

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bhutan, Lyonpo Ugyen Tshering, who is on a two day visit to Sri Lanka from 18-19 February 2010, met with Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama at the Foreign Ministry on 18th February 2010. In keeping with SAARC tradition, the Foreign Minister of Bhutan is scheduled to call on President Mahinda Rajapaksa who currently holds the Chair of SAARC, on 19 February, to hand over an invitation from the Prime Minister of Bhutan, Jigme Yoser Thinley, for the 16th SAARC Summit which will be held in Thimphu from 28-29 April 2010.

Welcoming the Foreign Minister of Bhutan to Sri Lanka, Minister Bogollagama assured him of Sri Lanka's wholehearted support as Bhutan prepares to assume the Chair of SAARC for the first time since the inception of the Association.

The two ministers discussed a range of issues pertaining to SAARC including the theme of the 16th Summit which is 'Climate Change'.

Discussions also covered progress on the establishment of the Secretariat of the SAARC Development Fund (SDF) in Thimphu. With the establishment of the Secretariat, it is envisaged that the Fund will begin active operation in serving as the umbrella institution for SAARC projects and programmes.

Foreign Minister Tshering conveyed the greetings of the Prime Minister of Bhutan to Minister Bogollagama and congratulated Sri Lanka for the active stewardship of the Association during the last 18 months since assuming the Chair of SAARC in August 2008. Sri Lanka's Foreign Secretary and senior officials were also associated with the meeting.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Colombo
18th February 2010