

Press Releases: Joint Statement From the U.S. Department of State and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka on the Second U.S.-Sri Lanka Partnership Dialogue

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
November 6, 2017

The text of the following statement was released by the Governments of the United States of America and Sri Lanka on the occasion of the second U.S.-Sri Lanka Partnership Dialogue.

Begin Text:

Sharing a commitment to democracy, rule of law, and the prosperity and well-being of our peoples, Sri Lanka and the United States convened the second Partnership Dialogue on November 6, 2017, in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The meeting was led by Sri Lanka Foreign Secretary Prasad Kariyawasam and U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Shannon. The Partnership Dialogue demonstrates the consolidation of cooperation between the United States and Sri Lanka, and serves to further strengthen and enhance bilateral relations in the widest sense, through regular and structured engagement.

As fellow democracies, the two governments resolved to work together toward a free and open Indo-Pacific region and for greater peace and stability around the world. The United States and Sri Lanka agreed that the security, stability, and prosperity of the Indian Ocean region should be safeguarded through the promotion of a rules-based order which would ensure that all countries that enjoy the global commons respect international laws and norms. Both countries agreed to advance this vision for peace and stability regionally and in international fora and stressed the particular importance of the freedom of navigation and overflight and of maintaining a maritime order based on the rule of law including unimpeded commerce, and they shared the intention to further promote cooperation and exchanges in maritime security and safety, including anti-piracy measures. Sri Lanka emphasized its need, as an island nation, to build maritime capacity so that it can

effectively patrol its own borders and safeguard its marine resources.

The vision to develop Sri Lanka as a regional hub for trade and investment in Asia, which would connect trade flows among ASEAN, India, the Middle East and Africa through free and open seas that would be the key to growth of the region, was discussed. The United States expressed its support for Sri Lanka through trade, investment, foreign assistance and direct partnership with stakeholders throughout the country. The United States remains committed to a strong economic partnership and robust trade relationship with Sri Lanka.

Since the inaugural Partnership Dialogue in February 2016, Sri Lanka and the United States have made substantial progress in bilateral relations. This includes cooperation in law enforcement, counter-narcotics, counter-terrorism, and the establishment of U.S. Departments of Treasury and Justice programs to help address fiscal and debt challenges, to strengthen rule of law, and to enhance transparency. Several important official visits have taken place, including high-level U.S. delegations to Sri Lanka, and visits to the United States by His Excellency the President, the Honorable Speaker of the Parliament, and the Minister of Finance and Mass Media, among others.

As a sign of strong bilateral ties and deepening U.S. engagement in Sri Lanka, the United States announced it will offer a second U.S. Coast Guard cutter to the Sri Lankan Navy, pending completion of Congressional notification. The Secretary Class High Endurance Cutter will allow Sri Lanka to more effectively police its coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone and to protect its sea lines of trade and communication. The United States is also working with the Sri Lankan government to return U.S. Peace Corps volunteers to Sri Lanka's English classrooms. The United States also announced a \$21 million/3,150,000,000 Sri Lankan rupees project, awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food for Progress program, to modernize and strengthen Sri Lanka's dairy sector by increasing productivity and improving milk quality, financing, food safety, and trade. The development of a Millennium Challenge Corporation compact for grant assistance for Sri Lanka will continue through 2017-2018.

Both countries acknowledged the bilateral and regional strategic benefits of increased military cooperation, including the U.S. Marine Corps' role in helping establish the Sri Lanka Marine Corps, sending Sri Lankan candidates to professional military academies in the United States, as well as several bilateral exercises and ship visits and engagements among top military officials from both countries.

Sri Lanka and the United States recalled their co-sponsorship of a resolution at the United Nations Human Rights Council in March 2017, reaffirming Sri Lanka's commitment to promote reconciliation, accountability, and human rights in pursuit of lasting peace and prosperity. The United States expressed support to Sri Lanka in the implementation of commitments as agreed in the Human Rights Council resolution, such as truth-seeking, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence, that includes providing closure to the families of the missing, and implementing appropriate reforms to enhance the professionalism of security institutions. USAID is assisting the Government of Sri Lanka in the implementation of these commitments that

reflect the will of the people of Sri Lanka, through support for reconciliation activities.

The commitment of the government of Sri Lanka to strengthening democracy, democratic institutions and practices, good governance, the rule of law, justice, reconciliation, accountability, and parliamentary procedures, was emphasized. The United States welcomed progress on constitutional reform, the return of private land held by security forces, and the establishment of an independent and permanent Office of Missing Persons.

Bilateral security sector cooperation continues in parallel with Sri Lanka's ongoing reconciliation, rule of law and judicial reform efforts. This also includes U.S. support for demining, joint military engagements, human rights training of Sri Lankan officers, and visits by ships and military officials.

Sri Lanka and the United States shared concerns about the grave threats to global security posed by terrorist groups such as ISIS.

The threat posed to international peace and security by North Korea's unlawful nuclear and ballistic missile programs, was discussed, and the importance of all UN member states maintaining pressure on the DPRK, and the full implementation UN Security Council Resolutions, in this respect, was emphasized.

The two countries noted with satisfaction the Indian Ocean regional conference hosted by Sri Lanka in August-September 2017, and agreed to continue to pursue joint initiatives that enhance security, stability, transparency and economic opportunity in the Indo-Pacific region.

Together, the United States and Sri Lanka emphasized the importance of their bilateral relationship and expressed commitment to expand and strengthen the U.S.-Sri Lanka partnership for mutual benefit.

The United States was one of the first countries to recognize Sri Lanka following independence in 1948. Both countries reaffirmed commitment to work towards increasing engagement and mutual support as the United States and Sri Lanka mark the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2018.

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Press Releases: Deputy Secretary Sullivan To Deliver Remarks at 2017 AAFSW Secretary of State Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad

Notice to the Press
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
November 6, 2017

Five winners will receive the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW) Secretary of State Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad (SOSA) at a ceremony on Tuesday, November 7, 2017 at 11:00 a.m. at the Department of State. Deputy Secretary John J. Sullivan will deliver remarks to congratulate the winners and highlight their exemplary service.

SOSA awards recognize U.S. government employees; family members, including domestic partners; and other members of household at embassies and consulates who performed exceptional volunteer service to their communities, mission or host country, or rendered outstanding assistance in emergencies. This year's award winners include:

AF – Grace Anne Turner, Dakar, Senegal

Upon arriving in Dakar and viewing the severe poverty and inadequate medical care around her, Grace Anne Turner looked for opportunities to work as a clinician. She joined the staff of the House of Hope, a large primary care clinic that sees 35,000 patients per year. Impressed by her dedication and commitment to quality of care, the clinic asked her to oversee a staff of physicians, nurses, and auxiliary staff that provided care to 50 children a day.

Grace Anne focused on two areas for immediate improvement: patient intake and treatment of dehydration. Dr. Grace formed a cadre of expat volunteers and designed a screening and training program for them to administer; with the help of these volunteers, the previous slow patient processing sped up dramatically. Regarding dehydration, a common and serious ailment among Senegalese children, Grace Anne devised an ingenious way to train mothers to rehydrate their ill children at home.

She also trained House of Hope staff to use a version of the World Health

Organization triage system, designed to prioritize those at greatest risk of death or disease transmission. In its first operating 18 days, the new system identified 45 critically ill patients (26 of them children). The new procedures were instrumental in identifying and stopping a potentially dangerous outbreak of measles throughout urban Dakar. Noticing several patients who met the definition of suspected measles, Grace Anne immediately contacted the health ministry. An intervention team (including Grace Anne) found a large number of cases in a marginalized (and unvaccinated) community. That same team conducted an intensive education and vaccination campaign that stopped the outbreak in its tracks.

"Dr. Grace" raised the profile of the clinic in the local community and internationally, drawing in thousands of dollars in donations, medicines, and materials. During her time at House of Hope, Dr. Grace improved its training programs, its material and human resources, its treatment algorithms, and its strategic planning for the future.

EAP – Craig Houston, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Working entirely without compensation, staff, or a budget, Craig Houston created a multi-faceted website (<http://www.chiangmaiair.org/>) to promote air quality awareness during northern Thailand's annual agricultural burning seasons, provide sustainable solutions to the problem, and support information sharing. He partnered with local government air quality experts, NGOs, schools and film directors to tackle this issue.

To increase awareness and reporting of seasonal high pollution levels, Craig met with local schools and small businesses to provide training on the use of air quality monitors, and by the end of 2017, he will have assisted eight schools and local businesses to obtain and install air quality monitors.

In addition to his work on air quality awareness, Craig is the Chair of the Consulate's Green Team. Under Craig's leadership, the consulate has screened films raising awareness of air quality issues, partnered with local U.S. government grant recipient NGOs who work closely on the issue, and participated in numerous community service endeavors including tree planting and city cleanup projects.

Craig's selfless dedication to this vitally important issue has helped improved the health and lives of northern Thailand's residents and visitors.

EUR – Alesia Krupenikava, Kyiv, Ukraine

As the first ever Regional Ambassador of the Technovation Challenge in Ukraine, Alesia was able to recruit more than 150 girls from all over Ukraine to participate in the program, find 50 mentors to coach them, raise over \$20,000 to send a team to the finals in San Francisco, sign up partners like Microsoft and the Ministry of Education, and recruit a team to take over and grow the program when she departs post.

This was the first time Technovation, the world's largest tech and entrepreneurship contest for girls ages 10-18, had been conducted in Ukraine.

When the original Regional Ambassador stepped down, Alesia was asked to take her place. Alesia was a tireless recruiter and promoter for Technovation, holding numerous meetings and information sessions and spent countless hours answering calls and emails to explain the program. The most meaningful thing for Alesia was that teams were signing up from all over Ukraine and from all backgrounds, including a team made up of girls with HIV, and others from orphanages and centers for families in crisis. Supporting the teams became an almost full time job by itself, and Alesia was a constant motivator and cheerleader for the girls.

The culmination of the program is a live event where the teams present their projects in demo sessions and give a “pitch” to a panel of judges and the audience. Alesia recruited the top technical university in Ukraine to host the event and another university for housing. She formed partnerships with organizations such as Microsoft to support the program, and was able to raise over \$20,000 to pay for travel to Kyiv, prizes for the teams, and for one team to attend the World Pitch Event in San Francisco.

SCA – Lisa A. Hess, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Lisa Hess created and leads the U.S. Embassy Colombo community outreach team that provides great benefits to Sri Lanka while also providing the U.S. mission community an opportunity for service.

Many of Lisa’s actions engaged U.S. Navy sailors visiting Sri Lanka. In 2016, the Captain of the USS Blue Ridge, command ship of the 7th Fleet, requested two days of community relations activities involving 30 U.S. and 10 Sri Lankan sailors. Lisa volunteered for this task and identified a community center in a poor area that provides education, food, medical treatment, and much more. Lisa raised the funds to pay for paint and materials needed for the sailors to conduct a renovation project at the center and make a contribution towards new playground equipment. The American and Sri Lankan sailors, community center patrons, and Embassy staff worked together to paint desks, tables, benches, classrooms, and playground equipment.

Lisa also organized outreach for U.S. and Sri Lankan sailors from the USS Hopper and USS Comstock to, including an activity at dental clinics in which children practiced their tooth-brushing skills on a sailor wearing a giant alligator costume, as well as cleaning debris from children’s playing fields. Other community outreach included repairing a local no-kill animal shelter, and cleaning and painting rooms at a local school for the deaf and blind.

Within the Mission, Lisa coordinated bake sales; helped prepare food for and serve our entire embassy community at our Black History Month breakfast; helped manage the U.S. booth at the overseas School of Colombo fun fair; and led a book drive for the school library. Funds raised in the bake sales and fun fair were used to establish a library for an under-privileged local school.

WHA – Maritza V. Wilson

As a Nicaraguan who practiced medicine in her native country before becoming

a U.S. citizen, Maritza Wilson has been uniquely equipped to make a significant contribution as a volunteer in Nicaragua.

Maritza focused her efforts through a non-profit organization called Amos Foundation (Fundación Amos), a group that serves a local community (barrio) in Managua via a walk-in clinic, home visits, and health education. Maritza became one of the regular volunteer doctors at the clinic, participating in home visits and home surveys to better understand the needs of the barrio and train members of the community in basic home health care—ensuring the sustainability of her efforts. Maritza's work with Amos Foundation also extended to Nicaragua's rural areas, including a remote village on the opposite side of the country in the impoverished Caribbean Coast. Serving that community for one full week, she instructed villagers in basic community health concepts, such as how to use (and clean) filters to avoid water-borne illness.

Maritza's work also involved the hosting of training teams, known locally as brigades, from the U.S. Maritza's knowledge of both cultures and languages has enabled her to integrate many of these teams seamlessly into the local context, maximizing their effectiveness. Maritza has organized and led training sessions for more than 1,000 high school students at four schools, offering instruction that covered reproductive health and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. She has also worked alongside U.S. neurosurgeons visiting Nicaragua each year to provide training and assistance in neurology treatment at the main public hospital in Managua.

Maritza has also worked to develop economic opportunities for families in her home village of San Juan de Oriente, a community famous for a unique type of pottery. Maritza started a non-profit venture to expand marketing opportunities for local artisans' pieces and to create new ceramics products. Maritza plans to leave the business in the hands of the families she is serving—ensuring her volunteer efforts will have an enduring impact on this community.

For more information about the award, please visit:

<http://www.aafsw.org/services/sosa>

The award ceremony is open for press coverage. Members of the press wishing to attend should contact Public Affairs Officer Brenda Greenberg at 202-647-1679.

Pre-set time for cameras: 10:15 a.m.

Final access time for all press: 10:45 a.m.

Media representatives may attend this award ceremony upon presentation of one of the following: (1) a U.S. government-issued identification card (Department of State, White House, Congress, Department of Defense, or Foreign Press Center), (2) a media-issued photo identification card, or (3) a letter from the requester's employer on letterhead verifying his/her employment status as a journalist, accompanied by an official photo identification (driver's license or passport). Those who do not have a State

Department building pass should allow adequate time for security processing at the 23rd Street entrance.

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Press Releases: Deputy Secretary of State John J. Sullivan at Signing of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact With the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

Notice to the Press
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
November 6, 2017

Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan and Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Acting CEO Jonathan Nash will welcome President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire Alassane Ouattara at the U.S. Department of State for the signing of a new \$525 million MCC compact with the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on Tuesday, November 7, 2017, at 10:00 a.m.

The ceremony will formalize MCC's Côte d'Ivoire Compact, which will spur economic growth and private investment to reduce poverty and support regional stability in West Africa. MCC's investments in Côte d'Ivoire support building workforce capacity by expanding access to secondary education and training, and improving the transportation infrastructure to facilitate trade and open new markets for goods. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire is expected to contribute an additional \$22 million to support the compact.

Compacts are MCC's largest grants, and country partners are chosen through a competitive selection process among the best-governed poor countries.

The ceremony will be open to the press.

*Pre-set time for cameras: 9:15 a.m. from the 23rd Street entrance.
Final access time for writers and still photographers: 9:45 a.m. from the 23rd street entrance.*

Media representatives may attend this briefing upon presentation of one of the following: (1) a U.S. Government-issued identification card (Department of State, White House, Congress, Department of Defense, or Foreign Press Center), (2) a media-issued photo identification card, or (3) a letter from their employer on letterhead verifying their employment as a journalist, accompanied by an official photo identification (driver's license or passport).

For further information about access to the event please contact the Department of State Office of Press Relations at (202) 647-2492. Media with further questions about the signing ceremony may contact Laura Allen at AllenLM@mcc.gov.

NOTE: MCC Acting CEO Jonathan Nash will be available for interviews following the ceremony. Media interested should contact Pam Stevens at StevensPR@mcc.gov.

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[Press Releases: Limited Resumption of Visa Services in Turkey](#)

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
November 6, 2017

As announced by our Embassy in Ankara this morning, the United States has received initial high-level assurances from the Government of Turkey that there are no additional local employees of our Mission in Turkey under investigation. We have also received initial assurances from the Government of Turkey that local staff of our Embassy and consulates will not be detained or arrested for performing their official duties and that Turkish authorities will inform the U.S. government in advance if the Government of Turkey intends to detain or arrest a member of our local staff in the future.

Based on these preliminary assurances, the Department believes the security posture has improved sufficiently to allow for the resumption of limited visa services in Turkey. We continue to have serious concerns about the existing cases against arrested local employees of our Mission in Turkey. We are also concerned about the cases against U.S. citizens who have been arrested under the state of emergency. U.S. officials will continue to engage with their Turkish counterparts to seek a satisfactory resolution of these cases.

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[Press Releases: Under Secretary Shannon's Meeting With Bangladeshi Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque](#)

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
November 5, 2017

As part of the continuing U.S.-Bangladesh Partnership Dialogue, Under Secretary for Political Affairs Thomas Shannon met with Bangladeshi Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque today in Dhaka, where they discussed further strengthening the U.S.-Bangladesh political, economic and energy partnership, counterterrorism cooperation, the nuclear threat from North Korea, and U.S. assistance for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. The United States recognized Bangladesh's central role in maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific.

During the meeting, Under Secretary Shannon thanked the government of Bangladesh for its generosity in responding to the refugees fleeing Burma's Rakhine State, and expressed appreciation for its continued efforts to ensure assistance reaches the affected population. He noted that we call on Bangladeshi and Burmese officials to continue developing a framework for the safe and voluntary return of Rohingya communities to Burma and that we urge rapid and complete implementation of the Annan Commission's recommendations.

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