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இலங்கை மனித உரிமைகள் ஆணைக்குழு  
Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

Press Notice No: HRC/P/i/E/17/12/24

## Press Notice

### International Human Rights Day 2024

International Human Rights Day, observed annually on December 10th, marks the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. This year's theme for International Human Rights Day 2024 was "Advancing Equality and Justice for All," emphasizing the need to address global inequalities affecting millions of people, also highlights the importance of human dignity, equality, and the protection of fundamental rights, such as access to education, healthcare, and free speech.

On December 10, 2024, the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) held a ceremony at the BMICH, under the patronage of Justice L.T.B. Dehideniya, Chairman of the HRCSL, and other commissioners in attendance. Mr. Marc-Andre Franche, the UN Resident Coordinator in Sri Lanka and the guest of honour, addressed the gathering on **UN's role in promoting and protecting human rights in Sri Lanka, progress, and challenges**. Prof. Deepika Udagama, Chair Professor of Law at the University of Peradeniya, attended the ceremony as the Chief Guest and delivered the keynote speech on **"Our Rights, Our Future, Right Now"**.

At the event, the HRCSL launched guidelines, on some significant and relevant areas included for the rights of persons with disabilities and the protection of human rights defenders, a compilation of HRCSL's 2024 recommendations, and research on the Status of Manpower workers in the Free Trade Zones, with actionable recommendations for their welfare.

The regional-level celebrations were organized by HRCSL Regional Offices across Sri Lanka, having engaged local communities over a variety of discussions on the importance of human rights. This emphasizes the significance of human rights at the local levels. The Kandy Regional Office commemorated International Human Rights Day on December 12, 2024, at the Matale Divisional Secretariat Auditorium organized by Mr. V. D. Sumanasekare, the Regional Co-ordinator, Kandy. The event was held under the patronage of the Chairman of HRCSL, Justice L.T.B. Dehideniya, Mr. Nimal G. Punchihewa, Commissioner of the HRCSL and Secretary of HRCSL also attended. The Ampara Regional Office commemorated International Human Rights Day on December 13, 2024, at the Dehiattakanditiya Mahaweli Shalika Hall organized by Mr. P.W. Chandrasiri, the Regional Co-coordinator, Ampara. This event was presided over by Mr. Nimal G. Punchihewa, Commissioner of the HRCSL and Secretary of the HRCSL also attended the event.

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17.12.2024

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