# Amend the Central Cultural Fund Act specifying how the money should be used - Sectoral Oversight Committee on Religious Affairs and Co-Existence

**Date :** 30-11-2023

- **Watching the sunrise in Sigiriya earns more than three thousand dollars a day - Central Cultural Fund informs the Committee**
- **8 million dollars from KOICA to develop Sigiriya**

The recommendations of the Sectoral Oversight Committee on Religious Affairs and Co-Existence were received to amend the Central Cultural Fund Act by imposing regulations on how the money should be used specifically so that the money available in the Central Cultural Fund cannot be used for illegal activities. This was stated when the said Committee met in Parliament on 27.11.2023 under the Chairmanship of Hon. Upul Mahendra Rajapaksha, Member of Parliament.

The director general of the fund, Prof. Gamini Ranasinghe, commenting stated that the dollar generation of the Central Cultural Fund, which was burdened with debt two years ago, has increased by 614%. He further stated that at present, more than three thousand US dollars are earned by providing the opportunity to foreigners to see the beauty of the sunrise in Sigiriya. The Director General of the Central Cultural Fund stated that the sectors that can further attract tourists around Sigiriya are being identified and KOICA has agreed to provide an aid of US$ 8 million to make these activities more successful.

It was discovered that some three-wheeler drivers who provide transport facilities to tourists informally in tourist areas charge exorbitant prices. Accordingly, the officials emphasized to the Oversight Committee that the installation of meters should be made mandatory for the three-wheelers in those areas.

The officials requested the committee to recruit employees for the vacant positions of the Central Cultural Fund and take measures to make permanent the 286 unconfirmed employees who are currently on duty. Accordingly, the committee agreed to intervene within the existing legal framework. Furthermore, officials of the Public Trustee Department also appeared before the Committee. The Chair inquired from the officials about the measures taken to increase the revenue generation of the department. Accordingly, the officials stated that they are currently working to generate income by using the land and property they have effectively. Furthermore, the officials informed the Committee that the basic measures of digitalization of the department has initiated to make the activities of the department more efficient.

Members of Parliament Hon. (Ven.) Athuraliye Rathana Thero, Hon. M. Rameshwaran, with permission of the committee chair Hon. Isuru Dodangoda and Hon. Kumarasiri Rathnayaka participated. Also, government officials including the Secretary of the Ministry of Religious and Cultural Affairs Mr. Somaratne Vidhanapathirana were present at this Committee meeting held.

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