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வெளிநாட்டு அலுவல்கள், வெளிநாட்டு வேலைவாய்ப்பு மற்றும் சுற்றுலாத்துறை அமைச்சு
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FOREIGN EMPLOYMENT AND TOURISM

Media Release

**Consultative process launched by Minister Vijitha Herath with
Provincial Governors to invigorate the tourism development and
promotion in regions**

A consultative process was launched on Thursday, 10 April by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism Vijitha Herath with the Governors of the Provinces to further invigorate the development of the Tourism sector in the Regions. With the substantive involvement of the Deputy Minister of Tourism Prof. Ruwan Ranasinghe and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Employment Arun Hemachandra, the meeting held at the Ministry focused on establishing a sustainable system to ensure the effective implementation of tourism development projects in order to cater to the growing tourism influx and to enhance the tourism product throughout the country.

A key outcome of the consultation was the collective commitment which emerged to work towards achieving the desired goals of the tourism sector which contributes significantly to the national economy. On the directive of the Minister, a mechanism will operate whereby teams from the Ministry and Colombo-based Tourism Institutions will have regular individual Provincial level consultations in order to address identified challenges.

The Governors attending the consultation included: Governor of the Western Province Hanif Yusoof, Governor of the Northern Province Nagalingam Vethanayahan, Governor of the Sabaragamuwa Province Champa Janaki Rajarathna, Governor of the North Western Province, Tissa Kumarasiri Warnasuriya, Governor of the Southern Province Bandula Harischandra, Governor of the North Central Province U. G. W. K. Wimalasiri Jinadasa, Governor of the Eastern Province Jayantha Lal Ratnasekera, Governor of the Central Province Sarath Bandara Samarasinghe Abayakoon, and Governor of the Uva Province Kapila Jayasekara. They were accompanied by senior officials serving the Provincial administration.

The Governors individually briefed the session on the needs of the respective regions, the opportunities and challenges of the tourism sectors, suggesting several useful ways forward to enhance the tourism product and also address the regional challenges.

Foreign Affairs
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வெளிநாட்டு அலுவல்கள்

📍 **Republic Building, Colombo 1**
ජනරජ ගොඩනැගිල්ල, කොළඹ 1
குடியரசுக் கட்டிடம், கொழும்பு 1

☎ 2 325 373/5, 2 207 200/7

✉ cypher@mfa.gov.lk

Foreign Employment
විදේශ රැකියා
வெளிநாட்டு வேலைவாய்ப்பு

📍 **17th Floor, "Mehewara Piyasa", Narahenpita, Colombo 5**
17 වන මහල, "මෙහෙවර පියස", නාරාහේන්පිට, කොළඹ 5
17ஆவது தளம், "மெஹேவர பியேச", நாரஹேன்பிட்டி, கொழும்பு 5

☎ 2 331 200

✉ info@mfe.gov.lk

Tourism
සංචාරක
சுற்றுலாத்துறை

📍 **696/4, Maradana Road, Colombo 10**
696/4, මරදාන පාර, කොළඹ 10
696/4, மருதாண வீதி, கொழும்பு 10

☎ 2 381 798, 2 321 222

✉ secretary@tourismmin.gov.lk

Earlier Professor Ruwan Ranasinghe speaking at the session highlighted the need for inclusive sustainable development of tourism to absorb the growing numbers of visitors and emphasised the critical element of coordination and absorption of the informal sector to the formal section. In this regard he noted the need for investment to rural areas with the support of the provincial administration.

Secretary of the Ministry Aruni Ranaraja addressing the gathering spoke of the need to ensure that Tourism is developed in an inclusive manner by developing the sector in the regions, creating jobs, and generating income for the people. She highlighted the need to protect and preserve the resources which sustain tourism in the region and identify its uniqueness and special features. She emphasised the need to develop human capital to sustain the service capacity of the industry.

Additional Secretary S. L. Naseer, Tourism section of the Ministry, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Board (SLTPB), Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA), Sri Lanka Convention Bureau (SLCB) as well as Sri Lanka Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management (SLITHM) engaged the regional representatives with options for addressing such challenges.

Chairman of the SLTDA Buddhika Hewawasam briefed the Governors on the tourism strategic plan, initiatives to enhance investments, and develop region specific branding synchronised with the global branding. Chairman of the SLITHM Dheera Hettiarachchi focussed on strengthening regional training institutes to enhance the human capital. Director General of the SLTDA Malkanthi Rajapaksha also briefed the session.

Senior Officials of the Ministry and related Institutions were also associated with the extensive discussion.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism Colombo

11 April 2025

Foreign Affairs
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වெளிநாட்டு அலுவல்கள்

📍 **Republic Building, Colombo 1**
ජනරජ ගෙවිනුගිල්ල, කොළඹ 1
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வெளிநாட்டு வேலைவாய்ப்பு

📍 **17th Floor, "Mehewara Piyesa", Narahenpita, Colombo 5**
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☎ 2 331 200

✉ info@mfe.gov.lk

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சுற்றுலாத்துறை

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696/4, මරදාන පාර, කොළඹ 10
696/4, மருதாணை வீதி, கொழும்பு 10

☎ 2 381 798, 2 321 222

✉ secretary@tourismmin.gov.lk