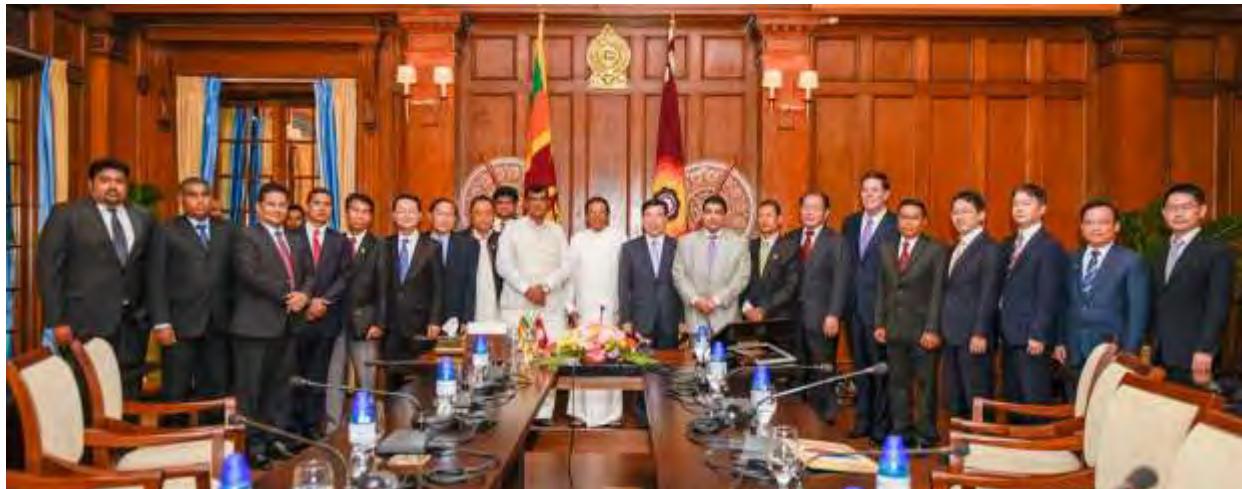


International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace Launched in Sri Lanka

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Colombo, Sri Lanka — The International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) was launched in Sri Lanka on Wednesday, October 5, 2016, at a special ceremony held inside the Sri Lankan parliament building in Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte in Colombo.

The IAPP, a project of the Universal Peace Federation, is an international network of lawmakers who collaborate together to advance peace and human development at the national, regional and global levels based on universal ethical and moral values rooted in the family.

The session was chaired by the Speaker of the Parliament, Hon. Karu Jayasuriya. Sri Lanka was represented by five government ministers, 57 MPs, in addition to the Deputy Speaker, the Secretary General of Parliament, the former Speaker, and 24 government officers.



The international delegation consisted of seven MPs (four current and two former) from four Asia nations: Nepal, Thailand, Malaysia, and India, along with 25 delegates from eight nations representing the co-sponsor, the Universal Peace Federation.

The President of Sri Lanka, H.E. Maithripala Sirisena, gave his government's unreserved backing for the new peace initiative. "I am confident that the launching of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace in our soils would provide us strength and support to the country's endeavor to establish a peaceful, democratic and economically prosperous nation," he said in a written message. Later in the afternoon the international delegates made a personal courtesy call on the President where he again reiterated his government's full support for this project.

At the official ceremony in the morning the Hon. Speaker Karu Jayasuriya thanked the Universal Peace Federation for this new initiative and offered his full support. He said the theme, "Addressing the Critical

Challenges of our Time: The Role of Governments, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations,” was especially relevant since everyone, including non-state actors, needs to work closely together to ensure and maintain peace in the society and nation.



Hon. Danraj Gurung, an MP from Nepal, said that IAPP can help lawmakers gain a wider perspective on issues and develop personal relationships with fellow parliamentarians in order to help solve domestic as well as bilateral problems. “Not only can MPs from one nation learn from other countries, equally important, matters between neighboring states can be handled more effectively when parliamentarians personally know each other,” he said.

