2024 to promote Sri Lankan culture, cuisines, products and tourism. - The Embassy, in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Tea Board, organised the 'Sri Lanka pavilion' with the participation of the twelve (12) Sri Lankan Tea exporting companies at the Espacio Food Service EXPO, which is one of the largest beverage exhibitions held in South America, in September 2023 in Santiago, Chile. Parallel to the exhibition, a press conference attended by over 35 journalists from electronic, printed and social media platforms and a cocktail reception with the participation of over 175 guests representing Chilean Tea importers, members of the Chilean Chambers of Commerce and other business entities, senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile and other government officials and journalists etc., were held on the evening of 27th September 2023 to promote Ceylon Tea in the Chilean market. - Following discussions with the Head of ProChile and the Head of International 	 <p>100%</p>		
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<p>Economic Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, a draft of an Agreement on establishing a Joint Commission on Trade and Economic Affairs between the two countries was sent to the Chilean side.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taken initiatives to establish cooperation between the Bogota Chamber of Commerce in Colombia and the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce in Sri Lanka and sent a draft text to the Sri Lankan side for their consideration. - In November 2023, discussions were held with the International Affairs Secretary of the São Paulo State Government to strengthen bilateral relations regarding economic cooperation between Sri Lanka and São Paulo. Agreed to seek to organise a delegation to São Paulo for the construction sector. Sought the possibility of inviting M/s Embraer S.A. Company, which is one of the largest aviation companies in the world, to establish a manufacturing plant of aviation parts and a regional office in Sri Lanka to gain access to Asia, the Middle East and Africa, considering the strategic location of Sri Lanka. - Met with the Council of Consulates and International Chamber of Commerce Coordinator and Special Advisor for Foreign Affairs of the São Paulo Chamber of Commerce (ACSP) in November 2023 and requested to take the initiative to resume activities with CCC once again to implement the MoU signed between ACSP and Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC) and also requested to organise a Brazilian business delegation (regional delegation by considering the cost-benefit) to Sri Lanka in October or November 2024. - In November 2023, met with the CEO of the São Paulo Supermarket Association (APAS) and discussed how to enter into the supermarket chains in São Paulo. And advised to participate 	<p>100%</p>		
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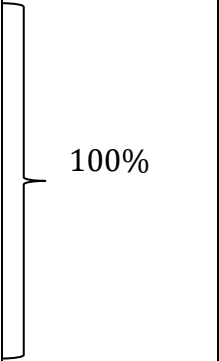
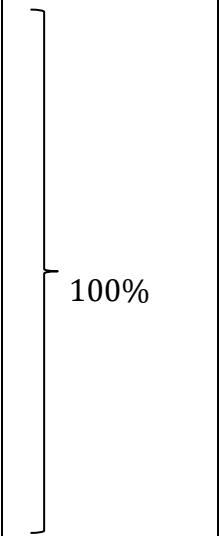
<p>in the “APAS Show” international trade fair. Sri Lanka could join the VIP Lounge (Select) area to increase brand exposure and product awareness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During the meeting with ABAV, it was requested that most Brazilian tour operators participate in the ABAV tourism exhibition, which will be held in Brasilia next year. - Met with the Vice President of Sales and Marketing of the Brazilian Supermarket Association (ABRAS) and informed that the “ABRAS – Food and Retail Future” promotional event in Sao Paulo would be the best promotional event which could participate in the companies to enter into the Brazilian supermarkets. - Met with the Brazilian Geological Survey official to establish cooperation with the Sri Lankan Geological Survey Bureau. - Sent a list of destination management companies (DMCs) in Sri Lanka to M/s Aviatur Colombia to check on the cooperation between tourism agencies in both countries. 	<p>100%</p>		
<p>Political Diplomacy (Bilateral/Multilateral)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Official Visit of H.E. the Ambassador to Mexico from 18-21 October/ Interactions with state/Political/business and other entities. - Signing of the Agreement on bilateral Foreign Office Consultation between Sri Lanka and Mexico - Preparation in respect of holding the first bilateral Foreign Office Consultations in early 2024 - Commencement of appointing an Honorary Consul for Sri Lanka. 	<p>95%</p>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain effective/close contact with the Embassies of Mexico and Trinidad and Tobago in the US on bilateral/multilateral relations matters. - Providing regular updates on developments/ opportunities in Sri Lanka in politics/ trade/investment/tourism etc. - Enhance Diplomatic engagements in Cuba - Number of communications/ actions/ interactions regarding the rationalisation of concurrent accreditation - Number of discussions by SL envoys - Signed MoUs/ Agreements - Number of bilateral consultations/ follow-up actions with line agencies - Number of Policy analyses prepared with regard to Agreements/ MoUS 		75%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brazil - Mission regularly interacted with the Secretary for the Asia Pacific and Russia, other senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil and the Ambassadors of the concurrently accredited countries to exchange views on political developments between the countries. - During the meeting the Ambassador had with the Mayor of the State of Goiás, they proposed to enter into a “Sister City” project between the Municipal Council of Goiania and a leading Municipal Council in Sri Lanka, for which the mayor accepted. - Proposed to conclude a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or an Agreement on Political and Economic Relations between Sri Lanka and Chile, for which the Chilean side responded affirmatively and the draft texts 		100%	

<p>were submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile.</p>			
<p>Multilateral Diplomacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Close engagement with the Organization of American States (OAS) - Participation at the 56th AGM of OAS - Securing the support of Mexico, Trinidad, and Tobago for Sri Lanka's multilateral engagements/ candidatures, etc. - Cuba's multilateral diplomacy - Brazil - The ambassador met with officials of Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Uruguay, and Paraguay regarding the 4th Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Sri Lanka, which was held during the 42nd Session of the UPR Working Group, Geneva. - The Mission had fruitful discussions with the relevant officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil and the respective Ambassadors/senior officials of the concurrently accredited countries to obtain their support/reciprocal support for the following Sri Lankan candidatures. <p>I. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) II. Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lobbied with Ambassadors of Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay to seek constructive intervention at the 53rd HRC Session in Geneva. - Arranged a bilateral meeting between the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka and his counterparts on the sidelines of the 78th UNGA in New York. - Held meetings to receive constructive interactions to support Sri Lanka with Brazil and other concurrently accredited countries at the 54th Session of the HRC. - Requested Unilateral support or reciprocal support arrangements for Sri Lanka's 	<p style="text-align: center;">95%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">100%</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">85%</p>	

<p>candidature at the Executive Board of UNESCO for the term of 2023-2027 held in Paris in November 2023</p>			
<p>Cultural Diplomacy and people to people relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural diplomacy and people-to-people relations of Cuba - Brazil - The Embassy participated in the International Food and Culture Bazaar 2023, which was held at the Museu de Arte de Brasilia (MAB). - The Embassy promoted Sri Lanka Tourism, Cuisines and Ceylon Tea at the Annual Bazaar of the Asian and Oceania countries held at the Museu de Arte de Brasilia 	<p>90%</p> <p>100%</p>		
<p>Defence & Security Cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trinidad and Tobago for intelligence and information sharing, mainly focusing on Terrorism and Drug Trafficking. - Brazil - The reformulated draft text of the Agreement on Defence Cooperation between Sri Lanka and Brazil has been shared with the Government of Brazil. <p>Communicated on Galle Dialogue - International Maritime Conference held in Sri Lanka to the governments of Brazil, Guyana, and Chile. The Guyana Chief of Staff of the Defence Force confirmed his participation in the Conference.</p>	<p>100%</p>	<p>85%</p>	
<p>Public Diplomacy (Press Releases and Social Media Posts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public diplomacy of Cuba - Brazil - The Embassy organised media interviews for the Ambassador. The theme “Promote Sri Lanka in Latin America” was discussed with a renewed TV Presenter in Brazil, William Mondo Media. During the 30-minute-long airtime, the interview covered Brazil-Sri Lanka relations and the diversity and uniqueness of Sri Lanka as an island nation. Also, it 	<p>100%</p>	<p>80%</p>	

<p>highlighted the availability of opportunities in Sri Lanka for Brazilians and South Americans in the areas of Trade, Tourism and Investment, with particular reference to the Colombo Port City project. A special focus was drawn to the Ceylon Tea industry, and a demonstration of preparing a cup of Ceylon tea was included. Pictures of tourist sites in Sri Lanka and varieties of Ceylon tea samples representing the geographical elevations in Sri Lanka vis-à-vis Nuwara Eliya, Uda Pussellawa, Dimbula, Uva, Kandy, Sabaragamuwa & Ruhuna, etc., also included in the video.</p> <p>Coordination with the Brazilian Cooperation Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Health/SL to receive necessary approvals to dispatch medical donations received under Brazilian Humanitarian Aid to Sri Lanka.</p> <p>With the College Baristia Brazil's invitation, the Mission participated in a session to educate the students on Ceylon Tea.</p> <p>During Sri Lanka's participation at the Expo Goiás 2023, 'TV Alego', one of the prominent TV channels in the State of Goiás, made live coverage on the Sri Lanka booth. Several YouTubers and other broadcasters also gave live coverage of the Sri Lanka pavilion on their media platforms.</p>	<p>100%</p>		
<p>Consular Diplomacy and Migrant Labour Welfare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintaining close cooperation with the Mexican Immigration authorities on illegal entry/ transit of Sri Lankans through Mexico. (38 reported such cases) - Consular diplomacy and migrant labour welfare of Cuba 	<p>100%</p>	<p>85%</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brazil - Information relevant to overseas Sri Lankans is regularly published on the Mission’s official website and FaceBook page. - Required verification is made with the assistance of Honorary Consuls of respective countries or via Zoom. - Regular Consular Services have been provided. 			
<p>Science & Technology Diplomacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Science & technology of Cuba - Brazil - As a result of regular interactions the Embassy had with the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), a High-Level Technical Team from the Federal University of Viçosa (UFV) and the Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar) visited Sri Lanka from June 9 to 21, 2023, to provide technical assistance for Sri Lanka’s Dairy and sugarcane industries. - The final draft of the MOU on cooperation between Rio Branco Institute of Brazil and BIDTI of Sri Lanka was sent to MFA Sri Lanka to provide the English and Sinhala documents to be signed in Brasilia in 2024. 			60%
<p>Human Resources & Mission Management, Overseas Assets Management & Development and Human Resource Development</p> <p>Cuba</p>	95%		
<p>Engagement with Overseas Sri Lankans</p> <p>Engagement with overseas Sri Lankans of Cuba</p>			60%
<p>Other</p>	90%		

4.3.4. Middle East Division

Priority Area	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected output		
	100%-90%	89%-75%	74%-50%
Economic Diplomacy(Bilateral/Multilateral) <i>E.g., Enhancing bilateral trade & economic cooperation</i> Number of the meetings held Number of communications, follow-up actions taken Number of discussions by SL envoys Number of quarterly reports on exports, investment, and tourist arrival from respective destinations.		80%	
Political Diplomacy (Bilateral/Multilateral) <i>E.g., Enhance Diplomatic engagements</i> <i>Number of communications/ actions/ interactions regarding the rationalisation of concurrent accreditations</i> - <i>Number of discussions by SL envoys</i> - <i>Signed MoUs / Agreements</i> - <i>Number of Bilateral Consultations/Follow-up actions with line Agencies</i> - <i>Number of Policy analyses prepared with regard to Agreements/MoU</i>		75%	
Cultural Diplomacy and people to people relations			70%
Defence & Security Cooperation			70%
Public Diplomacy (Press Releases and Social Media Posts)			50%
Science & Technology Diplomacy		75%	
Other			50%

4.3.5. Europe & North America Division

Priority Area	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected output		
	100%-90%	89%-75%	74%-50%
Political Diplomacy (Bilateral/Multilateral) E.g., Enhance Diplomatic engagements <i>Number of communications/ actions/ interactions regarding the rationalisation of concurrent accreditations</i> - Number of discussions by SL envoys - Signed MoUs / Agreements - Number of Bilateral Consultations/Follow-up actions with line Agencies - Number of Policy analyses prepared with regard to Agreements/MoU	95%		
Multilateral Diplomacy	90%		
Cultural Diplomacy and people to people relations			70%
Science & Technology Diplomacy			60%

4.3.6. South Asia Division

Priority Area	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected output		
	100%-90%	89%-75%	74%-50%
Political Diplomacy (Bilateral/Multilateral) E.g., Enhance Diplomatic engagements <i>Number of communications/actions/interactions Regarding the rationalisation of concurrent accreditations</i> - Number of discussions by SL envoys - 178 - Signed MoUs/Agreements - 11 - Number of Bilateral Consultations - 02 - Follow-up actions with line Agencies - 19	90%		
Science & Technology Diplomacy	92%		

4.3.7. South East Asia & Central Asia Division

Priority Area	Actual output as a percentage (5) of the expected output		
	100%-90%	89% - 75%	74% - 50%
Economic Diplomacy (Bilateral /Multilateral) Enhancing bilateral trade & economic cooperation	95%		
- Number of meetings held			
- Number of communications, follow-up actions taken			
- Number of discussions by SL envoys			
- Number of quarterly reports on exports, investment, and tourist arrivals from respective destinations			
Political Diplomacy (Bilateral/ Multilateral) Enhance Diplomatic engagements		80%	
- Number of communications/ actions/ interactions			
- Number of discussions by Sri Lanka envoys			
- Signed MoUs/ Agreement			
- Number of Bilateral Consultations held (ongoing)			
- Number of Communications/Follow-up actions with line Agencies			
Multilateral Diplomacy		85%	
Cultural Diplomacy and people to people relations			75%
Defence & Security Cooperation (visit, trainings)			70%
- Number of MoU followed up/ signed			
- Number of training/ visits			
Public Diplomacy (press releases and social media posts)	98%		
- Number of press releases			
- Number of Facebook posts/ updates			
- Number of tweets			
- Number of events attended			
Science and Technology Diplomacy			75%
Human Resources, Mission Management, Overseas Assets Management & Development (meetings trainings) Number of follow-up actions on HR & Assets matters		80%	
Engagement with Overseas Sri Lankans			70%

4.4. Achievement of Key Performance Indicators: Operational Divisions

4.4.1 Consular Division

Priority Area	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected output		
	100% - 90%	89% - 75%	74%-50%
Shifting the Consular Affairs Division to the 16 th Floor of the Suhurupaya Building	Relocation will be completed by the end of April 2024		
Repatriation of Stranded Sri Lankans			
<p>Repatriating Sri Lankan citizens from foreign countries due to various distressing situations, including deportation, overstay, illegal stay, etc.</p> <p>Repatriation of Sri Lankan citizens who are stranded and have become victims of human trafficking overseas in coordination with the respective Missions, Posts and NOK.</p> <p>To ensure the well-being of Sri Lankans held in foreign prisons and detention centres through the respective Missions/Posts.</p> <p>Assisting Sri Lankans overseas in crisis through various means.</p> <p>Engaging with international and local organisations such as IMO, ICRC, Caritas, Safe Foundation and line agencies to secure assistance for safe repatriation.</p> <p>Playing a crucial role in combating illegal migration and human trafficking by participating in activities and supporting the efforts of NAHTTF</p> <p>Regularly reporting to the law enforcement authorities about suspected human trafficking cases and potential victims for further action.</p>	Completed on a case-by-case basis.		
Coordination of Death Overseas			

<p>Handling requests for assistance submitted by NOK regarding deaths of Sri Lankan nationals abroad</p> <p>Coordination with Sri Lanka Missions/Posts abroad, RCOs and NOK of the deceased to fulfill necessary paperwork and formalities concerning the death.</p> <p>Establishing the identity of the deceased's NOK and collaborating with government entities such as D/E&I, RGD, and Police when encountering challenges in locating the NOK to ensure the accurate identification of the correct NOK.</p> <p>Liaising with NOK of deceased Sri Lankan nationals overseas regarding the repatriation, cremation, or burial of human remains aboard.</p> <p>Assisting NOK of the deceased in obtaining foreign death certificates, consular death certificates, medical reports, post-mortem reports, cancelled passports, and other relevant documents. Facilitating the registration process of deaths and dispatch of consular death certificates to the NOK.</p> <p>Facilitating the delivery of personal belongings to the NOK of the deceased.</p>	<p>Completed on a case-by-case basis</p>
<p>Coordination in the delivery of compensation and other financial benefits to the NOK</p>	
<p>Collaborating with relevant parties, including Sri Lanka Missions and Posts aboard, applicants, NOK and other entities to secure financial benefits such as compensation (death & non-death related circumstances), blood money, salary dues, insurance, gratuity, end-of-service benefits and any other applicable entitlement for the NOK or the applicant</p> <p>Monitoring and pursuing the compensation</p>	<p>Completed on a case-by-case basis</p>

<p>process with related stakeholders to ensure the acquisition of related financial entitlements/benefits for the respective Sri Lankan beneficiaries.</p> <p>Facilitating the receipt of the applicable financial benefits and ensuring their delivery to the relevant beneficiaries in accordance with the prescribed procedure through appropriate government agencies.</p>	
<p>Authentication of Documents</p>	
<p>Authenticating an array of documents issued by government authorities and private entities, including educational certificates, legal documents, export documents, birth, marriage, death certificates, and police certificates through the Electronic Document Authentication System (e-DAS).</p>	<p>Completed on a case-by-case basis</p>
<p>The Division proposed system integration with government ministries, departments, and authorities to streamline the document authentication process and ensure the authenticity of the documents it authenticated.</p> <p>The e-DAS is directly linked with relevant document issuing authorities through the system integration. Documents are transmitted to the system online with minimal human intervention, eliminating third-party involvement.</p> <p>The primary objective of the system integration is to facilitate applicants' completion of the document authentication process entirely online. This allows applicants to apply via a digital platform and receive authenticated documents directly on their desktops.</p>	<p>The integration started with the gradual development of relevant features within the e-DAS in the year 2023</p>

Established an auditing mechanism in the e-DAS to audit and review all documents authenticated through the system.	Implemented and operationalised
Established and successfully launched the system integration and online platform for authenticating GCE/OL and GCE/AL certificates in partnership with the Department of Examinations in August 2023	It was completed in August 2023, and it is fully operationalised at the moment.
Initiated the development of the Branch Module within the e-DAS to facilitate system integration with other government entities, including the Motor Traffic Department, Registration of Persons, Medical Council, Sri Lanka Police, local universities, etc.	Scheduled for completion during the second quarter of 2024
Started system integration with the Registrar General's Department to enable online access for applicants to apply for the authentication of birth, marriage and death certificates through the Consular Affairs Division.	Scheduled for completion by mid of April 2024
Introducing a new appointment system through the e-DAS to streamline the appointment system	Scheduled for completion by the end of April 2024
Initiated developing a dedicated webpage for the Consular Affairs Division within the Ministry's main domain	Scheduled for completion during the second quarter of 2024
Decentralisation of providing Consular Services	
Approval from the Cabinet of Ministers has been obtained to establish two Regional Consular Offices in Badulla and Anuradhapura.	Scheduled for establishment during the second quarter of 2024
Miscellaneous Consular Activities	
Coordinating and assisting individuals in registering overseas births, delivering Sri Lankan birth certificates to the respective recipients upon issuance and dispatch to the Division by the Missions/Posts.	Completed on a case-by-case basis
Assisting Sri Lankans in addressing matters	

<p>concerning travel documents, citizenship certificates, marriage certificates, driving licenses</p> <p>Facilitating and assisting applicants in acquiring police clearance certificates from foreign countries and verifying foreign degree certificates</p> <p>Assisting NOK in locating the whereabouts of their missing relatives</p>	
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4.4.2 General Administration Division

Priority Area	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected output		
	100%-90%	89%-75%	74%-50%
<p>Introduce a Common Website Platform for Missions/Posts Abroad</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of websites domain URL changes to gov. lk domain • Number of websites adopt to common web platform 			30%
<p>Enhance the capacity to apply IT knowledge in operational work to expedite the processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of video training sessions conducted • Number of participants • Number of training programmes conducted • Number of participants 	100%		
<p>System Improvements to the Electronic Document Attestation System (SAS) in the Consular Division</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce Customer Waiting Time • Reduce the number of customer visits to the Consular • Division per each customer's requirement • Improve daily served customers 		75%	
<p>Introduce Assets Management System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Assets added to the system • Number of Divisions enrolled on the system 		70%	

Providing training for the staff of the Ministry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number Of training programmes conducted 	90%		
Relocation of the Ministry under one house <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquisition of land Completing feasibility study (by the UDA) Design Building structure (by the UDA) 	Due to the proposed land change, the planned activities were not carried out. Therefore, this priority area was carried forward to the Action Plan for the year 2024.		

4.4.3 Human Resources and Mission Management Division

Priority Area	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected output		
	100%-90%	89%-75%	74%-50%
A. Administrating Human Resource Functions			
1. Management of officers in the Sri Lanka Foreign Service (SLFS)	95%		
2. Maintenance of personal files	95%		
3. Controlling internal attachments of SLFS officers	100%		
4. Implementation of overseas transfers	95%		
5. Appointment of Heads of Mission/Post	100%		
6. Appointment of Diplomatic Staff to SL Missions abroad	95%		
7. Appointment of non-diplomatic staff/support & technical staff to SL Missions abroad functions	90%		
B. Conducting Management Functions			
1. Implementation of SLFS Minute	95%		
2. Formation and Implementation of Ministry Instructions	100%		
3. Management of Cadre provisions in SL Missions abroad	95%		

4. Management of salaries and relevant allowances for staff attached to SL Missions abroad	100%		
5. Management of domestic & International travels by Mission staff	100%		
6. Management of overseas leave of diplomatic and non-diplomatic staff attached to SL Missions abroad	100%		
7. Management of audit queries and implementation of policy directives	95%		
8. Managing parliamentary questions	100%		
9. Management of establishment of new SL Missions abroad and temporary closure of Sri Lanka Missions abroad	90%		
C. Internal Management Functions			
1. Management of Staff Members of the HR & MM Division	100%		

4.4.4 Internal Audit Division

Priority Area	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected output		
	100% -90%	89% -75%	74% - 50%
Monitor and evaluate the performance of the Ministry and its Missions/Posts as a government institute accountable to the Parliament. - Number of internal audit reports submitted with recommendations for exposing and correcting internal control deficiencies.			52%

4.4.5 Legal Division

Priority Area	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected output		
	100% - 90%	89% - 75%	74% - 50%
Economic Diplomacy			
Trade and Investment -Negotiating Bilateral Investment Treaties with all possible counterparts and local stakeholders, including the Attorney General’s Department, and a number of negotiations to finalise Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements with Turkey, UAE, Lebanon, Belarus and Oman			60%
Air Services Agreements Concluding Air Services Agreements with the Republic of Korea (ROK), Canada, Hungary, Israel, Netherlands, Afghanistan and Oman. -exploring the possibility of negotiating new Air Services Agreements with other counterparts - The number of meetings to Finalize Air Services agreements with the Republic of Korea (ROK), Oman and Canada, Israel, Netherlands, and Afghanistan to expand the faster and easier movement of trade and passengers between the Countries for trade and economic development. The number of Air Services Agreements have been finalised for signing in 2023.	90%		
Avoidance of Double Taxation -Concluding Agreements on the Avoidance of Double Taxation (DTAA) with Cyprus, Hungary, and Malta and obtaining AG’s clearance for DTAA’s with Ukraine, Czech Republic, Denmark, and India. - Exploring the possibility of negotiating new DTAA’s with other counterparts - Number of DTAA’s concluded, with Cyprus, Hungary, and Malta. Observations of the Attorney General’s Department have been obtained for DTAA’s with Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Denmark, and India. -Follow-up actions to be taken with the Inland Revenue Department to expedite the process	95%		
Visa Exemption Agreements			

<p>-Concluding Visa Exemption Agreements with Bahrain, Maldives, Indonesia, Armenia and Lebanon.</p> <p>-Exploring the possibility of negotiating new Visa Exemptions Agreements with other counterparts</p>		85%	
<p>Finalisation of a fair and just Investor-State Dispute Settlement Mechanism under the United Nations Commission on International Trade and Law (UNCITRAL) Working Group III</p> <p>-Effectively representing GOSL at the United Nations Commission on International Trade and Law (UNCITRAL) Working Group iii on Investor-state Dispute Settlement Mechanism (ISDS) on potential reform options to bring about a fair and just ISDS mechanism by reviewing the unfair ISDS system, including the lack of independence and impartiality of arbitrators, third-party funding, and the duration and costs of proceedings.</p> <p>-The number of meetings to ensure that the recommendations of developing countries like Sri Lanka are considered by the Working Group iii, bringing a level playing field for both the investors and the host Countries.</p>			60%
Political Diplomacy (Bilateral/ Multilateral)			
<p>Providing Comprehensive observations on Treaties, Agreements and MoUs</p> <p>-Obtain policy perspectives from relevant political desks and line Ministries and provide comprehensive legal observations on Treaties, Agreements and MoUs.</p> <p>- Finalization of several Treaties, Agreements, and MoUs for signature to acquire more significant benefits in 2023.</p>		90%	
<p>Multilateral Treaties, Conventions and Agreements (examine whether ratifications/accessions/signature of particular International Convention/Treaty/Agreement are advantageous to Sri Lanka and whether there is adequate legislation to ratify the Treaty/Convention/Agreement)</p>		90%	
Defence and Security Cooperation			

<p>Mutual Legal Assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Concluding Agreements on Mutual Legal Assistance with ROK, Maldives, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Lebanon - Number of meetings to be held to Finalize the Agreements with identified Countries to ensure compliance with international norms by Sri Lanka to curb international crime 			70%
<p>Transfer of Sentenced Persons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Concluding Agreements with the Republic of Korea, Egypt, and Lebanon -Entering into Agreements with Afghanistan, which have already been finalised. <p>Several negotiations will be held to finalise the Agreements with the Republic of Korea, Egypt, and Lebanon to facilitate the transfer of prisoners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -exploring the possibility of negotiating new Agreements with other counterparts 			70%
<p>Extradition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Concluding Extradition treaties with ROK, Egypt, Italy, Lebanon, Maldives and UAE. -exploring the possibility of negotiating new Extradition Treaties with other counterparts -Number of negotiations to finalise Agreements with ROK, Egypt, Italy, Lebanon, Maldives and UAE. -Number of negotiations to be held with identified Countries to ensure compliance with international norms by Sri Lanka to curb international crime 			60%
<p>Consular Diplomacy</p>			
<p>Readmission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Entering into EU/SL Readmission Protocols/Agreements have already been finalised with the Netherlands on behalf of the Benelux countries, France. Italy and Georgia, subject to “clarifying the Readmission in error” clause - Number of negotiations for the safe and orderly return of citizens (failed asylum seekers and visa overstayers) of both countries to their country of origin and to ensure compliance with Sri Lanka's International norms, 			50%
<p>Labour/Migrant Worker Agreements</p>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concluding labour/migrant worker Agreements with Bahrain, Lebanon, Philippines, Seychelles, Luxembourg, Romania and Renewal Agreement with Republic of Korea - The number of meetings to be held to conclude Labour/Migrant Worker Agreements with countries with large Sri Lankan expatriate communities to effectively cooperate in the governance of migration processes and the protection of the rights of migrant workers. 	90%		
Other			
<p>Privileges and Immunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing legal observations/advice on privileges and immunities applicable to diplomatic missions and international and inter-governmental organisations. - Dealing with a number of matters on Immunities and Privileges where Sri Lanka is concerned. - Facilitate privileges and immunities applicable to diplomatic missions and international and inter-governmental organisations in Sri Lanka in accordance with the International Legal Framework on Privileges and Immunities and Laws of Sri Lanka. 	90%		
<p>Maintain the Treaty Index of Sri Lanka</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Updating the Treaty Index with signed agreements/MoUs by liaising with line Ministries/ Agencies and Sri Lankan Embassies abroad. -Provide Details of Signed Agreements and MoUs to line Ministries/ Agencies and Sri Lankan Embassies abroad for their implementation. -Ratification and Implementation of bilateral/ multilateral Agreements/ MoUs signed in the areas of economic, security, investment, technical, cultural and social development of Sri Lanka. 	95%		
<p>UN and International organisations. Related Matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Convening meetings with the Attorney General's Department, The Ministry of Defence, The Financial Intelligence Unit & the Department of Legal Draftsman to discuss how to comply with the relevant international laws and obligations under the United Nations and the United Nations Security Council. 		80%	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of meetings to finalise draft regulations relating to relevant UNSC Resolutions on Foreign Terrorist Fighters and countering violent Extremism. - The number of meetings for Implementing regulations for all other UNSCRs against countries after policy consideration, with the possible assistance of either the United Nations Office of Drug-Related Crimes or the United Nations Security Council Resolutions Committee. - Organizing and liaising with relevant Stakeholders, i.e., the Ministry of Defence, the Financial Intelligence Unit, and the Attorney General's Department, on the work related to the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering and Financing for Terrorist Purposes, the Financial Action Task Force, and the ICRG review process. - Number of meetings to be held to uphold and strengthen the country's AML/CFT framework through the respective jurisdictional roles of members. - Participating and coordinating the National Committee for the implementation of the Strategic Trade Control System - Number of discussions to be held to implement the relevant STC laws to suit International standards by the Cabinet-approved Committee on STC 			
<p>Law of the Sea</p> <p>Negotiating an International Legally Binding Instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity Beyond Areas of National Jurisdiction (BBNJ).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide inputs/observations at the Intergovernmental Conferences to be held in 2022 and represent the Government of Sri Lanka. - Holding Inter-Ministerial Meetings to consider concerns raised by stakeholders regarding the Sri Lankan position. - Number of meetings to ensure the interests of developing countries, including Sri Lanka, taken into consideration by the conference when 	90%		

<p>finalising the text of the BBNJ Convention, enabling a level playing field in relation to Genetic Resources and sharing of benefits & areas such as environmental Impact Assessment, Area Based Management Tools, Capacity Building and Transfer of Marine Technology.</p> <p>Defending Sri Lanka's continental shelf submission before the Subcommission appointed by the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provided required information to the subcommittee relating to sediment thickness in the Bay of Bengal area by developing a sediment thickness map using satellite gravity data. - Number of discussions to ensure positive recommendations by the subcommittee on the area claimed by Sri Lanka, extending - Sri Lanka's seabed area is approximately 23 times the landmass of Sri Lanka 			
<p>International Humanitarian Law (IHL)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Convening IHL committee meetings and liaising with IHL committee members, i.e., with the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Defense, Attorney General's Department, Department of Legal Draftsman, Ministry of Health and ICRC - Number of follow-up actions to be taken with relevant line agencies to obtain official endorsement of the Sinhala and Tamil translation of the Geneva Conventions presented to the National IHL Committee to make the Convention available in the public domain. - domestic legislation enacted to give effect to the international IHL Treaty obligations in Sri Lanka by 2023 		80%	
<p>Court Cases</p> <p>Fundamental Rights Cases other cases-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Take necessary action in consultation with the Attorney General's Department and the Ministry of Justice. 			

<p>- Number of observations to be provided to the Attorney General's Department for FR matters to expedite case proceedings and assert the Ministry's position.</p> <p>Foreign Summons-</p> <p>-Take necessary action in consultation with the Ministry of Justice and liaise with Missions abroad to expedite the process of court summons to facilitate court proceedings.</p> <p>-Number of summons to be served on Sri Lanka nationals abroad through Sri Lanka Missions abroad.</p> <p>-Number of summons-serving reports forwarded to the Ministry of Justice to keep the relevant courts in Sri Lanka duly informed.</p>	100%		
<p>Right to Information</p> <p>-Providing information requested under The Right to Information Act No. 12 of 2016 in liaising with the relevant Divisions of the Ministry.</p> <p>- Requests are due to be facilitated within the stipulated time frame in the Right to Information Act No. 12 of 2016.</p>	90%		

4.4.6 Overseas Asset Management and Development Division

Priority Area	Actual output as a percentage (%) of the expected output		
	100% -90%	89% -75%	74% - 50%
Establishment of the SL Embassy in Bucharest / Romania	100%		
Maintenance of GoSL-owned properties. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) New Delhi ii) Geneva iii) Paris iv) Paris 	100%		
Renovation Project in the former Official Residence in Canberra			10%

4.4.7 Protocol Division

Priorities	Actual Output as a Percentage (%) of the Expected		
	100% - 90%	89% - 75%	74% - 50%
Training for the staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting several training programs for the Protocol Officers in cooperation with the Human Resources Division. 		85%	
Reviewing the existing Policies on facilitating foreign dignitaries for State and Official visits. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current policies are under review 	100%		
Digitalisation of the division's documentation process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the IT Division to establish a digitalised system for documentation • Working with ICTA to develop a digitalised work floor enabling the work of the Colombo-based Diplomatic Missions online, reducing the usage of the paper-based administrative system. 			40%
Revamping of the Protocol Division Website. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revamping the Protocol Division Website for broader usage by the clients • Networking of the digitalised Diplomatic Identity Cards of the Colombo-based diplomats. • Network with airports, Customs, Immigration, Tax Department, the Tourist Board, etc. 	100%		
Establishment of a Diplomatic Enclave. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the Urban Development Authority for the proposed Diplomatic Enclave. • Under Phase 1, the UDA has identified land. • Waiting for the block-out survey plan to be produced with other formalities 			30%
Updating the Protocol Manuel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Current Protocol Manual is under review 	95%		
Locating the dates for the establishment of diplomatic relations with foreign countries.	100%		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the political desk, government agencies, Diplomatic Missions abroad and Diplomatic Missions based in Colombo 			
Recruiting new Protocol Officers following the newly approved carder. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awaits for the Cadre Commission's approval 	95%		
Restructuring the Protocol Division. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change the current appearance of the Protocol Division 		80%	
Shifting and reorganising the Record Room of the Protocol Division to a new location. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-arrange the record room with references for easy extraction of documents 	100%		
Reorganising the Flag Room. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize the current Flag Bank 	100%		

CHAPTER -5 - PERFORMANCE OF ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG)

5.1 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Act No. 19 of 2017 established the Sustainable Development Council, which is mandated to coordinate, facilitate, monitor, evaluate, and report on implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Sri Lanka.

The 2021 Global Sustainable Development Report assesses Sri Lanka's performance in achieving the SDGs as being progressive. We continue progressing in SDG Goals 1, 4, 7, and 13, and Sri Lanka currently ranks 83 among 166 countries. The country score has increased to 69.4, well above the regional average of 67.2.

Sri Lanka maintains steady progress in Quality Education (Goal 4) and Climate Action (Goal 13). In addition, the reduction in Age-standardized death rate due to non-communicable diseases in adults aged 30–70 years (contributing to performance under Goal 3 on Good Health and well-being), reduction in Permanent deforestation (contributing to performance under Goal 15 on Life on Land) and increase in the Times Higher Education Universities Ranking: Average score of top 3 universities (contributing to performance under Goal 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities) are some of the notable improvements made by Sri Lanka during the reporting period.

Sri Lanka's Second Voluntary National Review was presented to the High-Level Political Forum of the ECOSOC in July 2022, following extensive consultations with the Government, civil society, and international development partners. This Review highlights the progress in integrating the SDGs into the National Policy Framework and the enhanced institutional capacities for SDG governance, coordination, and monitoring since the first VNR in 2018.

In January 2023, the Sustainable Development Council issued guidelines to all government ministries to identify nationally appropriate SDG targets in line with each ministry's mandate. This exercise aims to direct the planning and resources of all government institutions towards SDGs amidst the economic challenges and ensure robust national-level monitoring and progress evaluation.

Accordingly, 21 Ministries have set 157 National SDG targets to be achieved by 2030. These national SDG targets will be integrated into a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for SDG progress assessment in Sri Lanka.

In strengthening the SDG data landscape, Sri Lanka is placed 13th out of 53 countries in the Asia-Pacific region for SDG data availability, according to the latest analysis done by UNESCAP. This would enable Sri Lanka's capacity for evidence-informed policy-making for SDGs in the future.

The contribution of UN agencies to the SDGs is directed towards line ministries under the overall UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) signed between the UN Country Team and the GoSL. The Country Cooperation Frameworks of various UN agencies have aligned with the UNSDCF.

- **UN agencies have assisted the SDC** on the following projects/initiatives in achieving SDGs:
 - The development of the SDG Budget Coding and Tagging System is to be introduced to the National Budget. (UNDP Sri Lanka)
 - Formulated SDG Investor Map and developed Project Pipelines to unlock new levels of private capital for SDGs. (UNDP Sri Lanka)
 - The SDG Council developed a National SDG Monitoring and Evaluating Framework based on the baseline data established for 115 SDG indicators in 2023 to have more accurate and evidence-based progress assessments. (UNESCAP)
 - Formulation of the National SDG Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. (UNESCAP)
 - Conducting a National Capacity building workshop to accelerate Digital Government Transformation in Sri Lanka. (UNDESAP)
 - Technical Support in developing Sri Lanka's First Sovereign Green Bond Framework (UNESCAP)
 - Capacity Building of Key Stakeholders on Sustainable Financing (UNESCAP)
 - Technical Support on Debt for Nature/ Climate Swaps (DFNS) (UNESCAP)
 - Technical Support to strengthen SDG monitoring and evaluation capabilities (UNESCAP)
 - Strategy to promote Inclusive and Sustainable Businesses (ISBs) to achieve the SDGs in Sri Lanka was launched in January 2024 (UNESCAP)

CHAPTER- 6- HUMAN RESOURCES PROFILE OF THE MINISTRY

6.1 Cadre Management

6.1.1 Staff of the Ministry (Colombo) as of 31 December 2023

Category	Approved Cadre	Existing	Vacancies/ Excess
Senior	105	81	24
Tertiary	09	05	04
Secondary	448	397	51
Primary	128	128	-

6.1.2. Staff of the Missions as of 31 December 2023

Category	Approved Cadre	Existing	Vacancies/ Excess
Home Based			
Senior/ Tertiary ¹	241	184	57
Secondary ²	250	166	84
Primary ³	9	6	3
Locally Recruited			
Secondary ⁴	237	195	42
Primary ⁵	311	251	60

¹ Head of the Mission, Minister Counsellor, Counsellor, First Secretary, Second Secretary, Third Secretary

² Officers in Management Service Officer's Service including Development Assistant, Information Technology Officers

³ Officers including Drivers, KKS, Sanitary Labours

⁴ Officers including Clerks, Receptionists, Stenographers, Translators, Information Technology Officers

⁵ Officers including KKS, Drivers and Sanitary Labours

6.2 Human Resource Development

Training Programmes conducted for all officers of the Ministry

#	Name of the Programme	No. of staff trained	Duration	Total Investment (Rs.000)		Output / Knowledge Gained
				Local (Rs.)	Nature of the Programme (Abroad / Local)	
1.	Spoken English Course for OES	30	100 hrs	751,744.07	Local	Improved knowledge of working in the English language
2.	Certificate Course Spoken English Course at IHR for MSO and DO	06	06 months	760,000.00	Local	Improved knowledge of working in the English language
3.	Residential Drivers Training	30	Ten days (Residential Training)	528,144.00 7,500.00	Local	
4.	Computer Hardware with Network	02	06 months	71000.00	Local	Depository of new knowledge for the career development of Officers
5.	Briefing sessions for Protocol Assistants and Consular Assistants Department of Motor Traffic	06	02 days	free	Local	Enhanced the knowledge of Government procedures to take responsibility and complete assigned duties effectively.
6.	Workshop on General Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure	01	05 days	free	Local	Enhanced the knowledge of Government procedures to take responsibility and complete assigned duties effectively.
7.	Government payroll system	03	03 days	54000.00	Local	Enhanced the knowledge of Government procedures to take responsibility and complete assigned duties effectively.
8.	Serving Etiquettes	64	05 days	1,070,000.00	Local	Enhanced the knowledge of Government procedures to take responsibility and complete assigned duties effectively.
9.	Training programme for officers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Human	138	One day	N/A	Local	To upgrade their capacities, the respective officers were given knowledge and practical experience

		(when required) in their respective fields.					
	Trafficking in coordination with the IOM.						
10.	Cyber Security and the Cyber Domain: Technical Co-operation Workshop on Capacity Development	30	One day	N/A	Local		
11.	Special Lecture on "How does a small country make themselves visible in the international space."	25	2 hours	N/A	Local		
12.	Training programme for the Receptionists and officers of the Office Employee's Service	45	One day	N/A	Local		
13.	Awareness programme on Introduction to Artificial Intelligence (AI) and ChatGPT	12	2 hours	N/A	Local		
14.	Training Programme on Tourism Promotion	15	3 hours	N/A	Local		
15.	Training session on "Role of Asia Pacific Region on Peaceful Passage, Transportation and Maritime Security."	150	One day	N/A	Local		
16.	Workshop on Writing Skills for Grade II & III Officers of the Sri Lanka Foreign Service	60	One day	N/A	Local		
17.	Briefing Session for the newly recruited Translators on Functions of the Ministry	3	One day	N/A	Local		
18.	Awareness Session on Integrated Capacity Building Approach for Organizational Digital Government Transformation	50	Six days	N/A	Local		
19.	Workshop on Writing Skills for Grade II & III Officers of	48	One day	N/A	Local		

	the Sri Lanka Foreign Service								
20.	Awareness session on "Personality and Grooming."	55	3 hours		N/A		Local		
21.	Orientation Programme for Ambassadors/High Commissioners-designate	9	15 days		N/A		Local		
22.	Clingendael Digital Training Blue Economy: Enhancing sustainable economic development of the Oceans	1	12 days		N/A		Virtual		
23.	11 th Online Course on International Migration Law - from 24 April to 19 May 2023	1	One Month		N/A		Virtual		
24.	Scholarship Opportunities for Commonwealth Civil Servants-The Ben Delo Commonwealth Leadership Programme (Online)	10	Throughout 2024, depending on the course applied.		N/A		Virtual		
25.	Online course on "Introduction to Digital Trade Regulations in Asia and Latin America"	1	Six days		N/A		Virtual		
26.	Young Asian Diplomats Program 2023	1	18 days		Fully funded by the organiser		Abroad (USA)		
27.	Residential workshop on "Approaches to Socio-Economic Recovery from COVID-19"	1	Five days		Fully funded by the organiser		Abroad (India)		
28.	2023 Global Leadership Programme	1	1.5		Fully funded by the organiser		Abroad (Korea)		
29.	Advanced Foreign Service Program for Foreign Diplomats - 2023	1	12 days		Fully funded by the organiser		Abroad (India)		
30.	Seminar on South-South Cooperation for Developing	1	12 days		Fully funded by the organiser		Abroad (China)		

CHAPTER - 7 - COMPLIANCE REPORT

#	Requirement	Status Complied/ Not Complied)	Brief Explanation for Non-Compliance	Proposed Corrective Measures to avoid non-compliance in future
The following financial statements/accounts have been submitted on the due date				
1.1	Annual Financial Statement	Complied	N/A	N/A
1.2	Advance to Public Officers Account	Complied	N/A	N/A
1.3	Trading and Manufacturing Advance Accounts (Commercial Advance Accounts)	N/A	N/A	N/A
1.4	Stores Advance Accounts	N/A	N/A	N/A
1.5	Special Advance Accounts	N/A	N/A	N/A
1.6	Others	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maintenances of books and registers (FR 445)				
2.1	Maintaining and updating the fixed assets register in terms of Public Administration Circular 267/2018	Complied	N/A	N/A
2.2	Maintaining and updating the personal emoluments register/personal emoluments.	Complied	N/A	N/A
2.3	Maintaining and updating the register of audit queries	Complied	N/A	N/A
2.4	Maintaining and updating the Register of Internal Audit reports	Complied	N/A	N/A
2.5	Preparing and submitting all the monthly account summaries (CIGAZ) to the Treasury on due date	Complied	N/A	N/A
2.6	Maintaining and updating the register for cheques and money orders	Complied	N/A	N/A
2.7	Maintaining and updating the Inventory Register	Complied	N/A	N/A
2.8	Maintaining and updating the Stocks Register	Complied	N/A	N/A
2.9	Maintaining and updating the Register of Losses	Complied	N/A	N/A
2.10	Maintaining and updating the Commitment Register	Complied	N/A	N/A
2.11	Maintaining and updating the Register of Counterfoil Books (GA – N20)	Complied	N/A	N/A

Delegation of functions for financial control (FR 135)				
3.1	Delegating the financial authority within the institute	Complied	N/A	N/A
3.2	Awareness of the delegation of financial authority	Complied	N/A	N/A
3.3	Delegating the authority ensuring that more than three officers are involved in the process of approving each transaction	Complied	N/A	N/A
3.4	Using the Government Payroll Software Package, which was introduced through the State Account Circular 171/2004 dated 11 May 2014 under the supervision of the Accountants	Complied	N/A	N/A
Preparation of Annual Plans				
4.1	Preparation of Annual Action Plan	Compiled	N/A	N/A
4.2	Preparation of Annual Procurement Plan	Compiled	N/A	N/A
4.3	Preparation of Annual Internal Audit Plan	Complied	N/A	N/A
4.4	Preparation and submission of the annual estimate to the NBD on the due date	Complied	N/A	N/A
4.5	Preparation and submission of the Annual Cash Flow Statement to the Operations Department of the Treasury on the due date	Complied	N/A	N/A
Audit Queries				
5.1	Responding to all audit queries by the date given by the Auditor General	Complied	N/A	N/A
Internal Audit				
6.1	Preparation of an Internal Audit Plan at the beginning of the year in line with the Financial Regulation 134 (2) DMA/1-2019 in consultation with the Auditor General.	Complied	N/A	N/A
6.2	Responding to all internal audit reports within one month.	Not Complied	Some Missions have not been replied to in the relevant period	To inform and respond within the specified time.
6.3	Submission of copies of all the internal audit reports to the Management Audit Department in terms of Sub-section 40(4) of the	Complied	N/A	N/A

	National Audit Act No. 19 of 2018.			
6.4	Submission of copies of internal audit reports to the Auditor General in terms of Financial Regulation 134(3).	Complied	N/A	N/A
Audit and Management Committees				
7.1	Holding at least four (4) meetings of the Audit and Management Committee in terms of the DMA Circular I-2019	Not Complied	Three meetings were held.	Necessary measures will be taken to ensure full compliance.
Asset Management				
8.1	Submission of information about purchases and disposal of assets to the Comptroller General's Office in terms of paragraph 7 of the Assets Management Circular No.01/2017	Complied	N/A	N/A
8.2	The details of the Liaison Officer appointed to coordinate the implementation of the provisions of the circular are transmitted to the Comptroller General's Office in paragraph 13 of the circular above.	Complied	N/A	N/A
8.3	Conducting boards of survey and submission of the relevant reports to the Auditor General on the due date in terms of Public Finance Circular No. 05/2016.	Complied	N/A	N/A
8.4	The survey boards disclosed actions on the excesses, deficits, and other recommendations during the period specified in the circular.	Complied	N/A	N/A
8.5	The disposal of condemned articles in terms of FR 772	Complied	N/A	N/A
Management of Vehicles				
9.1	Preparation and submission of daily running charts and monthly summaries of the pool vehicles to the Auditor General on due date.	Complied	N/A	N/A
9.2	Disposal of condemned vehicles within less than six months of condemnation.	Complied	N/A	N/A
9.3	Maintaining and updating the vehicle logbooks	Complied	N/A	N/A
9.4	Actions on all accidents in terms of FR103, 104,109 and 110.	Complied	N/A	N/A
9.5	Re-examination of fuel consumption of vehicles in terms of the provisions of paragraph 3.1 of the Public Administration	Not Complied	N/A	N/A

	Circular No.30/2016 of 29 December 2016			
Management of Bank Accounts				
10.1	Preparation of bank reconciliation statements and making them ready for auditing on the due date	Complied	N/A	N/A
10.2	Settlement of dormant accounts that had existed in the year under review or since previous years.	Complied	N/A	N/A
10.3	The action had been taken regarding financial regulations regarding balances disclosed through bank reconciliation statements, for which adjustments had to be made, and whether those balances had been settled within one month.	Complied	N/A	N/A
Utilization of Provisions				
11.1	Utilisation of allocations without exceeding the limit	Complied	N/A	N/A
11.2	The liabilities not exceeding the provisions that remained at the end of the year as per the FR 94(1)	Complied	N/A	N/A
Advances to Public Officers Account				
12.1	Compliance with the limits	Complied	N/A	N/A
12.2	Time analysis on the loan arrears	Complied	N/A	N/A
12.3	Settlement of loan balances in arrears for over a year.	Not Complied	Difficulty finding information	Action will be taken to find the information.
General Deposit Account				
13.1	Actions on lapsed deposits in terms of FR 571.	Complied	N/A	N/A
13.2	The control register for general deposit has been updated and maintained.	Complied	N/A	N/A
Imprest Account				
14.1	Remittance of the balance in the cash book, which is under review at the end of the year to TOD	Complied	N/A	N/A
14.2	Settlement of ad-hoc sub-imprest issued under FR 371 within one month of completing the task.	Complied	N/A	N/A
14.3	Issuance of ad-hoc sub-imprest without exceeding the limit approved by the FR371	Complied	N/A	N/A

14.4	Monthly reconciliation of balance of the imprest account with the Treasury books	Complied	N/A	N/A
Revenue Account				
15.1	Spending the collected revenue in terms of the regulations	Not applicable	N/A	N/A
15.2	Crediting the collected revenue to the revenue account without crediting to the deposit account	Not applicable	N/A	N/A
15.3	Submission of the reports on arrears of revenue to the Auditor General in terms of FR 176	Not applicable	N/A	N/A
Human Resource Management				
16.1	Maintaining the staff within the approved cadre	Complied	N/A	N/A
16.2	Issuance of duty lists to all members of the staff	Complied	N/A	N/A
16.3	Submission of all the reports to the DMS in terms of circular No. 4/2017 dated 20 September 2017	Complied	N/A	N/A
Provisions of Information to the Public				
17.1	Nomination of an Information Officer and maintenance of a register of information in terms of the Right To Information Act and its Regulations	Complied	N/A	N/A
17.2	Measures to receive allegations/appreciation of the public on the institute through the Ministry Website or any other means.	Complied	N/A	N/A
17.3	Submission of bi-annual and annual reports per sections 8 and 10 of the RTI Act.	Complied	N/A	N/A
Implementation of the Citizens Charter				
18.1	Formulation and implementation of a citizens charter/citizens client's charter of the Institution in terms of the circular numbers 05/2008 and 05/2018 (1) of the Ministry of Public Administration and Management	Complied	N/A	N/A
18.2	Formulation of methodology by the Institution to monitor and	Complied	N/A	N/A

	assess the implementation of Citizens Charter / Citizens client's charter as per paragraph 2.3 of the circular			
Preparation of the Human Resource Plan				
19.1	Preparation of a human resource plan in terms of the format under Annexure -2 of the Public Administration Circular No. 02/2018 dated 24 January 2018.	Complied	N/A	N/A
19.2	Ensuring providing minimum training opportunities, which is not less than 12 hours per year for each member of the staff	Not complied	Essential trainings were provided as per the National Budget Circular no. 01/2023	N/A
19.3	Signing of Annual Performance Agreements for the entire staff based on the format of Annexure-1 of the Circular above	Complied for staff grade officers	N/A	N/A
19.4	Appointing a senior officer by assigning the responsibility of preparing the human resource development plan, organising capacity building programs and conducting skill development programs as per paragraph No.6.5 of the Circular above.	Complied	N/A	N/A
Responding to the Audit Paragraphs				
20.1	Rectification of shortcomings highlighted in the audit paragraphs issued by the Auditor General for the previous years.	Complied	N/A	N/A