



Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council (CSLBC)

The Annual General Meeting of Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council was held on Saturday, April 30, 2011, at the Sheraton Hotel in Markham. Consul General for Sri Lanka in Toronto Mr. Karu Paranawithana and Deputy Consul General Mr. H.M.B. Herath graced the occasion. Mr. Kula Sellathurai, outgoing president of the council presided at the meeting and thanked the distinguished guests for attending. He presented the Annual Report for 2010/2011. Consul General Mr. Karu Paranawithana addressed the gathering and assured the members his fullest support towards promoting bilateral trade, investment, tourism and industrial cooperation between Canada and Sri Lanka. "Sri Lanka is geared towards unprecedented growth in the next few years and Canadians should engage in taking advantage of the opportunities in the country", said the Consul General.

Upali Obeyesekere - Business Consultant, Emerging Markets was elected uncontested as President, Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council for 2011/2012. He is a Founding Director/Charter member of Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council since 1990. In his acceptance speech, Mr. Obeyesekere said that he will lead by example and sought the cooperation of the board members to fulfill the primary objectives of the council. "A lot can be achieved by committed work towards the development of Sri Lanka", he added. The new president is also the popular editor of TradeWinds e-Magazine and CEO, CeylonHolidays (Canada).

Well known community activist, financier and entrepreneur Ganesan Sugumar was re-elected Vice President and long time importer Mohan Perera of M&M Twins Limited was elected General Secretary. Two new members were elected to the board – Roshan Navaratnam, CEO, United Car & Truck Rental and Rohan Perera, CEO, Global Business Network Inc. Others to be re-elected are Nalaka Weerasinghe as Hony. Treasurer; Ranjit Wickramasingha as Membership Director; and directors-at-large Lalith Wickremasinghe and Ranier de Lambert.

The Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council was formed in 1990, by a coterie of Canadian businessmen led by Sir Christopher Ondaatje in collaboration with the Sri Lanka High Commission in Ottawa. The Council is federally incorporated as a Not-For-Profit Corporation and engages in promotional work and provides advocacy to its members who do business with Sri Lanka. In the first ten years of its existence, the council acted as a catalyst that led to the purchase of Forbes & Walker by The Ondaatje Corporation. Scotiabank, a leading Canadian bank set up regional operations in Colombo in 1999 only to wind up operations in two years due to the uncertain security situation that prevailed in the country at the time.

As the first order of business, the newly elected president Upali Obeyesekere has invited its counterpart organization – The Sri Lanka-Canada Business Council to visit Canada in the third quarter of the year on a Trade & Investment Promotion Mission. If this goes through, it will be a shot in the arm to boost import/export numbers and improve commercial relations between Canada and Sri Lanka. Tan Beng Chuan, Group General Manager of Prima Group heads the Sri Lanka council that functions under the auspices of The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2011/2012 WITH CONSUL GENERAL AND DEPUTY CONSUL GENERAL

From L to R: Lalith Wickremasinghe, Ranjit Wickramasingha, Kula Sellathurai, H.M.B. Herath (Dy. Consul General), Ganesan Sugumar (VP-CSLBC), Karu Paranawithana (Consul General), Upali Obeyesekere (President, CSLBC), Rohan Perera, Nalaka Weerasinghe, Ranier de Lambert, Mohan Perera and Roshan Navaratnam.



CSLBC President Upali Obeyesekere flanked by his board makes the acceptance speech

