

60th ANNIVERSARY OF THE COLOMBO PLAN

Welcome Speech

By

Dato' Patricia Yoon-Moi Chia

**Secretary-General,
The Colombo Plan Secretariat**

1 July 2011

9.15 am

at

the Hilton Colombo Hotel, Colombo

Hon. Professor G.L. Peiris

Minister of External Affairs of Sri Lanka,

HE Kathy Klugman

President of the Colombo Plan Council,

Mr. R.D.P.Gamini, Deputy Post Master General (Operations),

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies & Gentlemen

Ayubowan,

“May you have a Good Life”.

1. On behalf of the Colombo Plan Secretariat, let me first thank our Chief Guest, Hon. Professor G.L. Peiris, Minister of External Affairs of Sri Lanka for honouring us with your presence in this event as Chief Guest. Thank you Hon Minister for taking the time out of your schedule to inaugurate the Colombo Plan 60th Anniversary ceremony. Your presence Sir, is a clear indication of the continuing unequivocal support and commitment of the Sri Lankan Government which has been the host country for the Colombo Plan for the last 60 years.

2. I would also wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence of several of our special guests, and extend a special welcome to Honourable Senior Minister Dr. Sarath Amunugama, the Chairman of *Tenaga Nasional* which

is the biggest power company in Malaysia and South East Asia, two of the 300,000 Colombo Plan scholars we have, and former Cabinet Minister Tan Sri Leo Moggie, our Colombo Plan scholar, Dr. Kim Hak-su from the Republic of Korea, former Executive Secretary of UNESCAP and first Secretary-general of the Colombo Plan Secretariat, Mr. Koh Tin Fook, head of the Singapore delegation, Ambassador Linggawati Hakim, head of the Indonesian delegation, other Colombo Plan eminent scholars, Professor Rajesh P. Khambayat from the Colombo Plan Staff College from Manila, Mr. Willaim Zehnder from the US State Department, resource persons and all invited guests for attending this historical milestone: the Colombo Plan 60th Anniversary today.

3. The Colombo Plan has come a long way and I am honoured to address this gathering as the 20th head of Mission and the 4th Secretary-general and to highlight our events. A First day cover and stamp will be launched and a road, Marine Drive, has been gazetted to be named the Colombo Plan Road. There will be a tree planting ceremony at the Hardy Technical Institute which was established by the Colombo Plan with Canadian assistance in 1956, with the Honourable Prime Minister of Sri Lanka as Chief Guest on 4 July 2011. Four special publications have been printed: A Legacy of Excellence, a special Commemorative Book of messages from heads of member countries, special feature in the Vietnam Embassy Newsletter and a Journal by the Colombo Plan International Society.
4. Our focus on human capital development has not changed over the 6 decades. It is a means to alleviate poverty and nation-building. Today we have with us, 24 international and local participants for the fourth Training Programme on Entrepreneurship Development using the Blue Ocean Strategy

2011 from 12 Colombo Plan member countries. Several successful Sri Lankan companies will be showcased and a new network established among the 12 participating countries.

5. Among its 26 member countries spanning the Asia-Pacific region, the Colombo Plan has a valuable brand name. Its hallmark activity, the Colombo Plan scholarships, continue to be provided albeit, in the 4 programmes which were put in place after the restructuring and revitalization under the first Secretary-general, Dr Kim Hak-su in 1995. Since then, the Colombo Plan continues its mandate to provide capacity building in Public Administration and Environment, Private Sector Development and Drug Advisory Programme, using South-South cooperation approach, where developing member countries come forward to share their experiences, and triangular cooperation, cooperation between the developed member countries and developing member countries. This year we expect to provide 2,000 places for all these programmes to nominating member countries, compared with about 500 in 2007.

6. Through the years, Sri Lanka has a special relationship with the Colombo Plan. As one of our founding members, former President J.R. Jayawardena was one of the chief architects of the cooperation framework of the Colombo Plan. As host country, Sri Lanka has provided support to the Secretariat to function efficiently as a diplomatic mission. The Colombo Plan has also laid the foundation of many educational and training institutions and socio-economic development in Sri Lanka, like in so many other developing member countries, which are too many to name here.

7. Just to name a few of these development and institutional projects here in Sri Lanka: the 50 diesel locomotives for railway department, Hardy technical College in Ampara which trained the skilled manpower needed by the accelerated Galoya Valley project, Universities of Moratuwa and Peradeniya, Maradana Technical College, Lapsapana Hydro power station, Katunayake Airport, Colombo milk factory now known as Milco, dental nursing School, Colombo harbour, the Tea Research institute and the Gannoruwa Agricultural centre.
8. Sri Lanka is also the fourth highest ranking recipient country of Colombo Plan scholarships, with about 1,300 training opportunities awarded.
9. Why has Colombo Plan survived for so long? It is one of the few international organizations which covers several subregions in scope, from the East to SEA, SAARC, West Asia and the Pacific countries. The Colombo Plan has been an important component of the foreign policy of the donor countries of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Japan, United States and all the recipient developing countries including Sri Lanka in the early decades of the 50s, 60s,70s and 80s. That it has a stabilizing role in its impact on the region is indisputable.
10. The Colombo Plan unique feature is its concept of self-help and mutual help where member countries are partners in development. As the Colombo Plan ventures into the future, it needs to continue to serve the interests of all member countries even as it also faces the challenge of being resilient in the face of an increasingly difficult voluntary funding environment. Colombo Plan has to further increase the recognition of its brand in the region, particularly in its host country, Sri Lanka. Under my administration, several activities have been

planned and held in Colombo, including community outreach programmes. We appreciate the continuous support of Australia, the Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore and the United States of America in their support of the Colombo Plan through voluntary funding and co-hosting of events as well as provision of resource persons for our activities.

11. I also would like to take this opportunity to invite all of you to join the Special Lecture on 'International Economic Cooperation in Asia-Pacific Region: Progress, Challenges and Perspectives' by Hon. Senior Minister of International Monetary Cooperation, Dr. Sarath Amunugama, just after this Opening Ceremony. I would also like to invite all of you to the International Seminar on 'South-South Cooperation: Strategic Directions for Continuing Relevance' by panelists from international organizations and member governments. Join us for some fun in our Colombo Plan International Bazaar tomorrow, 2 July 2011 at the Colombo Plan office premise.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. Before I conclude, I wish to express appreciation for the support and assistance received from the Office of the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Ministry of External Affairs of Sri Lanka and External Resources Department of the Ministry of Finance and Planning of Sri Lanka. I would also like to thank the media representatives for covering this event. My sincere appreciation again to Hon. Prof. G.L. Peiris, Minister of External Affairs, Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and all our special guests who are with us today. Also special thanks to all Representatives of Diplomatic Missions, senior officials, CEOs, officials of

chambers of commerce and private companies for your presence and to all who have contributed to make this event a success.

Thank you.