

G-15's SIGNIFICANCE IN CONTEMPORARY WORLD EMPHASIZED

With Sri Lanka's President, H. E. Mahinda Rajapaksa assuming the Chairmanship of the Group of Fifteen at the 14th Summit held in Tehran on 17 May 2010, the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Prof. G. L. Peiris underlined the importance of the Group in the contemporary world. At a media briefing held at the Sri Lankan Ministry of External Affairs on 18th May 2010, the Minister stressed that the G-15 has a critical role to play in the contemporary world and has the inherent strength to do so, comprising as it does 33% of the world's population, 25% of the world's crude oil producers and 27% of world exports in developing nations. The Membership of the G-15 also includes India, Brazil and Mexico - three of the 10 largest economies in the world.

The Minister further stated that at this critical moment in international affairs, when there are long awaited signs of the beginning of recovery from the recent global economic crisis, developing countries have priorities of their own and their challenge is to organize themselves effectively in order to formulate and implement policies of relevance to their populations in the broader international context. Many G-15 member States have human resources of a high calibre, and produce goods and services of a high quality. They therefore want equitable access for their products in international markets, he added.

Source: Website of the Ministry of External Affairs, Sri Lanka, Colombo, 18 May 2010

IRAN, BRAZIL SIGN EIGHT COOPERATION PACTS

Iran and Brazil signed eight cooperation documents in presence of their Heads of State and Government, on the sidelines of the 14th G-15 Summit held in Tehran in May 2010. Iran's Minister of Industry and Mines, Ali Akbar Mehrabian and Brazil's Energy Minister, Marcio Zimmerman signed an agreement on mines and geology, under which the private sectors of the two states are to cooperate with each other. The two G-15 countries also signed an agreement on industrial cooperation.

In addition, the Iranian Minister of Energy Majid Namjou signed an agreement with the Head of Brazil's National Petroleum Agency, Harold Lima to promote cooperation in the oil sector between the two states. Agreements on finance, standards and technology were also signed between the officials of the two countries.

Source: www.president.ir

MALAYSIA EXPLORES INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN KENYA

A 14-member delegation of businessmen from the Malaysian private sector visited Kenya on a three-day trade and investment mission in May 2010, to explore avenues of joint investment and commercial opportunities. The trade mission, composed of members from the Federation of

Malaysian Manufacturers had an opportunity to network with a cross-section of the local business fraternity, during a Trade and Investment Symposium organized by the Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs in conjunction with the Kenya Association of Manufacturers, in a Nairobi Hotel. Speaking at the event, Mr. Tai Soong Hoong, the leader of the Malaysian delegation, said that the mission was encouraged by the potential of the Kenyan market and expressed confidence that the networks created would translate into fruitful business cooperation.

During the meeting, two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed - an MoU between the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers and the Kenya Association of Manufacturers; and an MoU between the Association of Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia and the Kenya National Chambers of Commerce. The MoUs will strengthen the presence of Malaysian investors in Kenya and open up market opportunities for Kenyan goods in Malaysia.

Source: Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kenya

SRI LANKA, INDIA SET UP JOINT VENTURE FOR GARMENT EXPORTS

Sri Lankan apparel exporter, Brandix, has opened a 1,000-acre 'Apparel Park' in India to serve as a hub for manufacturers and suppliers in the South Asian region. The facility, located near the eastern Indian port city of Vishakhapatnam, when fully occupied, will accommodate up to 20 apparel manufacturing plants, three fabric mills, eight accessories manufacturers and a finishing plant. According to a company statement issued in May 2010, the Apparel Park supports large-scale knitting, garment manufacture, finishing, printing and embellishments with common facilities, including a centralized logistics facility.

The facility links apparel and related ancillary manufacturing firms in the two G-15 countries, and provides economies of scale critical to growth. "It will link global brands, manufacturing operations and service providers in a synergistic convergence that will consolidate the South Asian region's strength as a major apparel hub," the statement said. Brandix supplies some of the world's leading apparel brands, including Gap, Marks & Spencer, Victoria's Secret, NEXT, Lands' End, Abercrombie & Fitch, Old Navy and Tommy Hilfiger.

Source: www.lankabusinessonline.com

CHILE, MALAYSIA SIGN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Two of the most trade-oriented economies of the Group of Fifteen, Chile and Malaysia have signed a free trade agreement in May 2010. Once the agreement comes into force, 99% of Chilean exports will enter the Malaysia tariff-free and 95% of Malaysian imports will enter Chile free of tariffs. Chile has signed trade agreements of varying sorts with 58 countries, representing about 60% of the global population. It currently has free trade agreements with Canada, the U.S., the E.U., China, Mexico, Japan, South Korea, Australia and Peru, among others. The South

American nation is the world's largest copper exporter and one of the leading producers of wood pulp, iodine, lithium, fertilizers, molybdenum, and wine as well as other agricultural goods.

The FTA with Malaysia is the first for a Latin American nation, and also the first trade agreement that the new Chilean government under President Sebastian Pinera has signed. Chile has an export/GDP ratio of 47% while that of Malaysia is even higher at 117%. Trade between Chile and Malaysia grew to \$230 million in 2009, from \$130 million in 2000.

Source: DowJonesindex