



*The*  
**Ceylon  
Chamber of  
Commerce**

# **SRI LANKA ECONOMIC AND INVESTMENT SUMMIT 2025**

**GATEWAY  
TO GROWTH**

ASIA'S EMERGING  
OPPORTUNITY



2<sup>ND</sup> & 3<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER 2025  
SHANGRI-LA HOTEL - COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

# SRI LANKA ECONOMIC AND INVESTMENT SUMMIT 2025

## STEERING COMMITTEE

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Deputy Vice Chairperson

**Ms. Alikie Perera**  
Deputy Secretary General/COO

**Ms. Lilakshini de Mel**  
Senior Assistant Secretary General

**Mr. Shiran Fernando**  
Chief Economic Policy Advisor

**Ms. Ayesha Rafiq**  
Assistant Secretary General  
– Public Relations and External Communications

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Ms. Udeni Sudeshika

Ms. Humaira Haniffa

Mr. Gishan Weerasinghe

## SESSION MANAGERS

Ms. Arani Rodrigo | Ms. Saumya Amarasiriwardane

Mr. Trent Hemachandra | Ms. Charuni Gunathilaka

Ms. Yashoda Fernando | Ms. Nadeeni Wedande

Ms. Sachini Niwarthana | Mr. Dewmin Arachchi



## The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce

We're here to support businesses and be their collective voice in Sri Lanka. Our diverse membership includes everyone from large corporations to small businesses, and we work closely with government institutions to help businesses thrive.

We harness our extensive networks to provide a wide range of services to help businesses grow. This includes promoting international trade and investment, sharing valuable market insights, offering educational sessions and workshops, advocating for businesses with the government, and providing essential business services like issuing Certificates of Origin, all aimed at boosting the country's economy.

We actively engage with government officials, the President, Prime Minister, and relevant ministers, and collaborate with industry experts, economists, thought leaders, professionals, and policy advocates, and operate specialised committees to help shape national policies.

Additionally, our flagship event the Sri Lanka Economic Summit and Investment Summit is vital in fostering discussions on socio-economic policies and promoting a sustainable and progressive economy.



## **His Excellency Anura Kumara Dissanayake**

President

Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

It is my great honour to extend warm greetings to all participants at the Sri Lanka Economic and Investment Summit 2025, convened by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce under the theme "Gateway to Growth - Asia's Emerging Opportunity".

At this pivotal moment in our economic trajectory, we are poised to build upon our foundation of stability and enter a period of accelerated and sustained growth. This next chapter will be built upon the pillars of sustainable development, strategic partnerships and inclusive prosperity. Sri Lanka's unique geography, resilient human capital and evolving regulatory framework present a compelling proposition for investors, innovators and entrepreneurs.

As underscored by the National Budget 2026, Sri Lanka is garnering increasing international recognition for the disciplined advancement of our economic reforms and the transparency embedded within our anti-corruption initiatives. Our ascent of 15 places in the Global Democracy Index reflects a broader national transformation: a renewal of trust in the rule of law, stronger democratic safeguards and the revitalized functioning of our independent institutions.

This Summit represents more than a mere gathering of minds; it is a call to action. As we transition from stabilisation to accelerated growth, we must collectively focus on:

- Advancing structural reforms to enhance competitiveness and transparency;
- Diversifying our exports and forging stronger linkages with regional markets;
- Promoting quality investment in technology, renewable energy, logistics and value-added manufacturing;
- Fostering the growth of our small and medium enterprises, ensuring that prosperity is both inclusive and anchored in communities across the island.

I call upon the private sector, development partners and global investors to engage actively, bringing capital, expertise and global networks to bear on Sri Lanka's development agenda. The Government remains committed to cultivating a policy and regulatory environment that encourages innovation, safeguards investor rights and streamlines the path from opportunity to tangible outcome.

The deliberations and partnerships forged over these two days will be instrumental in shaping a shared vision for Sri Lanka: a nation achieving sustained growth, meaningful employment, regional connectivity and greater well-being for all its citizens.

I extend my gratitude to the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce for organising this significant event and wish every delegate a productive and inspiring Summit.

May this summit mark a decisive step in Sri Lanka's transformation. Together, let us open the gateway to growth and establish our nation as a leading contender in Asia's emerging opportunities.



## **Mr. Krishan Balendra**

Chairperson  
The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Sri Lanka Economic and Investment Summit 2025, hosted by The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce. This year's summit takes place at a time of renewed optimism - as Sri Lanka moves from stabilisation toward sustained and inclusive growth, driven by private enterprise and new investment.

The past few years have tested our resilience as a nation. Yet, they have also reshaped our outlook - reminding us that progress is possible when there is shared purpose and pragmatic reform. Our focus must now be on investment, competitiveness, and private sector-led expansion - turning the gains of reform into real growth and opportunity.

With its strategic location, skilled talent, and reform-minded outlook, Sri Lanka is emerging as a gateway between regions - and a bridge between ambition and opportunity. Our theme, '*Gateway to Growth – Asia's Emerging Opportunity*', reflects this aspirational forward momentum.

Over the next two days, this Summit will connect policymakers, investors, and business leaders to explore opportunities across key sectors. Through discussions spanning ports and logistics, education, tourism, technology, pharmaceuticals, and value-added exports, we will examine the drivers that can shape Sri Lanka's next phase of development.

As the economist Peter Drucker once said, "*The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence itself, but to act with yesterday's logic.*" Sri Lanka now has the opportunity to move forward with a renewed mindset - one that embraces reform, innovation, and collaboration.

On behalf of The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, I thank you for being part of this dialogue - and for your confidence in Sri Lanka's next chapter of growth.



## **Mr. Vinod Hirdaramani**

Chairperson

Sri Lanka Economic and Investment Summit Steering Committee

It is my privilege to welcome all participants to the Sri Lanka Economic and Investment Summit 2025. This year's Summit marks a new chapter for Sri Lanka - one where the focus shifts from stabilisation to sustained, inclusive growth, led by private enterprise and international investment.

Sri Lanka's reform journey has not been without its challenges, but it has brought us to a more stable footing and renewed optimism about the path ahead. The private sector now has a crucial role to play in driving this next phase of growth - by investing, innovating, and building partnerships that convert opportunity into tangible progress.

The theme '*Gateway to Growth – Asia's Emerging Opportunity*' reflects the country's readiness to re-engage with the world. This year's Summit has been carefully curated to turn that vision into reality. Each session is designed to bridge conversation with action - to connect investors with policymakers, regulators, and business leaders, and to identify specific pathways for investment and collaboration.

Discussions will explore high-growth sectors that can anchor Sri Lanka's economic transformation - from ports, logistics, and value-added services, to tourism, higher education, IT, pharmaceuticals, and diversified exports such as value-added agri products and electronics. The programme also features investor networking sessions, one-on-one meetings, and sector hubs with key government agencies, enabling participants to directly engage with the country's regulatory and investment ecosystem.

On behalf of the Summit Steering Committee, I thank all speakers, partners, and delegates for taking part in this important conversation on Sri Lanka's next phase of growth.





## Sri Lanka Economic and Investment Summit

The Sri Lanka Economic & Investment Summit (SLEIS) 2025 serves as the country's premier platform for dialogue on economic transformation and investment opportunities, convening policymakers, business leaders, and international investors at a critical juncture in Sri Lanka's post-stabilisation journey. Hosted by The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, the 2025 edition is positioned under the theme ***"Gateway to Growth – Asia's Emerging Opportunity"***, reflecting the nation's shift from macroeconomic stabilisation towards a new phase of accelerated, inclusive, and private-sector-led growth.

Over two days, the Summit will explore Sri Lanka's evolving economic narrative from achieving fiscal and monetary stability to driving sustainable investment and export diversification. Key plenary sessions such as "Stability Secured, Growth Unleashed" and "Designing the Next Phase of Sri Lanka's Economic Playbook" will feature high-level insights from government leaders, central bankers, multilateral partners, and private-sector strategists.

Sectoral deep dives will spotlight priority growth areas including ports and logistics, capital markets, tourism, and diversified exports (agriculture, manufacturing, and digital services). Dedicated investment sessions – ***"Why Sri Lanka?"*** and ***"Investor Point of View"*** – will highlight the country's comparative advantages: strategic location, human capital base, ongoing reforms, and access to major regional markets.

The Summit also facilitates business-to-business and investor networking, presenting curated opportunities across public-private partnerships (PPPs), infrastructure, renewable energy, tourism, and manufacturing. Beyond showcasing projects, it aims to catalyse investor confidence and strengthen Sri Lanka's positioning as a competitive and resilient investment destination in South Asia.

As the flagship economic event in the national calendar, SLEIS 2025 underscores the importance of policy continuity, structural reform, and private-sector collaboration in realising Sri Lanka's long-term development aspirations. It reaffirms the Ceylon Chamber's role as a convener

# Sessions & Speakers

Day 1 2 nd December

## Opening Session



### Mr. Krishan Balendra

Chairperson, The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce

Krishan Balendra is the Chairperson-CEO of John Keells Holdings PLC. He is also the Chairperson of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and the Hon. Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Sri Lanka. He is a former Chair of the Employers Federation of Ceylon, Nations Trust Bank and the Colombo Stock Exchange.

Krishan started his career at UBS Warburg, Hong Kong, in investment banking, focusing primarily on equity capital markets. He joined JKH in 2002. Krishan holds a law degree (LLB) from the University of London and an MBA from INSEAD.



### Mr. Kenneth Shen

Chairman, EDOTCO Group, Malaysia

Kenneth Shen is the Chairman of Astro Holdings Sdn Bhd and EDOTCO Group Sdn Bhd. He is a member of the board of directors of publicly-listed Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad, Malaysia's largest content creator. He has served on the boards of directors and advisory boards of various other listed and private companies, including Qatar Holding LLC, Axiata Group Berhad, PT XL Axiata Tbk, Yayasan Amir, Iskandar Malaysia Studios Sdn Bhd, AEA Investors, Capital International Emerging Markets, Morgan Stanley Asia Private Equity, Diogenes Investments and numerous other businesses.

Kenneth has more than 30 years' investment experience (public, private, private investments in public equity (PIPEs), debt, equity, mezzanine and funds) as well as extensive knowledge in corporate finance, mergers & acquisitions, and capital markets.

He served as the Executive Director, Investments at Khazanah Nasional Berhad (Khazanah) and had principal responsibility for Khazanah's investments in the creative, media and telecommunications industries, as well as other sectors and geographies. Prior to joining Khazanah, he was a board member and Advisor to the Chief Executive Officer of Qatar Holding LLC, the principal investment vehicle of the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA). He also had principal responsibility for QIA's strategic and private equity investments. Prior to joining QIA, he was with Salomon Brothers and its successor companies based in New York, and then in Hong Kong, and most recently as the Co- Head of the Asia Pacific Corporate Finance Group at Citigroup Global Markets. Prior to Salomon, he was with Lehman Brothers based in New York in its merchant banking and principal investment businesses.

Ken received his MBA degree from the Harvard Business School, AB degree (magna cum laude) in East Asian Languages and Civilizations (Japanese) from Harvard College and completed studies in Economics at Keio University (Tokyo, Japan).



## Session 1

# Macroeconomic Dashboard: Stability Secured, Growth Unleashed?

### Keynote Speaker



#### **Mr. Gevorg Sargsyan**

Country Manager for Sri Lanka, The World Bank Group

Gevorg Sargsyan is the World Bank Group's (World Bank, IFC, MIGA) Country Manager for Sri Lanka. Effective July 1st, he also assumed the role of World Bank Group Country Manager for the Maldives. Gevorg, an Armenian national, joined the World Bank in 2000 as Operations Officer in the Infrastructure & Energy Services Department based.

Gevorg has since held various positions working across sectors and regions, including as Country Manager and Head of Operations in several countries in Europe, Central Asia and East Asia, Program Manager for Climate Finance, and Global Lead for Clean Energy. During 2008-2011, he managed the World Bank's energy programme in Sri Lanka, India, and Maldives. Before assuming the Country Manager's position for Sri Lanka, he was the World Bank's Country Manager for Ukraine, based in Kyiv. Prior to joining the World Bank, Gevorg worked in senior positions at various private and public sector organisations.

He is the author and co-author of several publications in clean energy and infrastructure finance. He has an M.S. in Applied Math, and a Ph.D. (ABD) in Economics.



### **Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe**

Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka

Dr. P Nandalal Weerasinghe is the 17th Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. He served at the Central Bank of Sri Lanka for nearly 30 years in different capacities including Chief Economist/Director of Economic Research, Assistant Governor, Deputy Governor and Senior Deputy Governor. He also served as an Alternate Executive Director for India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Bhutan, at the International Monetary Fund. He has worked as an Independent Consultant for economic and financial matters for multilateral agencies and global investment firms before assuming duties as the Governor. Dr. Weerasinghe served as Visiting Lecturer at the University of Colombo, Visiting Research Economist at the SEACEN Centre, Malaysia, and Visiting Research Fellow at the Australian National University. He is an Advisory Board Member of the Centre for Applied Macroeconomic Analysis, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University.

At present, he serves as the chairman of several committees, including the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing (AML/CFT) National Coordinating Committee and the Financial System Oversight Committee, and he is a member of the Finance Commission of Sri Lanka. He has published several research papers in international and local journals. He holds a PhD and a Master's Degree in Economics from the Australian National University, and a B.Sc. Degree from the University of Kelaniya. Dr Weerasinghe has been rated 'A' grade Central Bank Governor by Global Finance Magazine in 2024 and 2025 based on inflation control, economic growth goals, currency stability and interest rate management. He received the award of "Sri Lankan of the Year 2024" from LMD (Lanka Monthly Digest) Magazine.

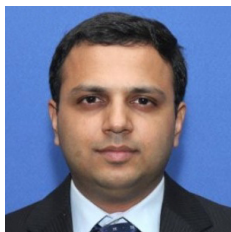


### **Ms. Lilia Aleksanyan**

Senior Economist, Asian Development Bank

Lilia Aleksanyan is a Senior Country Economist at ADB's Sri Lanka Resident Mission. Previously, she was ADB's Central Asia Regional Economist, where she led the formulation of ADB's country partnership strategy in the Kyrgyz Republic. Her current work focuses on macroeconomic outlook analysis, policy advice, and technical assistance in macro-fiscal and financial policies. Before joining ADB, she worked at the French Ministry of Finance and Banque de France.

She also taught at Sciences Po and the University of the Philippines. She holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the Paris School of Economics



### **Mr. Saurav Anand**

Economist, Standard Chartered Bank

Saurav is responsible for macroeconomic coverage of India and South Asia. He has been covering macro-economic research for Bangladesh and Sri Lanka since 2015. He joined Standard Chartered in 2009 in Mumbai as an Equity Research Analyst and later shifted as a macro-economic analyst in 2015. Saurav holds an MBA from the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, and an engineering degree from the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. He also holds FRM certification (GARP – USA) and has cleared CFA Level II.

## **Moderator**



### **Mr. Anushka Wijesinha**

Director/Co-founder, Centre for a Smart Future

Anushka Wijesinha is an economist with experience in government, private sector and think tanks. He is the Co-founder and Director of Centre for a Smart Future, an interdisciplinary public policy think tank. Anushka is currently, and has been, an international consultant for advisory projects across South and South East Asia, East Africa, and the Caribbean, with a focus on economic competitiveness. In consulting roles, he has worked for the World Bank, ADB, UNCTAD, and ITC.

Anushka is a member of the Governing Board and Monetary Policy Board of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka.

In previous roles, he served as Advisor to the Minister of Development Strategies and International Trade; as Chief Economist of The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce; as Research Economist at the Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka, and Visiting Fellow at the Korea Development Institute.

In the private sector, Anushka has served on several corporate boards in the financial services industry including Seylan Bank PLC, Fairfirst Insurance Ltd, and HNB Finance PLC.

He Chairs the Investment Committee of a high net-worth family wealth office.

He has been a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Future Council on Innovation Ecosystems.

Anushka holds a Masters in Economics from University of Leeds, BSc in Economics from University College London, and is an alumnus of the Harvard Kennedy School's 'Leading Economic Growth' executive programme.

## Session 2

# Beyond Stability: Designing the Next Phase of Sri Lanka's Economic Playbook

### Keynote Speaker



#### **Dr. Alex Patelis**

Former Chief Economic Advisor to the Hon. Prime Minister of Greece

Alex Patelis served as Chief Economic Advisor from 2019 to 2024, advising Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis on economic policy to advance Greece's structural reform agenda and acting as liaison to the global investment community to attract foreign capital—a period during which Greece regained investment-grade status, cleaned up its banking system, and reduced its debt load.

With over three decades of experience as an economist, advisor, analyst, and strategist, Alex has worked in a variety of roles across London, New York and Athens.

Alex started his career with the US economics research team at Goldman Sachs & Co. in New York, where he worked under Bill Dudley, Chief US Economist as well as a proprietary FICC trader in the same firm. In London, he joined Citigroup Asset Management as a quantitative economist. At Merrill Lynch, he held a variety of positions, including Global Head of FX & Debt strategy, as well as Managing Director of Global Research, Head of International Economics. In this capacity, Alex managed the research teams responsible for the firm's outlook on all economies outside North America, including developed and emerging countries in EMEA, the Pacific Rim region and Latin America, as well as foreign exchange, local currency and external debt bonds. For their research, Alex and his team won a variety of awards, including from Extel and Institutional Investor. He was also Chief Economist at PSQR, a global discretionary macro hedge fund.

Prior to his public service, Alex was President of Patelis Macro, an independent research boutique he launched in 2010, which focused on global macroeconomic analysis providing strategic insights to select institutional clients around the world.

Alex earned a Ph.D. in Economics in 1997 from Princeton University, USA, where his thesis advisor was Professor Ben Bernanke. Titled "Asset returns and monetary policy", part of his thesis was published in the Journal of Finance. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics and Mathematics from Sussex University, UK.



**Dr. Harsha de Silva**

MP, Chairman of the Committee on Public Finance, Parliament of Sri Lanka



**Mr. Bernhard (Bernie) STEFAN**

Managing Director, Nestlé Lanka PLC

Bernie Stefan is the Managing Director of Nestlé Lanka PLC, responsible for overseeing Nestlé's operations in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. He joined Nestlé Lanka in March 2023, bringing with him over 23 years of experience.

Bernie began his career with Nestlé Waters in France, specializing in Mergers & Acquisitions. He then held various positions of increasing responsibility within Nestlé Waters in the United Kingdom, Germany, and Switzerland. In 2007, he became the Country Business Manager for Nestlé Waters Direct in Germany. Afterward, he moved to Australia in 2008 to serve as the Head of Route Sales and Operations for Nestlé Peters Ice Cream. In 2012 Bernie relocated to Nestlé Greater China, leading Strategy and Business Development.

In 2017, he returned to Switzerland as a Regional Manager for Zone Asia, Oceania, and Africa, supporting Greater China, South Asia Region (India, Sri Lanka & Bangladesh) and Nestlé Pakistan, and leading Marketing, Sales and eCommerce and Ice Cream for the Zone. When Nestlé created Zone Greater China in 2022, Bernie joined the team as Zone Deputy.

He also serves as a Board Member of The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

Bernie was born in September 1973 and is an Austrian citizen. He is fluent in German, English, and French and holds an MBA. He is married and has two children. In his free time, he enjoys wing-foiling, skiing, cycling, and participating in triathlons.



**Ms. Rajitha Jayasuriya**

Chairperson, Sri Lanka Apparel Exporters' Association (SLAEA)

Rajitha Jayasuriya is Chairperson of the Sri Lanka Apparel Exporters' Association (SLAEA), leading the country's largest export sector through a time of rapid global transformation. A champion of inclusive leadership, she is a key stakeholder helping shape the industry's response to shifting global supply chains and emerging technologies. Rajitha is a vocal advocate for regulatory reform and digital readiness, working to position Sri Lanka as a future-focused sourcing destination.

She also serves as Director – Corporate Affairs at MAS Holdings, one of South Asia's largest apparel tech companies, where she oversees its legal, regulatory, corporate communications, and local and global stakeholder engagement. As a member of MAS' Apparel Board, she plays a key role in strengthening the company's global footprint and institutional resilience.

An Attorney-at-Law, Rajitha holds an LLM from Monash University and has completed her executive education at Stanford University, the National University of Singapore, and the Centre for Creative Leadership.

**Moderator**



**Mr. Bingumal Thewarathanthri**

Chief Executive Officer, Standard Chartered Bank Sri Lanka

Bingumal, better known as Bingu, was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Bank, Sri Lanka on 1 January 2019.

Having joined Standard Chartered in July 2004, Bingu counts more than 30 years of experience within the Banking and Finance industry. During his tenure at Standard Chartered, he has held several leadership positions in Sri Lanka and Africa.

Bingu was elected as Vice Chairperson of The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce for 2025/26. He was the former Chairman of Sri Lanka Banks' Association (SLBA) and is currently serving as a Board member. He holds an MBA from the University of Wales, UK. Bingu is an FCMA (Fellow Chartered Management Accountant) and a CGMA (Chartered Global Management Accountant) of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), UK. Further, he was recently recognised as a foundation member of the ICMA (Institute of Certified Management Accountants) Australia.

## Session 3

# Sector Deep Dive I : Ports, Logistics and Value Added Services

### Keynote Speaker



#### **Mr. Tim Miltenburg**

Global Head of Decarbonisation, APM Terminals BV, Netherlands

Tim Miltenburg is Head of the Decarbonisation Centre of Excellence at APM Terminals, steering the company's ambitious mission to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions across all terminal sites by 2040. He leads a team focused on implementing solutions that will transform the asset and energy footprint of the terminal operator over the next two decades. With a decade of experience in helping organisations develop and scale their decarbonisation strategies, Tim has previously worked as a consultant at PwC and in various transport and logistics roles.

He holds a Master's degree in Environment and Resource Management and a postgraduate degree in Business Analytics and Data Science from VU University in Amsterdam.



#### **Admiral Sirimevan Ranasinghe (Rtd) WWV, RWP, VSV, USP**

Chairman, Sri Lanka Ports Authority

Admiral Sirimevan Sarathchandra Ranasinghe (Rtd) is from Anuradhapura and served in the Sri Lanka NAVY from 1982 to the beginning of 2019.

He is a recipient of the Weera Wickrama Vibushanaya and Rana Wikrama Padakkama for gallantry. Also he has been decorated for distinguished service and he has been commended by the Commander of the Navy for outstanding performance of duty and exceptional contributions to naval service.

He was the Commander of the Navy from October 2017 to December 2018. He also held the post of Secretary to Ministry of Ports and Shipping & Southern Development in 2019.

He joined Sri Lanka Ports Authority as the Chairman in October 2024.





### **Mr. Ruwan Waidyaratne**

Managing Director - Hayleys Advantis Group/ Executive Director - Hayleys PLC

Ruwan Waidyaratne is a seasoned leader in the transportation and logistics industry with over four decades of experience. He currently serves as Managing Director of Hayleys Advantis Group and as an Executive Director of Hayleys PLC.

Throughout his career, Mr. Waidyaratne has played a pivotal role in shaping Sri Lanka's logistics and maritime sectors. He is a former Chairman of both the Ceylon Association of Shipping Agents (CASA) and the Sri Lanka Logistics and Freight Forwarders' Association (SLFFA), and is a Chartered Member of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) Sri Lanka.

In addition to his corporate leadership, Mr. Waidyaratne contributes actively to several industry and bilateral business councils. He serves as Vice President of the Sri Lanka–Japan Business Council, is an Executive Committee Member of the Council for Business with Britain, and represents the Transport and Logistics Group on the Council of the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC). He also chairs the EDB Advisory Committee on the Logistics Sector and serves on the Steering Committee on Economic Policy of The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Waidyaratne is the Honorary Consul of the Kingdom of Cambodia in Sri Lanka. He holds an MBA from Edith Cowan University, Australia, and has completed executive development programmes at the National University of Singapore, the Indian School of Business, and INSEAD.



### **Ms. Shehara de Silva**

Group Managing Director of McLaren's Group

Shehara De Silva is the Group Managing Director of McLaren's Group, a dynamic and diversified conglomerate in Sri Lanka with core operations in shipping, marine, and logistics, as well as strategic ventures in petroleum, manufacturing, property, and leisure. With a robust academic foundation—an MSc in Shipping, Trade and Finance from City University, London, and a BSc in Economics from the London School of Economics—Shehara combines global perspective with deep industry insight.

In her leadership role, Shehara is responsible for driving strategy, optimizing operations, overseeing acquisitions, and managing shared services across 45 companies and joint ventures. Her tenure has been marked by consistent revenue growth, the introduction of innovative services, and expansion into high-value sectors including petroleum tankers and real estate development. Shehara is a respected advocate for the shipping industry. She was the first female Chairperson of the Ceylon Association of Shipping Agents (CASA), and she continues to shape the sector through her roles on national and international panels, including the Ceylon Shipping Corporation and the International Chamber of Shipping's Diversity Panel. She also

### Session 3 - Sector Deep Dive I : Ports, Logistics and Value Added Services

founded WISTA Sri Lanka, creating a vital platform to support and empower women in maritime professions.

Her leadership excellence has earned her numerous accolades, including "Personality of the Year" (2018) and "Best Corporate Leader of the Year" (2020). Deeply committed to social responsibility, Shehara is a Brand Ambassador for Room to Read Sri Lanka and actively supports education-focused initiatives, including scholarships for children of prisoners and nationwide literacy programmes.



#### **Mr. Anand Jha**

Vice President - Government Affairs for Visa in India and South Asia

Mr. Anand Jha currently heads Government Affairs for Visa in India and South Asia. He brings a wealth of experience working with the governments in the region. Most recently, he was the Managing Director, Head of India & South Asia Government Relations, for Blackstone, a leading global private equity investment firm. Previously, he held senior executive roles at Heineken and Wal-Mart India. Before joining the private sector, for close to two decades, Anand served in the Indian Civil Services, working across various ministries within the Government of India. He eventually rose to the position of Additional Director General of Investigations, in the Competition Commission of India, Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

Anand is a lawyer by training and holds an LLM in International Trade and Commercial Laws from Durham University. Additionally, he also holds an MBA from the Faculty of Management Studies University of Delhi and professional certification from the Said Business School at Oxford University.

Outside of work, Anand enjoys cooking and tennis.

### **Moderator**



#### **Mr. Romesh David**

Chief Executive Officer - SAGT

CEO of South Asia Gateway Terminals ([www.sagt.com.lk](http://www.sagt.com.lk)), Sri Lanka's first public private partnership project in the ports sector, by a consortium led by the A P Moller/Maersk Group and John Keells Holdings. SAGT is today rated among the best container ports in its class globally, has won multiple international accolades over the past two decades and serves the world's largest container shipping lines calling at the Port of Colombo.

A Chartered Fellow of the century old Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport and a past International VP of the Institute, he also served as a Global Advisor to WiLAT (Women in Logistics & Transport) until 2023 and has now been nominated as the incoming President Elect of the Institute from January 2026. Romesh is the current Chair of The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce Sectoral Committee on Transport & Logistics, the Immediate Past President of the Indo-Lanka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and was a founding member of the IFC's Women-in-Work, High-Level Advocacy Group in Sri Lanka.

## Session 3

# Sector Deep Dive II: Capital Market - Catalyst for Growth

### Keynote Speaker

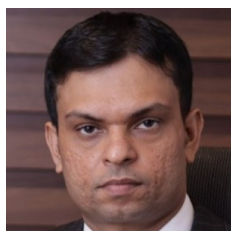


#### **Mr. Ruchir Desai**

Co-Fund Manager - AFC Asia Frontier Fund, Hong Kong

Mr. Ruchir Desai is the Co-Fund manager of the AFC Asia Frontier Fund which was named the Best Emerging Market Equity Fund at the 2025 Asian Investor Asset Management Awards. Ruchir has been with Asia Frontier Capital since July 2013. As part of managing the fund, he covers markets such as Bangladesh, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

He holds an MBA in Finance from CUHK Business School, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, during which time he spent a semester on exchange at The Fuqua School of Business, Duke University. He is also a CFA® charter holder since September 2015.



#### **Mr. Senaka Kakiriwaragodage (CFA)**

Chief Executive Officer - NDB Capital Holdings Limited

Mr. Senaka Kakiriwaragodage is the Director/Chief Executive Officer of NDB Capital Holdings Limited, the investment banking cluster of NDB Bank. He is also a director of several NDB Capital Group companies and investee companies. Mr. Kakiriwaragodage has over 22 years of experience in investment banking, private equity and IT services.

Mr. Kakiriwaragodage holds a B.Sc. First Class Degree in Computer Science and Engineering from the University of Moratuwa and a MBA from the University of Manchester, UK. He is also a fellow member of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, UK, a Chartered Global Management Accountant (CGMA) and a CFA Charter holder. He held board positions in CIMA Sri Lanka and CFA Sri Lanka Society. He is a member of The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce Finance and Capital Markets Sector Committee.



#### **Senior Professor D.B.P.H. Dissabandara**

Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Sri Lanka

A distinguished scholar with broad experience in finance, corporate governance, and capital market regulation, Senior Professor Dissabandara brings a wealth of knowledge and a proven track record of leadership to the SEC.

With a Ph.D. in Finance from Chukyo University, Japan, under the prestigious MONBUSHO scholarship, Senior Professor Dissabandara has established an outstanding academic career, contributing significantly to the fields of finance and corporate governance. He also holds an MSc in Management from the University of Sri Jayawardenepura and a BSc in Management from the same university.

In his previous role as Director General of the SEC, Senior Professor Dissabandara initiated 10 key projects that accelerated the development of the Sri Lankan capital market, showcasing his visionary leadership in driving impactful reforms and policy initiatives. During his tenure as Director of the Financial Services Academy & Capital Market Education & Training Division at the SEC he played a pivotal role in advancing educational initiatives and capacity-building programs aimed at strengthening the knowledge and skills of market participants.

Senior Professor Dissabandara also served as the Deputy Secretary General of Financial Affairs at the National Economic Council of Sri Lanka, contributing to the strategic economic planning of the country. In addition to his regulatory and academic roles, Senior Professor Dissabandara has held various chairmanships and directorships in various organizations, chaired international research conferences, and served as a reviewer for reputable research journals. He is also the current President of the Sri Lanka Finance Association and holds memberships in prestigious professional organizations, including the Japan Society for Applied Management and the Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment (CISI), UK.

Editor of several International Journals, including the Journal of Emerging Financial Markets and Policy and Authored several books in the fields of Finance and Corporate Governance.



### **Mr. Rajeeva Bandaranaike**

Chief Executive Officer - Colombo Stock Exchange

Rajeeva Bandaranaike is presently the Chief Executive Officer of the Colombo Stock Exchange having taken over the CSE in 2013.

He has served in several senior management capacities at the Stock Exchange previously in Trading, Clearing and Settlement, Branch Development, Marketing, Human Resources and in several market development initiatives and counts over 30 years at the Stock Exchange.

He has also served as the Chief Executive Officer of two listed companies and counts over 35 years' experience in financial services.

He is the Chairman of the Data Protection Authority of Sri Lanka and also serves on several financial services industry committees.

He serves as an external member of the board of the Faculty of Management Studies of the University of Sabaragamuwa and also as member of the board of the Sri Lanka Institute of Credit Management.

He currently serves on the Nominations and Governance Committee of the World Federation of Stock Exchanges (WFE).

Mr. Bandaranaike holds a Degree in Law (LLB) from the Open University of Sri Lanka, a Master's in Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Southern Queensland, Australia, a Post Graduate Diploma in Marketing from the Chartered Institute of Marketing (UK) and the Stockbroker Certification from the Securities Institute of Australia.



### **Mr. Dilshan Wirasekara**

Managing Director/CEO - First Capital Holdings PLC

An investment banker by profession with a career spanning over 29 years, comprising diversified expertise in financial services including me banking treasury and investment management, capital market strategy and corporate finance advisory services. An alumnus of INSEAD having completed his Executive Professional Education in INSEAD Business School in Fontainebleau, France. He is also an Alumnus of AOTS, Tokyo, Japan. He specialises in Asset and Liability Risk Management having secured the accolade of leading and representing two Sri Lankan companies in winning the International Bank and Asset and Liability competition **organised** annually by Netherlands Development Finance Company (FMO, German Investment Corporation (DEG) and Proparco- a subsidiary of Agence Française de Développement (AFD).

#### **Other current appointments**

Deputy CEO - JXG (Janashakthi Group)

Director - Agility Healthcare (Pvt) Ltd

#### **Previous Appointments**

Chairman - Colombo Stock Exchange (24th June 2022 to June 2025)

General Manager of Softlogic Capital PLC (May 2012 to November 2013)

Head of Treasury at Nations Trust Bank PLC. (October 2005 - August 2009)



### **Mr. Sharhan Muhseen**

Chairman - Commercial Bank of Ceylon PLC

Mr. Sharhan Muhseen is a senior corporate leader and investment banker with extensive experience in board leadership, corporate strategy, mergers & acquisitions, corporate finance, and capital markets. Sharhan has been instrumental in setting strategy and providing leadership and direction to key corporates in Asia and Sri Lanka. He has held senior roles, collaborating with company boards and leadership teams across Asia to drive their strategic corporate agendas.

He currently services as Chairman of Commercial Bank of Ceylon, Chairman of CBC Finance, Chairman of Platinum Advisors and Deputy Chairman of Amana Takaful Life. He also serves as Director of PCCW Limited Hong Kong, David Peiris Holdings and as senior advisor to Great Eastern Holdings Singapore. Previously, he served on the boards of Gestetner of Ceylon, the Lankan Angel Network and served as a Senior Advisor to TPG and BNP Paribas.

His prior experience includes leading roles at global investment banks Credit Suisse, Bank of America, Merrill Lynch and JP Morgan. His most recent role was as Managing Director, Head of South-East Asia Financial Institutions Group and Head of Asia Insurance at Credit Suisse, based in Singapore. He was also a Director at Merrill Lynch and an Associate Director at Deloitte previously. In his Investment Banking career spanning more than two decades, Mr. Muhseen has completed landmark mergers and capital-raising transactions of more than USD 100 billion.

He is credited with leading research reports on banking sector efficiency, currency depreciation, and budget deficits during his tenure as lead economist and head of banking sector research at Jardine Fleming. Mr Muhseen has also worked at Standard Chartered Bank in the Corporate Banking Division, where he started out as a Management Trainee and at Rodman and Renshaw as a stock and commodities broker based in Chicago.

Mr Muhseen has policy-level experience, having worked as a Team Leader at the National Council for Economic Development, a World Bank funded PPP under the Ministry of Finance, and as a Director at the Task Force to Rebuild the Nation, a Presidential Task Force for rebuilding the economy after the 2004 Tsunami.

He holds an Executive Certificate in Directorship from the Singapore Management University, a master's in economics from the University of Colombo and a Bachelor of Business Administration (Hons) from Western Michigan University. He has also completed the Corporate Finance training programme with JP Morgan in New York.

## Moderator



### Ms. Ruvini Fernando

Head of Strategy, Risk & Transactions - Sri Lanka and Maldives

Ruvini has over 30 years of experience in capital markets, investment and portfolio management and financial advisory services across corporate finance, transaction services and capital projects and infrastructure, serving a wide array of clients in a wide range of industries.

She provides subject matter expertise in Public Private Partnerships and has worked closely with the Government of Sri Lanka and Development Finance Institutions such as the World Bank Group and Asian Development in Macro-policy formulation and sectoral assessments.

Ruvini has also worked with clients on fund raising initiatives, transaction structuring and cross-border activity particularly focusing on foreign markets such India, Maldives, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Singapore.

Educational Background and Qualifications:

- MBA, Postgraduate Institute of Management, University Sri Jayewardenepura
- Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, UK
- Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, UK
- Executive education:
- Harvard Business School, Executive Education Program – Decision Making and Negotiation Strategy- July 2023
- Harvard Kennedy School, Executive Education Program – Public Private Partnership for Infrastructure – August 2021
- National Association of Software Developers, Ecommerce Businesses India – 1999
- Leaders in Dubai 1999
- National University of Singapore – Executive Program on Strategic Management 1997

## Session 4

### Sector Deep Dive III

## Tourism - How can we finally market Sri Lanka as a tourist destination?

### Keynote Speaker



#### **Ms. Natalie Kidd**

Managing Director and Head of Global Operations, Intrepid Travel Asia, Australia

Natalie has worked in the Asian travel sector for nearly 20 years, having first joined Intrepid in 2005 as the founding General Manager in Vietnam. Natalie grew this one office into a global network of 28 inbound tour operators and now leads all aspects of sales, marketing and operations across Asia, including Intrepid's largest office in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Natalie has always had a passion for Asian culture and heritage and holds a Master of Asian Studies, a Bachelor of Arts/Asian Studies as well as a Master of Business Administration.

Outside of Intrepid, Natalie was recently recognised as a leader in Retail & Hospitality at the AFR's 2025 Women in Leadership awards. She has also served on the Board of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.





### **Mr. Sanjiv Hulugalle**

CEO/GM, Cinnamon Life City of Dreams Sri Lanka

A passionate hotelier and visionary leader, Sanjiv Hulugalle brings over two decades of global experience across 12 countries and 5 continents to his role as Chief Executive Officer and General Manager of Cinnamon Life at City of Dreams, South Asia's largest integrated resort and entertainment hub.

Before returning home to Sri Lanka, Sanjiv held senior leadership roles internationally, including as Regional Vice President for Jumeirah Group in the United Arab Emirates, and as President of Hospitality & Real Estate for Kohler Co. in the United States. He also served as Regional Vice President and General Manager of the iconic Mauna Lani Resort in Hawaii, part of the prestigious Auberge Resorts Collection.

Sanjiv's career foundation was built over more than two decades with Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts, leading premier properties across Hawaii, China, the Maldives, and other key global destinations.

Grounded in deep service values, a global perspective, and a spirit of innovation, Sanjiv is committed to nurturing people, shaping destinations, and redefining hospitality with authenticity, creativity, and heart.



### **Mr. Santosh Kumar**

Regional Head - South Asia, Booking.com

In his role as Regional Head, South Asia, Santosh Kumar plays a critical role in driving business growth, strategy and operations across one of the most dynamic regions of the company. Santosh brings over a decade of leadership experience from the travel and hospitality industry.

Santosh joined Booking.com in July, 2022 and was previously Managing Director, Indian subcontinent at HRS Group, a global SaaS-based corporate travel accommodation technology provider. He has also worked at American Express Global Business Travel and has extensive consultancy experience working with Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), Deloitte, and Diamond Management and Technology Consultants in USA and India.

Santosh holds a Masters degree from Carnegie Mellon University and an MBA from the Indian School of Business. In his free time, Santosh likes to travel, watch sports and experience the unadulterated joy of parenthood with his son.



### **Mr. Miguel Cunat**

Founder, Pekoe Trail in Sri Lanka

Miguel Cunat is a travel designer, consultant, trail tourism expert and advocate who has spent over two decades helping Sri Lanka find the balance between growth and care. Guided by the belief that travel, when done right, has the power to restore landscapes, empower communities, and reconnect people to place, he has become one of the leading voices in tourism in Sri Lanka.

Originally from Madrid, Miguel grew up between Spain and Australia, and began his career in digital branding before dedicating himself fully to tourism, not just as an industry, but as a force for transformation. Since moving to Sri Lanka in 2003, he has co-founded and led pioneering ventures such as Sri Lanka In Style and The Fabulous Getaway, helping shape the country's reputation for experiential and luxury travel. He is best known as the founder and driving force behind the Pekoe Trail, a 300-kilometre hiking route through Sri Lanka's Tea Country that integrates community development, conservation, and adventure into a single vision of regenerative travel. The trail has received global acclaim, including being named "Best Experience in the World" by National Geographic (2024) and "Best International Tourism Development Project" by the British Guild of Travel Writers (2023).

Recognised internationally as a Conde Nast Traveler Top Travel Specialist for Sri Lanka and a member of Wendy Perrin's prestigious WOW List, Miguel continues to design deeply insightful, high-impact journeys across Sri Lanka for those seeking to connect with the island in meaningful and transformative ways. He is also a regular panelist and speaker on topics related to destination stewardship, sustainability, and the future of tourism. He advises government, companies and private investors, helping redefine tourism in a way that uplifts people, regenerates nature, and strengthens the future of travel in his adopted homeland.



### **H.E. Carmen Moreno**

Ambassador, Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka & the Maldives

H.E. Carmen Moreno is a senior Spanish diplomat with over 30 years of experience in international relations, development cooperation, and peacebuilding. She has served extensively across Asia - including postings in India, China, Pakistan, and Malaysia - and held the position of Director General for Development Cooperation with Asia at the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Her work has consistently bridged sustainable development with trade and investment promotion, support to economic reforms and regional integration.

Currently, she serves as the European Union Ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives, following previous ambassadorial roles for the EU in Cambodia and for Spain in Thailand. She holds a law degree and postgraduate qualifications in conflict resolution and international relations in Asia.

## Moderator



### **Shibani Thambiayah**

Chairperson of Renuka Hotels PLC

Ms. Shibani Thambiayah is the Executive Chairperson and Joint Managing Director of Renuka Hotels PLC, a leading entity in Sri Lanka's hospitality sector. She has been a member of the board since 2005 and was appointed Chairperson in September 2017. Ms. Thambiayah began her career in the hospitality industry in 1999 with Hotel Renuka and Renuka City Hotel, where she now holds the position of Joint Managing Director. Her diverse experience includes roles in market management with Expedia Inc. in New York and in marketing at Nestlé Lanka Ltd.

Ms. Thambiayah has also held directorships at DFCC Vardhana Bank and DFCC Bank PLC, and currently serves on the boards of Renuka City Hotels PLC, Cargo Boat Development Company PLC, and several other Public Unlisted Companies. Her industry involvement extends beyond her corporate roles; she has been an active participant in the Sri Lankan hospitality and business community, serving as a Committee Member of The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce for six years prior to her appointment to the Board. She is the Vice President (representing Colombo City Hotels) of the Tourist Hotels Association of Sri Lanka and also holds the position of Vice President of the Colombo City Tourist Hotels Association.

Her academic credentials include a Bachelor of Economics (Honours) degree from the University of Nottingham, UK, and a Master of Management in Hospitality from Cornell University, USA.

## Session 4

# Sector Deep Dive IV : The New Age of Diversified Exports

### Keynote Speaker



#### **Prof. Sanjay Kathuria**

Co-founder of the Trade Sentinel, and a Visiting Senior Fellow at the Centre for Social and Economic Progress

Prof. Sanjay Kathuria is a pre-eminent thinker and commentator on economic development and integration in South Asia, contemporary geo-economics issues, economic development, and trade and globalisation. He is co-founder of the Trade Sentinel, a Visiting Senior Fellow at the Centre for Social and Economic Progress, an Adjunct Professor at Ashoka University, and a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies in Singapore. Earlier, he worked for over 27 years at the World Bank, and a decade at ICRIER in New Delhi.

He holds a Doctorate in Economics from Oxford University and a Master's in Economics from the Delhi School of Economics. He is working on a book on The Future of South Asia. Apart from many books and reports published at the World Bank, his writings have featured in Foreign Policy, Project Syndicate, Hindustan Times, Indian Express, The Wire, Daily FT (Sri Lanka), and Business Standard, among others.



#### **Mr. Chathura Abeyratne**

Director/COO, Joint Agri Products Ceylon (JAPC)

Mr. Don Chathura Jayanga Abeyratne is a distinguished Sri Lankan entrepreneur and exporter, with over 15 years of experience in international trade and agribusiness. He currently serves as the Director and Chief Executive Officer of Joint Agri Products Ceylon (Pvt) Ltd, a leading exporter of certified organic products established in 1993. Under his leadership, the company has grown significantly, achieving an annual export turnover of USD 20 million and employing a workforce of over 500 people, while supplying a diverse range of value-added agricultural products to global markets.

Mr. Abeyratne began his career by building a strong foundation in export operations and quality management, which laid the groundwork for his future success. He is also the founder of Ethical Teas (Pvt) Ltd and serves as a Director of Joint Agri Products NZ Limited in New Zealand and Agri Products LLC in Dubai.

Academically, he holds a Master of Business Management in Marketing from the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, and a Bachelor of Business, majoring in Management and Marketing, from Edith Cowan University, Western Australia.

Driven by his strategic vision and industry expertise, Mr. Abeyratne has led Joint Agri Products Ceylon (Pvt) Ltd to be recognised as Sri Lanka's Best Organic Exporter in the Spices and Agri Products sector for the past three consecutive years at the Presidential Export Awards, organised by the Export Development Board (EDB).



### **Dr. Upendra Pieris**

Chief Executive Officer, OREL IT

Upendra Pieris is one of the youngest and most visionary CEOs in Sri Lanka's tech industry, leading OREL IT, one of the nation's largest IT Exporter and a global powerhouse in AI, Cyber Security, Cloud, Managed Services, and Data Centers.

Under his leadership, OREL IT operates in 55+ countries, partners with Fortune 500 companies, and stands as a certified global multi-cloud service provider. As one of Sri Lanka's largest private-sector employers, the company continues to drive innovation, digital transformation, and economic growth across global markets.

OREL IT has been honoured as Most Outstanding Exporter of the Year (NCE), Most Innovative Service Provider of the Year at the Presidential Export Awards, and winner of the Best Management Practices Award in the ICT sector. Upendra also contributes to Sri Lanka's technology ecosystem through his continued involvement with FITIS and the Sri Lanka Association for Artificial Intelligence (SLAAI), and has previously served as a Director at SLASSCOM and a member of the Forbes Technology Council



### **Dr. T. Sayandhan**

Chief Executive Officer, Sunshine Healthcare

Dr T. Sayandhan is a veteran in the healthcare industry with over 34 years of experience. Currently serving as the Chief Executive Officer of Sunshine Medical Devices and Lina Manufacturing and also a Director at Sunshine Healthcare Lanka Ltd. Sayandhan has been driving both businesses to achieve remarkable success. Since joining Sunshine Healthcare in 2017, he has been leading the medical devices business to new heights, making it one of the best-performing businesses in the group.

Moreover, with his recent appointment to Lina Manufacturing he has played a pivotal role in the financial growth of the company, which recently achieved its best financial performance in over a decade and has helped Sunshine Holdings sustain its growth over the last few years despite an economically volatile situation. Before joining Sunshine Healthcare, Sayandhan held various leadership roles at multinational and large-scale healthcare companies such as GlaxoSmithKline & Hemas Pharmaceuticals, where he developed his expertise.

He holds a Doctorate and an MBA from the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing, Fellow of the Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing, and Fellow of the Institute of Management.

In addition Dr Sayandhan is a distinguished Toastmaster DTM and a Yoga Siromani (teacher of Yoga)



### **Mr. Irfan Thassim**

Founder & Managing Director, Oceanpick Pvt Ltd.

Irfan Thassim is a pioneering Sri Lankan entrepreneur and the founder of Oceanpick, South Asia's first offshore barramundi aquaculture farm. With over two decades of executive experience in the textile and apparel industry, Irfan made a bold transition to sustainable aquaculture, driven by a vision to harness Sri Lanka's vast ocean resources for food security, economic development, and environmental stewardship.

Under his leadership, Oceanpick has grown into a globally recognised operation, exporting premium barramundi to markets including Australia, Europe, and the US, while maintaining ASC and BAP sustainability certifications. Irfan's work has positioned Sri Lanka on the global aquaculture map and created meaningful employment in underserved coastal communities.

He is widely regarded as a visionary in sustainable ocean farming and a passionate advocate for building new economic models rooted in renewable marine resources.

## **Moderator**



### **Ms. Subhashini Abeysinghe**

Research Director, Verité Research

Subhashini currently works as a Research Director at Verité Research, a think tank based in Colombo. She is a renowned economist with expertise in trade policy, trade facilitation, global value chains, regional & multilateral trade agreements. Her latest research delves into China's economic engagement in Sri Lanka and the geo-economics competition between India and China in the Indian Ocean region. She has extensive experience working with the private sector to tackle barriers faced when engaging in international trade. She has been a long-standing member of the Export Development Committee and the Economic Policy Committee of The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.

She has worked as a senior economist for The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce for nearly ten years. She was a visiting lecturer at the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Colombo and Sir John Kotelawela Defence University in Sri Lanka. She has a bachelor's and master's degree in economics from the University of Colombo and a master's in international law and economics from the World Trade Institute, University of Bern, Switzerland.

## Session 1

### Investment Pulse:

### Where Sri Lanka Stands and What Comes Next?

#### Keynote Speaker



#### **Mr. Arjuna Herath**

Chairman, Board of Investment of Sri Lanka

Mr. Arjuna Herath, Chairman of the Board of Investment of Sri Lanka, is a corporate leader with over three decades of experience in both the public and private sectors. As a former Senior Partner and Head of Consulting at Ernst & Young (Sri Lanka and Maldives), he has advised leading organisations on capital markets, restructuring, governance, technology, investments, and performance improvement, and was named among the 20 leading business figures in Sri Lanka by Lanka Monthly Digest in 2014.

He was the inaugural Chairman of the Data Protection Authority of Sri Lanka, and has served in many leadership roles in internationally recognised organisations. Previously, he was the founding CEO of Nepal Sri Lanka Merchant Bank Ltd, where he built operations from the inception, and Head of Corporate Finance at Merchant Bank of Sri Lanka & Finance PLC, leading advisory, capital markets, and investment management.

Mr. Herath is a Fellow Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka. With a BSc and an MA in Financial Economics from the University of Colombo, as well as an MBA from the University of Strathclyde.



#### **Mr. Dimuthu Abeyesekera**

Chairman, Colombo Stock Exchange

Mr. Abeyesekera, who has served on the CSE Board for 6 years, is a veteran capital market professional with over 35 years of industry experience. He currently serves as Director/CEO of Asha Securities Ltd, which is affiliated with Phillip Capital Singapore, a global financial services group managing assets exceeding US\$ 35 billion with a presence in major financial markets around the world.

Previous appointments - Chairman of the Colombo Stockbrokers Association (CSBA).





### **Mr. Mangala Wijesinghe**

Chairman/CEO, Sri Lanka Export Development Board

An accomplished leader with over 25 years of senior management experience across diverse sectors. Currently serving as the Chairman and Chief Executive of the Export Development Board of Sri Lanka and the Chief Operating Officer at Brown & Company PLC, with a proven track record of transforming loss-making ventures into profitable enterprises.

His expertise lies in managing complex business operations and driving strategic initiatives to achieve operational excellence. Leadership experience spans sectors including Pharmaceuticals, Chemicals, Consumer Electronics, Integrated Engineering Products, Lubricants, and Telecommunications, with extensive experience managing a global network of international suppliers, ensuring efficiency and profitability.

#### **Career Milestones**

- Chairman/CEO, Sri Lanka Export Development Board (EDB) (October 2024 – Present)
- Leading strategic initiatives to enhance Sri Lanka's export competitiveness in global markets.
- Chief Operating Officer, Brown & Company PLC (October 2021 – Present)
- Transformed multiple loss-making ventures into profitable businesses within short periods.
- Managing a portfolio of over 40 international suppliers, achieving both efficiency and profitability.
- Director BI Holdings.
- Board Member, International Chamber of Commerce Sri Lanka. (ICC Sri Lanka)
- Board Member, National Gem & Jewellery Authority Sri Lanka.



### **Mr. K.A. Vimalenthirajah**

Secretary, Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Food Security

Mr. K. A. Vimalenthirajah is an officer of the Sri Lanka Administrative Service, counting over 31 years of experience in the public service. He is presently working as the Secretary, Ministry of Trade, Commerce, Food Security and Co-operative Development.

He is an Attorney-at-Law.

Mr. Vimalenthirajah holds a Special Degree in Economics from the University of Jaffna, Master of Philosophy in Economics from the University of Peradeniya, Master of Business Administration from the University of Moratuwa and Bachelor of Laws from the Open University of Sri Lanka. He has a Postgraduate Diploma in Development Studies and Public Policy, Postgraduate Diploma in International Relations, Diploma in Human Resource Management and Diploma in Information Technology.

Prior to his appointment as the Secretary, Ministry of Trade, Commerce, Food Security and Co-operative Development, he has held various positions in the public service including the Director General of the Department of Fiscal Policy, Director General of the Department of Trade

## Session 1 - Investment Pulse: Where Sri Lanka Stands and What Comes Next?

and Investment Policy of the General Treasury, Senior Assistant Secretary in charge of Administrative Reforms, the Chief Information Officer of the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs, Minister Counsellor of the Sri Lankan Embassy in Beijing, China.

Mr. Vimalenthirarajah is presently a member of the Board of Directors of People's Bank, Sri Lanka and a Trustee of the Mahapola Education Scholarship Trust Fund. He was Sri Lanka's Director to the SAARC Development Fund, and Member of the Supervisory Board for the Commonwealth Small States Trade Finance Facility (CTFF). He also represented the General Treasury as a Director of the Board of the Bank of Ceylon, People's Bank, Sri Lanka Telecom PLC, the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation, Export Development Board of Sri Lanka, De La Rue Lanka Currency and Security Print Ltd, the Colombo Port City Economic Commission, Board of Investment of Sri Lanka, and the Institute of Human Resource Advancement of the University of Colombo and as Chairman / Director of the Board of Directors of the Sri Lanka Insurance Corporation. Mr.Vimalenthirarajah is also a Visiting Lecturer for the Postgraduate Programme of the Department of Economics and Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo.

## Moderator



### Mr. Supun Weerasinghe

Group Chief Executive / Non-Independent, Executive Director

Mr. Supun Weerasinghe is the Executive Director and Group Chief Executive at Dialog Axiata PLC, a position he holds since 2017. His career in telecommunications began with Dialog in 1999, where he progressed through various key roles, including Head of Strategy, CEO of the Mobile Business, and Group Chief Operating Officer.

In 2013, Mr. Weerasinghe functioned as the Group Chief Strategy Officer at Axiata Group Berhad in Malaysia. He then led Robi Axiata Limited in Bangladesh as the CEO and Managing Director from 2014 to 2016.

Mr. Weerasinghe serves on the Boards of Hemas Holdings PLC, The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and UNGC Network, Sri Lanka.

He is a Fellow Certified Management Accountant, Sri Lanka, Fellow Member of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, UK, and holds a Bachelor of Science in Accountancy and Financial Management from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka. Mr. Weerasinghe holds an MBA from the University of Western Sydney, Australia, and is an alumnus of the Harvard Business School.

## Session 2

# Why Sri Lanka - Investor View

### Keynote Speaker



#### **Mr. Imad Fakhoury**

Regional Director for IFC South Asia

Imad N. Fakhoury is IFC's Regional Director for South Asia. He oversees IFC's strategic investments and advisory interventions in South Asia, leveraging the World Bank Group (WBG) to promote sustainable private-sector led growth and accelerate the region's transition to a greener, more inclusive, and resilient development model. Mr. Fakhoury focuses on innovative products and transformative technologies, encouraging global and regional integration, strengthening capital markets, and increasing competitiveness. His key priorities include enhancing financial and digital inclusion for underserved communities, closing the gender divide, creating and sustaining jobs, empowering small businesses, increasing climate financing, helping countries transition to cleaner sources of energy, bridging infrastructure gaps, and facilitating public-private partnerships (PPPs).

Mr. Fakhoury has a bachelor's degree in biomedical engineering, a master's degree in engineering management from Case Western Reserve University, a master's in public policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and an MBA from Kellogg Business School at Northwestern University.



#### **Mr. Vivek Sood**

Group CEO and Managing Director, Axiata Group Berhad

Vivek has 34 years of extensive experience across Telecommunications, Financial and FMCG industries. He has successfully led multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural teams. Vivek is the Group Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Axiata Group Berhad. Prior to this role, he served as the Group Chief Financial Officer. Axiata Group is a prominent regional telecommunications company with a presence in 9 countries across South and Southeast Asia, serving 175 million customers.

He also serves as Chairman of ADA Data AI Solutions Sdn Bhd (formerly known as Axiata Digital & Analytics Sdn Bhd), Boost Holdings Sdn Bhd and SMART Axiata CO., Ltd. Additionally, he is a Board Member of CelcomDigi Berhad, Robi Axiata PLC and Dialog Axiata PLC as well as a Commissioner on the Board of PT XLSmart Telecom Sejahtera Tbk and the President Commissioner of PT Link Net Tbk.

Vivek joined Axiata after spending over 6 years with Telenor Group, holding several key leadership roles as Executive Vice President and Group Chief Marketing Officer, CEO Telenor India, CEO of Grameenphone Bangladesh, and EVP-Finance of Telenor India. Vivek held key positions as Chief Operating Officer and CFO of Tata AIA Life Insurance India. Prior to that, he served Hutchison Essar South

## Session 2 - Why Sri Lanka - Investor View

Limited as VP of Finance–South Circles, and Tupperware as Director of Finance–India Operations. Vivek began his career at Hindustan level Limited, Unilever subsidiary in India where his last position was Regional Commercial Manager.

Vivek holds a Bachelor of Commerce from University of Delhi and is a qualified Chartered Accountant of India.



### **Ms. Imeshika Kariyawasam**

Marketing Director - Unilever Sri Lanka

Imeshika Kariyawasam is a Marketing Director at Unilever Sri Lanka – one of the largest and oldest FMCGs in the country. She is currently leading some of the most iconic and award winning household brands in the country, including Sunlight, Surf Excel, Knorr and Marmite. Imeshika has had a fast-tracked career with the Unilever network for more than 15 years. She has played a leading role in building both brands and new consumer markets across multiple categories including Beauty, Personal Care, Home Care and Food. She is passionate about serving Sri Lankan consumer needs with leading edge innovations and product experiences, supported by strong multi stakeholder business models.



### **Mr. Thulci Aluwihare**

Deputy Managing Director, CHEC Port City Colombo (Pvt) Ltd.

An experienced business strategist and an investment professional with international experience in corporate wealth creation, specialised in investment strategy, transaction advisory, divestiture, capital raising and restructuring. +25 years of work experience in London, Melbourne and Colombo.

Thulci is the Deputy Managing Director of CHEC Port City Colombo (Pvt) Ltd and was a member of the Colombo International Financial Centre (CIFC) – Steering Committee Task Force and worked closely with the Presidential Secretariat to set up the first foreign currency designated multi services Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Sri Lanka. With the enactment of the Colombo Port City Economic Commission Act, Thulci's primary role now is to promote FDIs and create a destination appeal for international businesses to set up in Port City. The Port City project is a USD 15 billion new township development, an extension of the existing Colombo CBD.

Prior to joining CHEC Port City Colombo (Pvt) Ltd, Thulci was the Director, Head of Mergers & Acquisitions at PwC, Sri Lanka and Maldives. He spent 14 years with PwC including at PwC Melbourne office where he was involved in large cross-border MNC transactions. Thulci was also selected to the Global PwC Panel of Trainers for Mergers & Acquisitions and conducted training for managers in the Advisory University Program held in Copenhagen, Stockholm, Dublin, Rome, Warsaw and Abu Dhabi.

He is currently serving as a Non – Executive Independent Director of Abans Finance PLC and Expack Corrugated Cartons PLC. He also served as a member of the Investment Advisory Panel of Soft Logic Asset Management Company from 2021-2023. Thulci is a member of The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce Investment Promotion Sector Committee and Infrastructure Sector Committee. He is an Economics graduate from the University of West London, UK, and holds an MSc in Financial Economics from the University of Colombo.

## Moderator



### **Mr. Shiran Fernando**

Chief Economic Policy Advisor, The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce

Shiran is the Chief Economic Policy Advisor at the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and previously served as its Chief Economist, heading the Economic Intelligence Unit. Prior to this, he was the Lead Economist and Senior Product Head at Frontier Research.

An experienced speaker, panelist, and moderator at economic and business forums locally and internationally, Shiran also writes LMD's monthly Economic Outlook column. He is a Chevening Scholar, an alumnus of the U.S. International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) and an Australia Awards recipient. Shiran serves as member of the board of World Vision Lanka and University of Vocational Technology and formerly Petroleum Development Authority of Sri Lanka and Biodiversity Sri Lanka.

Shiran holds a BSc in Economics and Finance (University of London), an MSc in Economic Policy (SOAS, University of London), an Executive MBA (PIM, Sri Lanka), and a Postgraduate Diploma in International Relations (BCIS). He is also an ACMA and CGMA-qualified professional.

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