

The Government of Sri Lanka strongly condemns the suicide bomb attack outside the Indian Embassy in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan yesterday (7th July 2008). This terrorist atrocity aimed against two neighboring nations with which Sri Lanka enjoys close and friendly ties, claimed the lives of at least 40 people and seriously injured scores of others. Among the victims in this carnage was the Counsellor of the Indian Embassy, Mr. Venkateswara Rao who had also served some years ago in the Indian High Commission in Colombo. Sri Lanka extends her profound condolences to the governments and peoples of Afghanistan and India, as well as the bereaved families on this tragedy.

Afghanistan, with the restoration of democracy and legitimate governance has made commendable progress in national development and in strengthening ties with the international community. This consolidation of relations with the neighbourhood has facilitated Afghanistan's admission as the newest Member of SAARC, during the last Summit in April 2007 in New Delhi.

The continued progress of Afghanistan towards peace and prosperity remains important for the South Asian region. The Government of Sri Lanka is confident that this terrorist outrage will not deter Afghanistan's forward march.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Colombo

08 July 2008