The next great change in Sri Lanka’s relations with African nations is within sight. The new foreign policy Revitalized Africa seeks to enhance Sri Lanka’s cooperation in the political, economic and cultural spheres across Africa. The “Revitalized Africa” foreign policy aims to optimize the strategic linkages and cooperation through the 54 member-African Union (AU), where Sri Lanka received Observer Status in 2014.

Revitalized Africa Policy’ was prepared by the Sri Lankan Foreign Relations Ministry in consultation with line agencies. On 11 December 2019 further attempts were made to draw attention to the “Revitalized Africa” foreign policy initiative during the inaugural session of the Bilateral Political Consultations between Sri Lanka and Egypt held at the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs in Cairo.

The bilateral Consultation was presided over by Ambassador Mounir Zahran, Chairman of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs on the theme ‘Sri Lanka – Egypt Relations and Strengthening Sri Lanka’s Relations with the African Continent’. Revisiting the importance of close cooperation between Sri Lanka and African states, Sri Lankan Foreign Secretary H.E Ravinatha Aryasinha expressed the hope that by creating greater awareness of Africa and its emerging opportunities within Sri Lanka, and of Sri Lanka within African countries, can work with African friends to build on longstanding links towards more substantive and productive outcomes.

The structural question of binding the two economically important common markets of South Asia and Africa is central for understanding the future prospects of bilateral relations between Sri Lanka and Africa. Such openings would have positive effects in advancing initiatives to build beneficial ties to achieve full potential in economic growth for Sri Lanka and African nations. It is the task of the foreign policy makers of both Sri Lanka and African nations to deal with this special phase in accessing South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and African continent consumer markets by exploring Revitalized Africa “foreign policy “initiative. Sri Lanka’s geostrategic position in the Indian Ocean connecting east and west on the new Maritime Silk Road and its possibility of accessing South Asia’s 1.5 billion consumer market offers the opportunity for the South Asian island nation to be a logistic hub for the African common markets. On the one hand, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Egypt, Algeria, Mauritius and littoral states like Seychelles are some of the main engines of growth among the African states. For both Africa and South Asian littoral countries like Sri Lanka and Seychelles are important for its geopolitical significance. These littoral nations can take giant leaps if “Revitalized Africa” foreign policy can be fast tracked in the coming years. It is noteworthy to mention liberalised markets like Sri Lanka make it easier for large African economies to compete with globally competitive markets. From an economic perspective the ties between African economies and Sri Lanka can be taken to a whole new level if the policy makers can succeed in binding African common markets with SAARC. Given the longstanding bonds, African nations, and Sri Lankan policy makers must reinforce the “Revitalized Africa” foreign policy initiative to new heights of collaboration and co-operation.

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