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4th February 2017

**Message from Hon. Mangala Samaraweera, MP.,
on the Sixty-Ninth Anniversary of the Independence of Sri Lanka**

On the sixty-ninth anniversary of Sri Lanka's Independence, I extend warm greetings to all Sri Lankans and persons of Sri Lankan origin who live and work across the world in different capacities.

Our Nation's journey since the 4th of February 1948 has been mixed with achievements that we can be proud of, as well as challenges fraught with pain and anguish.

Following the decisive step taken under the leadership of President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, to form a National Unity Government, we proceed on the path of formulating national policies required to ensure our nation's progress as a strong democracy, where good governance, the rule of law, individual rights, justice, freedom, and the dignity of all are upheld; the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious nature of our country is cherished and celebrated; where all forms of discrimination are denounced; and we build a strong nation with equitable economic development, that would be at peace with itself and with the world, working together with the international community for the benefit of all.

The path we have chosen for ourselves is a challenging one. The task of nation-building is one that requires dedication and commitment of all Sri Lankans living both in Sri Lanka and overseas.

As we approach the seventieth year of our independence, I urge all of you to seize this historic moment in our nation's history to contribute your strengths, your goodwill, your energy, skills and wisdom, to build an inclusive and prosperous nation that is reconciled and at peace so that we march forward as the brothers and sisters of one family, with respect towards all, to ensure the non-recurrence of conflict and build the Sri Lanka of our dreams as proud citizens.

Mangala Samaraweera, MP
Minister of Foreign Affairs