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NCE appreciates late Dr. Kelegama's invaluable service to Lankan exporters

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The late Dr. Saman Kelegama was a highly regarded intellectual and professional who was closely associated with the National Chamber of Exporters of Sri Lanka (NCE) almost from the inception and rendered yeoman services to the chamber over the years in support of efforts to provide services to Sri Lankan exporters to develop exports.

He was particularly committed and passionate to the efforts of the chamber to recognize and reward the achievements of exporters by being closely associated with the Annual Export Awards conducted by the chamber by making a worthy contribution to develop the event into its current high professional standing as a national event of the exporter community.

He assisted the chamber initially in designing the application forms related to the event by providing his professional inputs and later by assisting to refine the documents. In subsequent years he also served as Chairman of the professional panel of judges to select award winners by contributing with his valuable knowledge and time.

It is sad that he has not been able to be among the living to witness the 25th anniversary of the event to be conducted in September this year, which he would have undoubtedly been proud to witness, since he has never failed to attend the event as a special invitee over the years in spite of his many engagements.

As Executive Director of the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) he never failed to respond to requests made by the chamber from time to time by contributing research papers and insights related to the field of exports, based on the work carried out by the IPS.

Further, he responded without hesitation on many an occasion by participating as a resource person in seminars and workshops conducted by the chamber on export-related subjects, imparting his insights and valuable knowledge on the various topics related to exports.

In this regard, in addition to participation as a panellist at export-related forums, he contributed by making presentations to enhance the knowledge of exporters on subjects related to the export trade. His style of presentation of rather complex topics in a simple and lucid manner as a well-known economist was indeed admirable, which displayed his skills as a born teacher and academic as well.

He was also instrumental in providing valuable articles to the quarterly Sri Lanka Exporter Magazine of the chamber by utilizing the services of the professional staff of the IPS, which service continues to be provided to date.

During the immediate past before his untimely demise, he has been chairing the main discussions at the Strategy Development and International Trade Ministry, in his capacity as an advisor to the government, related the negotiations being carried out on the proposed free trade agreements with India, China and Singapore and also the important discussions related to the formulation of the 'national trade policy'.

In this context, the chamber has been fortunate to benefit from his knowledge and insights related to these subjects and also for his ability to listen patiently and assimilate for consideration the suggestions made by the chamber related to these subjects. The chamber wishes to particularly record the admirable manner in which he was able to field the criticisms directed on the work carried out related to these subjects, with equanimity and tolerance which are undoubtedly high traits of a truly intellectual and a good human being with wisdom.

His departure from our midst at this unexpected time is a great and irreparable loss not only to the exporter community but to the entire country, at a time the efforts of the government and all those who love our country, are focused to accelerate the development of exports for the betterment of the economy and the well-being of Sri Lanka.

May his sojourn in samsara be ever so short and may he attain the supreme bliss of nibbana!

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