Sectoral Oversight Committee on International Relations looks into matters relating to the National Oceanic Affairs Committee Secretariat

Date : 16-01-2024

The Sectoral Oversight Committee on International Relations, which met on 09.01.2024, drew its attention to the affairs related to the National Oceanic Affairs Committee Secretariate, an agency affiliated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Committee to which Member of Parliament Hon. Namal Rajapaksa is the Chair, met on the said day under the Chairmanship of Member of Parliament Hon. Akila Ellawala. The role of the National Oceanic Affairs Committee Secretariat, challenges faced and future plans were discussed here.

The current Chairman of the secretariat, Dr. N.P. Vijayananda, addressing the meeting, stated that there is a possibility of using a sea area of 250 nautical miles beyond the exclusive economic zone, which is 200 nautical miles from the land of the country, for economic activities in the country.

According to the United Nations Charter on the Law of the Sea, the agreement of the regional countries is necessary, so the Chairman pointed out that negotiations with other regional countries, including India, are ongoing. It was also discussed that this ocean region is very important for Sri Lanka due to fuel exploration and biodiversity.

Accordingly, the Committee Chair pointed out the need to speed up these activities in coordination with the Ministry of Defense and said that he expects to make a request to the minister in charge of the subject.

Committee members and Members of Parliament Hon. Madhura Withanage, Hon. S.M.M. Muszhaaraff officials representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were present at the Committee meeting held.