

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, Dr Sarath Amunugama, stated that there have been no incidents of violence or disruption in the country following the recent developments and hence there was no justification for the Travel Advisories issued by a few countries. He has further noted that the peaceful environment continues to prevail in the country and tourists are enjoying uninterrupted access to tourist sites and facilities throughout the Island.

Media Release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in regard to this is given below;

### Media Release

#### **Foreign Minister Amunugama says "no justification for the changing Travel Advisories"**

Foreign Minister Dr. Sarath Amunugama, said that there was no justification for the Travel Advisories issued by a few countries, since there have been no incidents of violence or disruption in the country following the recent events. The Tourism sector has not been subject to any inconvenience.

The Minister made these observations when he met with the leading inbound tour operators, Senior Officials of Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB), representatives of the Sri Lankan Airlines and other leading foreign carriers to discuss the Travel Advisories issued recently. He said that the Government was fully committed to safeguarding and improving of the tourism industry.

Industry leaders briefed the Minister that in addition to regular flights, TUI, one of the world's leading tour operators, is now scheduled to operate 03 Charter Flights to Colombo on a weekly basis while the TUI Cruise Liner is also scheduled to use Sri Lanka as a Port of Call in the high season. The industry leaders also informed that Aeroflot has announced nonstop direct flights from Moscow to Colombo from 28 October 2018 and SWISS will resume its direct flights Zurich – Colombo from 04 November 2018. Meanwhile Lonely Planet, one of the leading international travel guide publishers, has recently named Sri Lanka as the world's top destination. It was noted that presently there are around 4000 cricket fans from the UK in Sri Lanka to follow the English cricket team's current tour.

This was testimony to the peaceful environment prevailing in the country and tourists are enjoying uninterrupted access to tourist sites and facilities throughout the Island.

The Minister also informed that since the assumption of his present portfolio he has instructed all Heads of Sri Lanka Missions overseas to personally make representation to the authorities concerned in their countries of accreditation in order to remove the Travel Advisories, to be in keeping with the ground realities in Sri Lanka. They will also maintain regular interaction with the leading Travel Agents/ Outbound Tour Operators in their respective capitals to brief them on the peaceful situation prevailing in the island with a view to promoting arrivals. The Minister said that he planned to make Tourism Promotion a main aspect of the Foreign Ministry's work programme.

Foreign Secretary Ravinatha Aryasinha and Senior Officials of the Ministry were present at the meeting.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Colombo

02 November 2018