

Medicare 2019: HC's Remarks
[BMICH: 1 March 2019]

Minister of Health, Nutrition & Indigenous Medicine of Sri Lanka,
Hon. Dr. Rajitha Senaratne,

State Minister of Health of Sri Lanka Hon. Faizal Cassim

WHO Representative to Sri Lanka Ms. Razia Pendse

Dr. Amal Harsha de Silva, Dy DG, Ministry of Health

Senior Officials of Ministry of Health of Sri Lanka,

Leadership of FICCI present here today

Delegates,

Distinguished guests,

Ayubowan

- I am happy to be here this morning at the Medicare exhibition in Sri Lanka. I was here at the Exhibition last year too, with my friend, Dr. Rajitha Senaratne. I am told, State Minister of Health Hon. Faizal Cassim just returned from Delhi yesterday, after attending the Global Digital Health Partnership Summit organized by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of India. We are glad to facilitate these partnerships.
- As diseases know no boundaries, our cooperation in healthcare needs to go beyond frontiers - the only way to combat the emerging challenges in the health sector is to share knowledge, techniques and best practices. For us, **collaboration is celebration. Partnership is progress.**

- In our part of the world, both in India and in Sri Lanka, healthcare has always been looked at in a holistic way- preventive healthcare has been equally important as curative healthcare. Lord Buddha spoke about '*the golden middle path*', striking a fine balance between self-denial and self-indulgence. We have built on these rich traditions, from a shared heritage of Alternative systems like Ayurveda to the modern linkages in pharma and allied sectors.
- Sri Lanka's health indicators today are comparable to some of the most developed countries in the world. It is commendable that Sri Lanka adopted the Free Health Policy after gaining independence and has been consistent in its progress ever since. India, on the other hand, has carved out a niche for itself in areas such as cardiac and orthopedic procedures, neurosurgeries, cancer treatment and organ transplantation. There are several things that we can learn from each other.
- People from the world over travel to India for high-end diagnostic services and affordable health care. India is also the largest provider of generic drugs globally. Indian also supplies over 50 per cent of global demand for vaccines.
- Last year, we launched Ayushman Bharat, world's largest government funded health care programme. I am confident that all these offer a lot of potential for the industry also in both countries to share, innovate and grow together.
- I am delighted to note that 2018 has been a significant year for India-Sri Lanka cooperation in the health sector. There are several milestones we all can be proud of:
- The successful implementation of the 1990 Emergency Ambulance Service across Sri Lanka has further strengthened emergency preparedness and response system in Sri Lanka. Since its inception nearly 875,000 people have called this service seeking help. We have so far covered 8 Provinces; it will soon be available to - **everyone- everywhere** in Sri Lanka. For us,

nothing is more precious than saving a life. It is the largest Indian grant project in Sri Lanka after the Indian Housing Project.

- Last year, we also gifted equipment worth LKR 100 million to Vavuniya hospital. We are also setting up a new Surgical unit for around LKR 275 million, in Batticaloa Teaching Hospital.
- A vast array of Sri Lankan health care professionals have availed the training opportunities provided by Government of India under our fully funded ITEC Programme.
- India remains committed to creating more such stories of partnership, as per Sri Lanka's own priorities and requirements.
- I am happy to see the enthusiastic participation of Indian companies here today. I compliment FICCI for their efforts and being part of Medicare story. I wish all of you a successful exhibition.
- As Lord Buddha said, *"To keep the body in good health is a duty. Otherwise, we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear."*

Bohoma-sthuuti..

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