

## **JOINT DECLARATION ON ENHANCED COOPERATION BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND SRI LANKA**

### *Introduction*

1. Australia and Sri Lanka have built a strong and enduring relationship since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1947. Underpinning this friendship are strong historical ties, common values and many shared interests – including a commitment to democracy, the rule-of-law, and support for a stable, liberal rules-based international order.
2. Australia and Sri Lanka have achieved much together over the past 70 years. Our longstanding development partnership has helped alleviate poverty and build human capital. Our people-to-people links are extensive across all sectors of society – academia, media, culture, literature, science, sport, medicine, politics, commerce and law. Our close cooperation on security and defence matters has been particularly effective in countering people smuggling and enhancing regional security.
3. Australia recognises Sri Lanka’s strong economic growth and considerable progress toward national reconciliation since the end of the conflict in 2009. Its economic reform agenda, deeper integration with the global economy and progress toward becoming an important Indian Ocean economic hub present new opportunities to expand the economic relationship.
4. In recognition of the closeness of our bilateral relations and to further deepen our partnership, this Joint Declaration on Enhanced Cooperation, signed on the occasion of the State Visit by President H.E. Maithripala Sirisena to Australia, marks the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. This declaration seeks to guide our enhanced bilateral partnership in coming years.

### *Security and defence cooperation*

5. As close neighbours, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) members and trading nations, Australia and Sri Lanka mutually benefit from a peaceful and secure maritime domain. Both countries are committed to closer cooperation and engagement in the Indo-Pacific to help create a more prosperous and secure region.
6. We will continue to work together to shape the future of the region and the broader global environment by supporting, reinforcing and strengthening regional norms and the rules-based order, including through forums, particularly IORA, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. We will enhance our dialogue on strategic policy matters, both bilaterally and through regional forums such as the Galle Dialogue and Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS).
7. Australia and Sri Lanka will maintain our efforts to prevent people smuggling and to ensure a close working relationship between relevant agencies. Both countries commit to enhance police and legal cooperation on other transnational crime, including human

trafficking and modern slavery, money laundering, narcotics smuggling and international terrorism.

8. Australia and Sri Lanka are committed to ongoing defence engagement, particularly on maritime security. Our navy-to-navy links have been a highlight of the bilateral relationship. Both countries commit to explore additional, individual training opportunities and provision of expert assistance. Recognising our mutual interests in the Indian Ocean, both countries will continue to cooperate on search and rescue, and maritime safety through the Indian Ocean Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control.
9. Australia recognises the importance of Sri Lanka's human rights, reconciliation and transitional justice agendas to its long-term peace and prosperity. Australia will continue to stand with Sri Lanka on this journey, including through lending practical support for reconciliation measures.

#### *Economic cooperation*

10. Australia and Sri Lanka are committed to harnessing the significant opportunities of greater trade and economic integration in the Indo-Pacific region. Both countries will also do more to expand bilateral trade and investment, particularly in agribusiness, energy, education, tourism, hospitality and mining.
11. Both countries commit to explore the possibility of improving market access, trade promotion and investment facilitation. Australia will continue to support Sri Lanka by providing technical advice in support of trade facilitation reform and improving its business-enabling environment. This may include establishing a bilateral framework to expand the economic relationship.
12. Both countries recognise new and growing opportunities for greater energy cooperation. Sri Lanka's energy requirements are changing and Australia is a major global energy supplier. Australian private sector investment expertise in energy infrastructure holds potential to drive future economic growth in Sri Lanka.
13. Australia and Sri Lanka recognise the opportunities for closer cooperation in the minerals and mining sector. Australia will help Sri Lanka map its natural resources and establish a sustainable mining sector under an exchange of letters between Geoscience Australia and the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment.
14. Both countries recognise the importance of tourism to our national economies. As a major driver of economic growth, Australia will continue to assist Sri Lanka develop a sustainable tourism industry that generates widespread employment opportunities. Australia will continue to assist Sri Lanka promote investment opportunities in its tourism industry.

#### *Development cooperation*

15. Australia and Sri Lanka recognise our longstanding development partnership has made an important contribution to Sri Lanka's growth and prosperity. Australia remains strongly

committed to assisting the Sri Lankan Government achieve its inclusive development goals, including through developing skills and opportunities for small business, and encouraging greater participation of women in the workforce.

16. Australia and Sri Lanka commit to explore opportunities for greater collaboration in developing Sri Lanka's agriculture sector, in particular dairy and fisheries, including by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR).
17. Australia and Sri Lanka commit to explore opportunities for enhanced collaboration in science, technology and innovation, in particular to address the prevalence of Chronic Kidney Disease of unknown etiology (CKDu) in Sri Lanka through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) and the Presidential Taskforce on CKDu in Sri Lanka.
18. Noting the regular occurrence of natural disasters in both countries, Australia and Sri Lanka commit to continued cooperation in disaster management, including through international development partners.

#### *Education and people-to-people links*

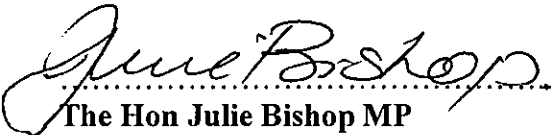
19. Australia and Sri Lanka recognise the positive role of our extensive people-to-people links, which are the bedrock of our warm bilateral relationship. Australia's large Sri Lankan community has made a significant contribution to many different sectors of Australian society and economy.
20. Both countries recognise that overseas Sri Lankans, including those based in Australia, have the potential to make a significant contribution to Sri Lanka's reconciliation process and future development. Australia and Sri Lanka commit to continue to support initiatives to encourage overseas Sri Lankans to contribute to Sri Lanka's economic development.
21. Our strong and growing education ties have boosted the human capital of both countries. Australia and Sri Lanka commit to enhancing cooperation in research and vocational training including through partnerships between our educational institutions, our development partnership and implementation of the New Colombo Plan. Both countries commit to enhance cooperation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to empower younger Sri Lankans.
22. Sporting exchanges further enhance our bilateral relationship. Under the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding on Sports Cooperation, Australia and Sri Lanka commit to promote cooperation between professionals in cricket, basketball, swimming, volleyball, tennis, boxing, rugby, cycling, golf and baseball, as well as in sports integrity measures.

#### *Implementation*

23. Australia and Sri Lanka jointly decide to take forward enhanced bilateral cooperation in these fields through the Sri Lanka-Australia Senior Officials Talks; the Sri Lanka-Australia

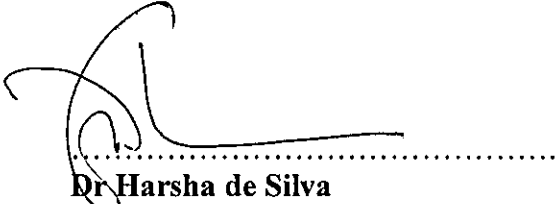
Joint Working Group on People Smuggling and Other Transnational Crime; official visits and exchanges in each direction.

Signed in Canberra on 25 May 2017.



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**The Hon Julie Bishop MP**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
for the Government of Australia



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**Dr Harsha de Silva**  
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Lanka