



# DAY OF RUSSIA



Vladimir V. Putin,  
President of the Russian Federation



Dmitry A. Medvedev,  
Prime-Minister of the Russian Federation

## MESSAGE FROM THE AMBASSADOR OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIONAL DAY OF RUSSIA

Dear Sri Lankan friends!

It is a great honour and pleasure to address people of Sri Lanka on the occasion of the Day of Russia that we celebrate on 12th June, 2016. This day the Russian people at home and around the world rejoice with strong patriotic sentiments and respect for the Motherland, a country with more than a thousand-year-long history, unique legacy and culture, which has united on a vast expanse a multitude of peoples, religions and languages.

On this very day 26 years ago, the Parliament of the Russian Federation adopted the Declaration of the State Sovereignty. Later the 12th June was declared The National Day of the Russian Federation and marked the beginning of a new era in the history of Russia – foundation of a new, independent, democratic state. Nowadays the Day of Russia symbolizes not only the cardinal changes that took place quarter of a century ago, but the entire history of the Russian state which has been continuously evolving for more than 11 centuries and will keep evolving with the help of current and future generations.

At the same time, Russia must find its place in the modern world, which is also undergoing deep transformation. International relations are in the process of transition, they become increasingly complex and unpredictable, accompanied by increased economic and political turbulence at the global and regional levels. But the essence of this transformation is the creation of a polycentric system of international relations. Thus, the objective of Russian foreign policy is to contribute to the creation of sustainable world system based primarily on the equality of all participants and non-interference in internal affairs, while maintaining the supremacy of international law in international relations, declaring full support for United Nations decisions and avoiding their unilateral and arbitrary interpretation.

During last couple of years Russian foreign policy and diplomacy has been consistent and coherent. The recent Russian military operation has succeeded in Syria in stopping the expansion of ISIL and in returning territories under legitimate control of the Syrian government. Russian experts jointly with UNESCO started demining and reconstruction of the Palmyra site and will try to bring back the destroyed world



cultural heritage. The diplomatic efforts has helped to relieve the crisis and the negotiations are still in progress to resolve the situation once and for all. We strongly believe that regional problems and internal conflicts can be efficiently resolved by peaceful, political means and we oppose the vicious practice of imposing unilateral and arbitrary opinions and even more interfering in the internal affairs. In this light, the current crisis in Ukraine represents a serious challenge for the Ukrainian authorities, Russia and its Western partners. Russia holds firmly to the universal and exclusively peaceful way to resolve this crisis with Minsk agreements being the most realistic base for that. The nationwide dialogue is necessary to reach full settlement and as Honorable Sergey Lavrov put it: "Russia is not going to change its position over Ukraine, because we believe it's an honest position."

The turbulent development of modern international relations makes Russia to secure its deserved place in the international arena. This brings new challenges and threats, but also gives an opportunity to a fresh start. Russian foreign policy maintains multiple-vector nature, it is open for cooperation on the principles of equality and respect of mutual interests with all those ready for that. Now it is high time for collective, collaborative

actions in order to find adequate solutions to common challenges. The so-called "network diplomacy" is taking over the bloc approach. Russia put much effort into the formation of flexible target-oriented alliances with Russia's active involvement, such as G20, BRICS etc. and this trend has its rationale.

The fact that the "centre of gravity" of the global growth is rapidly moving towards Asia and the Pacific has already become an axiom. It is justified that Asia-Pacific is one of the key priorities of Russia's foreign policy. Russia is not only the European but also an Asian country (2/3 of our territory is in Asia), due to its geographical position, history, cultural and religious links with the East. Thus, Russia is natural bridge between the East and the West. Historically, Russia has been inseparably connected with many countries of the Asia-Pacific region. Russian support was one of the determinant factors contributing to the victory of national liberation movements in Asia. Concerning Russia's foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific region Honorable Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, noted that "Russia's first priority is to assume an active participation in regional architecture of security and cooperation".

As mentioned above, Russia is a prominent member of regional multilateral and trans-regional associations such as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), East Asian Summits, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Asia Cooperation Dialogue, the Eurasian Economic Union created in 2015. All of these alliances serve as a link between Europe and Asia-Pacific region, to fulfill in particular its economic interests of the member-states and promote economic cooperation with our Asian partners.

On this great occasion of the National Day of Russia let me congratulate all my compatriots who live here in Sri Lanka as well as our Sri Lankan friends. And I am sure we do have many friends here. Let me express my gratitude and appreciation to all organizations and institutions in Sri Lanka for contributing to strengthening of relations between our two countries and nations!

Long live the Russia  
- Sri Lanka friendship!

## Message From MANGALA SAMARAWEEERA Minister of Foreign Affairs

Diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and the former USSR were established on 19th February 1957 and the Sri Lanka Embassy in Moscow was opened on 16th May 1957. Sri Lanka recognized the Russian Federation as the successor state of the former USSR on 28th December 1991.

A number of ministerial and other visits have taken place since the establishment of diplomatic relations. Significant among them were the visits of Prime Minister Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike in 1963 and 1974 to Russia, and Foreign Minister Lavrov and Deputy Foreign Minister A. S. Chernyshev to Sri Lanka in 2010 and in 1995 respectively.

The relations between our two countries have been characterized by friendly cooperation at the bilateral and multilateral level based on mutual respect. Russia has over the years demonstrated its sincere friendship towards Sri Lanka by extending very strong support and solidarity. These sentiments are not only shared by our Government, but also by the people of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka's economic relations with the Russian Federation have expanded



significantly and Russia is a major trading partner. Strengthening our economic relations is a priority. Russia has, over the years, made a significant contribution towards promoting global peace and security and the formation of global economic policy. In particular, Russia's role as a permanent member of the UN Security Council has helped ensure peace and prosperity across the world.

Russia continues to be a popular destination for Sri Lankan students in the field of higher education. The scholarships annually provided by the Russian Federation to Sri Lanka are greatly beneficial to Sri Lankan students, especially those specializing in the fields of medicine. During the past few years, tourist arrivals from Russia to Sri Lanka have also recorded an increasing trend.

On this happy occasion of the National Day, I extend my felicitations to the government and people of the Russian Federation. I wish to take this opportunity to wish the Sri Lanka-Russia Business Council every success.

Mangala Samaraweera, M.P.  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

## His Excellency Russian Ambassador Mr. Alexander A. Karchava comments on bilateral relations between Russia and Sri Lanka.

Could you tell us about relations between Russia and Sri Lanka?

The diplomatic relations between Russia and Sri Lanka were established in 1957 but their history actually goes long before the Independence. We find first mentions of Ceylon in the memoirs of Russian merchant and traveler Afanasiy Nikitin as early as in the late 15th century. Later in the 18th century several princes, scientists and geographers visited the island. First idea of opening the Russian consulate in Sri Lanka appeared in 1858 but first official representative of Russia was appointed only more than 30 years later and the Consulate was opened in Colombo. In 1891 future Russian Emperor Nikolai II visited Ceylon. The tree planted by future Emperor can be observed in Peradeniya botanical gardens.

Our long-lasting ties, fruitful and extensive exchanges in different spheres, despite the long distance between our two countries, take roots in shared multicultural, multinational and multi-religious landscape. Bilateral relations between Russia and Sri Lanka in political sphere can be defined as excellent: Russia from the very beginning expressed understanding of the Sri Lankan Government struggle against terrorism and supported Colombo in all international fora. As did Sri Lanka and we value this support very much.

How have the Russian-Sri Lankan relations developed recently?

I am pleased to say that recently the political contacts between our two countries picked up a good pace. Moreover, it gives me an immense pleasure to highlight that Sri Lankan interest and commitment to the activities of the Shanghai Organization of Cooperation (SCO) as a dialogue partner is highly appreciated. Just last month Deputy Minister of Justice Mr. Sarathi Dushmantha Mithrapala traveled to Moscow to take part in the Legal Forum organized under the auspices of SCO.

The past year was also marked by the visit of delegation from Russian Upper Chamber of Parliament, from Federal Council of Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. The Deputy Speaker of Federal Council Mr. Iliyaz

Umakhanov had quite fruitful visit to Sri Lanka. He met with Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs, conducted substantial talks with Honorable Speaker Mr. Karu Jayasuriya and members of the Sri Lankan-Russian parliamentary group of friendship and had a meeting with the Chairman of Sri Lankan Board of Investment, Mr. Upul Jayasuriya.

Also, in the course of last 3 years we managed to sign several bilateral agreements: on cooperation in nuclear area, on visa-free journeys for holders of diplomatic and service passports and on cooperation in mass communications.

What is the status of commercial ties and how can they develop further?

Even though bilateral relations fall behind the political cooperation, this year became the beginning of a new economic era in commercial relations between Russia and Sri Lanka. In February 2016 the 1st Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation that took place in Moscow. Sri Lankan delegation led by Secretary to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce T.M.B.K. Tennekoon met with Russian Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Head of the Fisheries Agency Mr. Iliya Shestakov. Parties signed the Protocol of the First meeting that we hope will give way for elaboration of Working plan to further strengthen bilateral trade relations.

What prospects do you see for Russian-Sri Lankan relations?

The time-tested nature of the friendly Russia - Sri Lanka links gives me all reasons to say that there is a wide and open road for the continuous development of our bilateral political contacts, highly beneficial cooperation in the trade, economic, educational and cultural spheres. I have not any doubt in the bright perspectives for the sustainable and large scale development of the relations between our two countries. Also, we expect the return visit to Russia of the Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka His Excellency Mr. Karu Jayasuriya and participation of Minister of Finance Honorable Mr. Ravi Karunanayake in Saint-Petersburg Economic Forum later this month.

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## Message by Mr. Isuru Samarasinghe President of the Sri Lanka - Russia Business Council

It is my great pleasure, honour and pride as the President of the Sri Lanka - Russia Business Council to issue this message of felicitation to H.E. the President and the people of the Russian Federation, on the joyous occasion of their National Day.

The economic and trade relations between Russia and Sri Lanka are equally strong and growing in today's global world. Many opportunities have been provided for business ventures in both countries to achieve their business aspirations. The two countries have also been active in furthering cultural exchanges in addition to the economic and political cooperation achieved. The wide engagement of the two countries in the fields of trade, commerce,

education, culture, tourism, air connectivity, would no doubt help to further widen the horizons of Sri Lanka - Russia interactions. We in Sri Lanka can look back with confidence the work towards forging ahead to exploit and improve the services and opportunities available for the mutual benefit of both countries. I am happy to note that relations between Russia and Sri Lanka give an excellent example of sincere friendship and mutual understanding that can exist between two countries and nations. The Sri Lanka Russia Business Council



was inaugurated in 2001 in fostering and strengthening relations between the two countries in different spheres. The Council now has a membership of 75 companies from a wide range of businesses.

The Sri Lanka - Russia Business Council works closely with both the Embassy of Russia in Sri Lanka and the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Russia. I wish to express my sincere thanks to both the Ambassadors, His Excellency Alexander Karchava and His Excellency Dr. Saman Weerasinghe for their cordial cooperation and assistance rendered

to the activities of the Council. I take this opportunity to send warmest greetings and congratulations to H.E. Alexander Karchava and the staff for the opening of the new office complex of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Baudhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 7, and wish them all the best and continued success at the new location. On behalf of the Sri Lanka Russia Business Council I would like to convey our sincere greetings to the Government and the People of Russia on the happy occasion of the Russian National Day and wish success in their endeavours.

May the friendship between Russia and Sri Lanka continue to grow from strength to strength in the future and last forever.

