



EMBASSY OF BELGIUM  
New Delhi



CONSULATE OF BELGIUM  
Colombo



Embassy of Sri Lanka  
Belgium

## Belgian Week 2010

Trade & investment delegation from Belgium to Sri Lanka  
Opportunities for business in Sri Lanka  
November 22 – 26, 2010

### Belgian Economic delegation upbeat following visit to Sri Lanka

The Belgian business delegation which included over 50 representatives from 40 companies who visited Sri Lanka for 'Belgian Week 2010' held from November 22-26 to explore economic and investment possibilities, have expressed optimism on the country's business climate and the prospect of their doing business in Sri Lanka. The mission was organized as a collaborative effort by the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Belgium, the Embassy of Belgium in New Delhi and the Consulate of Belgium in Colombo.

The business representatives were from a range of sectors including agro-food, machinery, construction, interior, energy, fisheries, gems, information technology, infrastructure, water supply, financial services, textile, tobacco, tourism investments and various trading companies. Most of the companies were exploring opportunities in Sri Lanka for the first time. Besides high level interactions with the Ministers of External Affairs, Economic Development, Industrial Development and International Trade, International Economic Corporation and senior officials including the Governor of the Central Bank, members of the delegation had B2B meetings with over 150 companies in Sri Lanka at match making events organized by the Sri Lanka Export Development Board, as well as by the Benelux Business Council of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce. The program also provided opportunities for visits to Sri Lanka's blue-chip companies, several companies with Belgian investment, the 'Building a Future Foundation' in the frame of sustainable fishing and touristic exploration and excursions.

In post-visit comments, a cross-section of the delegation made the following observations;

#### Mr. Boris Pintelon/Aelbrecht-Maes Ltd. (Manufacturer of steel constructions)

"The feeling I have was totally relaxed than last year. When I was here in December there were lots of army men with guns and I saw streets unclean. Touring around, I went to the South this afternoon and it is really good and clean. This time I do not see army people so it is like holiday atmosphere and that is perfect".

#### Mr. Paul Callebaut/BESIX Sanotec (Infrastructure)

"Thanks to a set of high level meetings with the Ministers of Economic Development, External Relations, Water Supply and Drainage, and Finance, our companies were able to better understand the current political and economic outlook of the country for the years to come. The current political stability and the economic boom are two positive elements we are taking into account to further strengthen our presence in the country."



Honorary Consul for  
Sri Lanka in Belgium

**BSBC**  
Belgolux Sri Lanka  
Business Council



**Mr. Wim Ceriez/'The Old Lady at the Sea' (Hotelier)**

"It was very important for me to make up my mind concerning Sri Lanka. Due to all information I was able to capture - what the government is planning for the future of Sri Lanka and how they will manage that - I decided to invest much more to expand our boutique hotel".

**Mr. Ronald Reich/Redcorp (IT, content management and solutions)**

"The IT development of Sri Lanka is second to nobody. We came here because of the quality, not because of the price. But the price is also very competitive so no complaints at all and really very very happy about this trip. It was perfectly organized, and it was a dream".

**Mr. Alain Renard/SGG Corporate Services (Corporate financial services)**

"This is the first time I came to this country and it is a pleasure to discover this country which is booming. What is important also in a country is growing the financial sector to be very strong and to provide investors with some security, confidentiality. Confidence is the main point. Because we have the experience in Luxembourg as it has developed a strong financial sector. Mainly in private banking and also in industry. This could be a beginning also for Sri Lanka which could be developed as a central or financial hub for South of Asia. It could be a very interesting point".

**Ms. Carine Derez/Alliance International bvba (Manufacturer of industrial washing machines)**

"I was really happy this time that I could meet so many high ranked official people, which is not obvious if you do not know anybody, that is something you cannot establish yourself. This is why I love this mission and it was really something new to us but something I would recommend to anyone who want to get some feet in a new country. Yes, we have some really good prospects and I hope to be back, may be in three weeks to finalize it".

**Mr. Marc Huberty/Balteau (Manufacturer of water supply & water pumps)**

"I had the opportunity to come to Sri Lanka in 2008 and I was really surprised on the good way Sri Lanka has moved forward. Of course now I feel that the war is over and there is a prosperous climate to do business and I met so many people who love this country. We are working in diverse sectors and have huge opportunities, and a lot of people like to cooperate with our company".

**Mr. Jef Maes/Maes Mattress Ticking nv (Manufacturer of mattress ticking)**

"I have been in Sri Lanka already many times on holiday. ... I have friends and they told me that I should invest in this country for production here and exports for this part of the world, and this is my first business trip to Sri Lanka to see what we could do in this part of the world. .... Our real intention is to come and invest and sell in Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand and to expand our sales in this part of the world from Sri Lanka".

**Mr. Marc van Dael, Manager/Director, Copertiz bvba (Importer of coco products)**

"The business climate is very good to start something here. This is the 4th visit I have here in Sri Lanka, and I am now at a point to invest in an existing factory where the commercial department was not so good so the factory was not 100% producing. I have the market in Europe for coco products and coco husk products. I have immediately the market after investment in the factory and to give some advantage to the people who are working there, they can full time work in there. I also have good contact with people in plantation to start only in the cycle that means that I will take the coconuts from plantations, both the nut and the husk and then I can something with the coco 'nut' more specially to the oil, and bring the oil to a higher level because the oil has a good quality because the 40 years or more there was a competition between palm oil and coconut oil and olive



oil. So I will bring back coconut oil specially from Sri Lanka because my heart is already here, I will bring up that level of coconut oil upto the level it must be.

**Mrs. Akkou Zhumatayeva/Cezhum bvba (Importer of Ceylon tea)**

“I had a lot of contacts with tea exporters. We start up with a new brand T + H : organic green tea + organic functional herbs. This functional be has a nice taste/flavour and is really functional. In our contacts we had some contacts with providers of organic herbs. This can be interesting”.

**Mr. Teunissen Reinier/Aquamaster Europe (Manufacturer of water pumps)**

“I have some interesting contacts and there are some nice things arranged here to share knowledge to support your country. Benelux is a water country and we have a knowledge in there and I think it can be extra value for Sri Lanka in the short term and long term. The biggest development here to be reach in the clean water industry in Sri Lanka. You are wasting quite a lot of clean water that comes from the air, 80 percent goes into the sea and mix it with salt water. There is lot of things to be evaluated. Every house can keep rain water harvesting and we use it inside the house. It saves a lot of water. It saves the community to save money in systems to catch water. If every house does so individually, there would be a lot of progress”.

**Mr. Joris Smets/Vanbreda International (Health insurance)**

“For me it is the first time I have been visiting Sri Lanka, it was very interesting, had many meetings....Unfortunately I have only been visiting in Colombo but I have very positive views about the people who are open to talk about new opportunities. We are working to get some new projects with hospitals and I have a feeling that they are very optimistic about their future and open to discuss new opportunities”.

**Mr. Stefan van de Kelder/Transurb Technirail (Solutions in railway and urban transport)**

"Our goal in investing in Sri Lanka is not just to be greedy.....it is to earn ourselves a good reputation among our shareholders by participating in construction in a developing country”.

**Mr. Emmanuel Blomme/Cortes (Manufacturer of cigars)**

“For me the future view is very positive, honestly. I came here, one and a half years ago. Our company has been here for 23 years. My view ever since I came here has been good and it has been improving every month, every single week and every day. When I tell the people why Sri Lanka is such a fantastiup rec country to invest it is very easy as it has everything, good locations, geographically speaking, very well centered in Asia. You have very good facility with BOI helping and assisting very well. People in general and the authorities and also the societies as a whole do support to invest very well. That is also a very big plus. I would like to say that momentum is there now”.

A Belgian Food Festival with the Chef Filip Van de Venster flown in from the gastronomic restaurant 't Vensterke in Londerzeel, Belgium was also held from 20-28 November 2010 at the Cinnamon Grand, with a grand Belgian gastronomic dinner held on Wednesday 24 November 2010 at which External Affairs Minister Prof. G.L.Peiris and Mrs. Peiris were the Guests of Honor.

Ambassador of Belgium to Sri Lanka Jean Deboutte, Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU Ravinatha Aryasinha, and the Honorary Consul of Belgium for Sri Lanka Pierre Pringiers were associated with the business delegation.



