Make necessary changes to attract candidates with practical skills into the Foreign Service recruitment process - Sectoral Oversight Committee on International Relations propose

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- **The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should look positively at the Sri Lankan Diaspora - The Sectoral Oversight Committee discus.**
- **Proposals from the Committee to reduce the complexity of the procurement process to facilitate infrastructure required for foreign embassies.**

The Sectoral Oversight Committee on International Relations proposed that salary scales should be prepared to attract applicants with practical skills into the recruitment process for the positions of the Sri Lanka Foreign Service and the recruitment system should be reformed.

Officials present at the Committee said that although a significant number of candidates qualified for the interview based on academic qualifications by scoring high marks in the Foreign Service recruitment examination, practical knowledge, skills, and personality required to meet the needs of the country and the service were not reflected throughout the interviews.

This was discussed when the Sectoral Oversight Committee on International Relations met in Parliament recently (Dec. 05) under the Chairmanship of Hon. Namal Rajapaksa, Member of Parliament.

Accordingly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that a significant number of marks are based on the recruitment exam and academic qualifications, so even if the candidates do not have the practical knowledge, skills, and personality to meet the requirements of the service, they will be admitted to the service based on the marks obtained.

Furthermore, it was discussed in the Sectoral Oversight Committee on International Relations that the country used to look at the Sri Lankan Diaspora from a negative stand point and that should be changed.

The sectoral Oversight committee pointed out that other countries look positively at its migrant population, that the foreign affairs ministries of such countries work of such behalf and that its community has now reached the level of holding high positions in the countries they have migrated to. Accordingly, the Chair of the Committee pointed out that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sri Lanka should pay attention on this regard.

Furthermore, it was discussed that the process of providing the necessary infrastructure for foreign embassies is very long and complex, and to reduce the situation, the Committee suggested making timely changes to the procurement process.

Chair of the Sectoral Oversight Committee on International Relations, Member of Parliament Hon. Namal Rajapaksa inquired the officials about the internship program and also instructed them to

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report to the committee about the responsibilities, role, and the program carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the groups undergoing internship training.

Members of the committee, Hon. Niroshan Perera and Hon. Madhura Withanage, also participated in this meeting.

A group of Youth representatives assigned to Committee also participated in this meeting and with the permission of the chair, they presented their ideas before the Committee.