



The  
Ceylon  
Chamber of  
Commerce

# ACTIVITY BOOKLET 2024

# BOARD MEMBERS



**Duminda  
Hulangamuwa**  
Chairman



**Krishan  
Balendra**  
Vice Chairman



**Bingumal  
Thewarathanthri**  
Deputy Vice Chairman

**Buwanekabahu Perera**  
Secretary General/CEO

**Alikie Perera**  
Deputy Secretary General/COO  
Financial Controller

## Board Members

**Amal Cabraal**

**Kasturi Chellaraja Wilson**

**Sarath Ganegoda**

**Supun Weerasinghe**

**Vinod Hirdaramani**

# THREE PILLARS

## POLICY ADVOCACY

The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce actively contributes to shaping national policies, offering expert insights and recommendations to ensure a stable and growth-oriented business environment. It advocates for sustainable economic strategies and plays a key role in advising on business related policy interventions.

## MARKET ACCESS

Through a multitude of activities, including organising inbound and outbound trade delegations, trade related seminars and webinars, B2B meetings, networking events, and the Ceylon Chamber's 22 bilateral business councils, we connect Sri Lankan businesses to global markets. This pillar enhances Sri Lanka's international competitiveness in key industry sectors.

## ENGAGEMENT

Curated programmes, networking events, and outreach initiatives, foster collaboration across businesses, industries, and society. This collaboration promotes innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainability, providing platforms for networking and knowledge sharing to drive sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

# FLAGSHIP EVENTS

## SRI LANKA ECONOMIC SUMMIT

The Sri Lanka Economic Summit conducted under the theme **‘Shaping Sri Lanka’s Future: Transformational Growth Rooted in Sound Economic Policies’** was conducted on January 28th and 29th at the Shangri La Hotel Colombo. The Summit was inaugurated by President Anura Kumara Dissanayake who participated in a Fireside Chat with the Ceylon Chamber’s Deputy Vice Chairman Bingumal Thewarathanthri on the Government’s vision for sustainable economic transformation. This year attracted the highest number of participation in the Summit’s 24-year history.



# FLAGSHIP EVENTS

## DEFINING THE VISION - THE DEBATE

The Ceylon Chamber hosted 'Defining the Vision - THE Debate' on 29th August at the BMICH, where the leading economic experts of the four main Presidential candidates (Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Hon. Sajith Premadasa, Hon. Namal Rajapaksa, and Hon. Anura Kumara Dissanayake) presented and defended their parties' economic policies



## IORA BUSINESS CONCLAVE

Hosted by the Ceylon Chamber as the Chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Association Business Forum, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition to plenary sessions and panel discussions, delegates networked and engaged in over 245 B2B meetings with industry representatives



# FLAGSHIP EVENTS

## SRI LANKA CLIMATE SUMMIT

Hosted under the theme 'Code Red - Climate Risks and Opportunities for Sri Lankan Businesses', this inaugural Summit hosted by the Ceylon Chamber brought together 67 national and international speakers and over 400 participants with one focus - sustainable climate action



## BEST CORPORATE CITIZEN SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS

Talawakelle Tea Estates PLC and Aitken Spence PLC walked away with the Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability Award 2023 and 2024 respectively.



# POLICY ADVOCACY

## Economic Sustainability

**Vision 2030:** The Ceylon Chamber developed the **Vision 2030** policy document, leveraging its unique access to vast policy and industry expertise, to guide political parties towards sustainable and inclusive development.



### Vision 2030 Five Year Economic Plan

2025-2030

Compiled by:  
The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce



**National Budget:** Budget proposals for 2025 were compiled based on Member feedback, with priorities aligned to Vision 2030. Input from the Climate, Digital Economy, Economic Policy, Export Development, Finance & Capital, Logistics and Transport, Public Sector Reforms, and Taxation, committees also informed the submissions.

**Growth:** Engaged with the ADB Country Director and Senior Economist on reforms and private-sector growth strategies.



## Tax Policy & Administration

**Tax:** Sri Lanka's first Taxpayer Perception Study, conducted with the UNDP and Inland Revenue Department, assessed taxpayer views on fiscal policies and tax morale.

A roundtable discussion with international tax experts including the CEO of the Tax Justice Network and a UNDP Regional Tax Specialist, to discuss contemporary tax issues, joined by the Chamber's Taxation, and Export Development, Committees.



**RAMIS:** Submitted feedback on the Revenue Administration Management Information System issues to the Cabinet-appointed sub-committee.

**IMF:** Facilitated discussions with an IMF mission, and industry representatives, on customs administration, SVAT repeal, VAT refunds, and foreign exchange concerns.

The Ceylon Chamber also met with an IMF technical mission to discuss challenges related to tax expenditures, exemptions, and incentives.



# POLICY ADVOCACY

## Trade & Market Access

**SLTFTA:** Submitted Member input to the International Trade Office on the Rules of Origin Criteria and HS Codes for Consideration in relation to the Sri Lanka Thailand FTA

**Exports:** Presented exporters' concerns to the Export Development Board for discussion at the 24th Exporters' Forum.

**Tariffs:** Submitted member feedback for the National Tariff Policy to the Department of Trade and Industry.

## Policy Reforms

**Tax:** The Tax, Shipping and Logistics, & Export Development, committees initiated an ongoing engagement with Sri Lanka Customs, to address procedural challenges, with future regular engagements planned.



**Economy:** Joint recommendations on the Economic Transformation Bill submitted to President Wickremesinghe, focusing on key reforms through the Legislation, and Economic Policy, Steering Committees.

## Food Safety & Nutrition

The Food & Beverages Committee engaged with Health Sector representatives to enhance national food safety and nutrition regulations, focusing on draft regulations, dietary reference intakes, and mycotoxin standards.

- **Ministry of Health:** Provided feedback on the Food (Mycotoxins) Regulations 2021.
- **Food Control Administration Unit:** Discussions on Food (Labelling and Advertising) Regulations 2022 relating to adopting dietary reference intakes for Sri Lankans.
- **DG of Health Services:** Addressed potential industry challenges related to the above regulations.
- **CODEX:** Representatives of the F&B Committee serve on CODEX sub-committees, contributing input to articulate the CODEX harmonised regulations for the industry

**The Chamber's expertise in food science, nutrition, and international standards, contributed significantly towards shaping the food labelling and marketing regulations implemented on 01/01/2025.**

## Digital Transformation

**Digital ID:** The Ceylon Chamber's Board advocated for the Digital ID initiative in a meeting with President Wickremesinghe, highlighting the socio-economic benefits for the country.

**Digital Trade:** Submitted a White Paper on Digital Trade to the Ministry of Trade and Industries, recommending infrastructure improvements and strategies to bridge the digital divide.



# POLICY ADVOCACY

## Sustainable Finance

**ESG:** Multi-stakeholder forum on Environmental and Social Governance, organised by the Finance & Capital Markets Committee.

**Green Finance:** Partnered with the Sri Lanka Banks' Association to unlock green finance opportunities for SMEs and export-driven businesses.



**E-Waste:** Initiated discussions with key stakeholders, including the Sri Lanka Banks' Association, to establish an E-Waste Management Fund for sustainable disposal and recycling.

## Sector-Specific Advocacy

**Energy:** Contributions to the draft Long-Term Generation Expansion Plan by the Energy Sector Committee, and recommendations on the proposed Electricity Bill reforms, to the Ministry of Power and Energy.

**Public Sector:** The Public Sector Reforms Committee reviewed over 400 government institutions and submitted recommendations to the Government on an optimal structure for improved policymaking and implementation.

**Healthcare:** The Healthcare Committee highlighted concerns on pharmaceutical price regulations and their impact on transparency, fairness, and market stability, to President Wickremesinghe.

## Annual General Meeting



# MARKET ACCESS

## Business Delegations

### Outbound

**Canada:** Sri Lanka – Canada Business Forum, and meetings with government officials and the private sector - SLCBC

**Indonesia:** INASCA 2024 Business Forum - SLIBC

**Maldives:** Hotel Asia Exhibition 2024, & meetings with Maldivian government officials - SLMLBC

**Thailand:** LogiMAT & LogiFood Southeast Asia Exhibition – CCC & SLGMBC

### Inbound

**Australia:** IT sector B2B meetings with Australian companies - SLANZBC with the Sri Lanka-Australia Chamber of Commerce

**China:** Middle East Liaoning General Chamber of Commerce, & Yunnan International Trade Association and CPC Shanghai Pudong New Area Committee

**Hong Kong:** Hong Kong Trade Development Council – Focus on gems and jewellery, tea, and agriculture modernisation

**India:** Southern Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry - agro-product exports, gem processing and trading, and textile manufacturing, and a business delegation led by Global Fortune India

**Malaysia:** B2B meetings with a Malaysian logistics company - SLMBC

**Maldives:** South Huvadhoo Atoll Hoandedhdhoo Council - Joint ventures in resort development, local tourism and agriculture

**Netherlands:** Visit by a Dutch delegation, trade seminar and networking event

**Vietnam:** High-level delegation from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam, exploring opportunities in agriculture, forestry and fishery



# MARKET ACCESS

## Sri Lanka - Thailand FTA

The Ceylon Chamber and the Chamber's Sri Lanka Greater Mekong Business Council were instrumental in facilitating a series of B2B meetings that followed the signing of the Sri Lanka - Thailand Free Trade Agreement, with over 200 representatives of Sri Lankan companies discussing opportunities across a spectrum of sectors with a 21-Member business delegation from Thailand. The FTA was signed at the Sri Lanka - Thailand Business Forum, which was organised with the Ceylon Chamber as a collaborating partner.



## SME Development

A series of training programmes and workshops was conducted via collaborations with organisations including the ILO, USAID, government entities, and private sector companies. Over 300 SMEs in districts including, Badulla, Colombo, Galle, and Mannar, gained training and insights into topics ranging from intellectual property, export strategies, and market analysis, to compliance business planning, and branding, equipping them with essential knowledge to run their businesses.



## Market Insights

**Bangladesh:** Webinar on the business landscape, including FDI opportunities, labour regulations, and profit repatriation- *SLBBC*

**Korea:** Navigating Korean and Japanese markets to assist potential investors grasp the intricacies of these markets - *SLKBC*

## Memoranda of Understanding

**India:** Southern Gujarat Chamber of Commerce.

**Thailand:** Renewed an MoU originally established in 1988 with the Thai Chamber of Commerce.

# ENGAGEMENT

## Networking & Events

**Australia – New Zealand:** ‘The Business Opportunity Guide Economic Forum’ , highlighting opportunities, policies, and frameworks facilitating trade between Sri Lanka, Australia, and New Zealand - *SLANZBC*

**Belarus:** Meeting with the Ambassador of Belarus

**China:** Interactive session with the Ambassador-Designate to China - *SLCHBC*

**European Union:** Meeting with the Ambassador of the EU to Sri Lanka & the Maldives, to discuss collaborations in trade, tourism and investment

**Indonesia:** Meeting with the Indonesian Ambassador and Foreign Ministry representatives.

**Korea:** Panel Discussion on Sri Lanka’s economic outlook - *SLKBC*

**Maldives:** Discussion on bilateral cooperation with the Maldives Foreign Ministry and High Commission - *SLMLBC*

**New Zealand:** Meeting with High Commissioner David Pine

**Sierra Leone:** Courtesy call by the High Commissioner

**Thailand:** Meeting with the Ambassador-designate to Thailand - *SLGMBC*

**UK:** Panel discussions on tourism sustainability and the Economic Transformation Bill’s impact - *CBB*

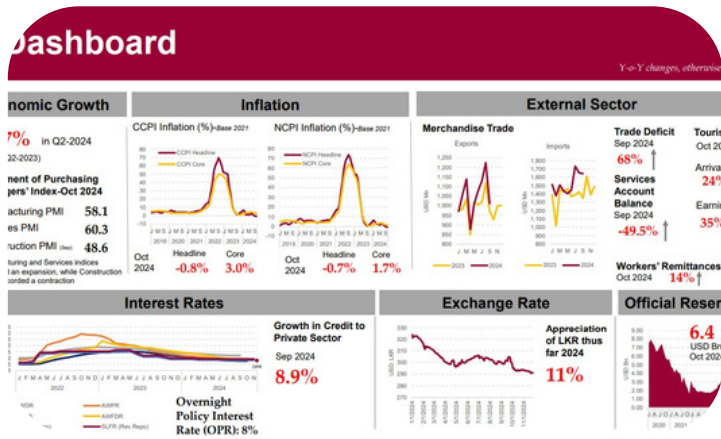
Meeting with the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce



# ENGAGEMENT

## Economic Insights & Research

**Monthly Economic Update:** Monthly economic insight reports and videos.



**Macroeconomic Briefings:** The Economic Intelligence Unit delivered tailored sector-specific macroeconomic briefings for industries including automobiles, banking, healthcare, and MNCs.

**Economic Outlook:** The 9th edition of the Economic Intelligence Unit's annual flagship Outlook Report for 2024 was launched at the Economic Outlook 2024 seminar. The report reviews the performance of the domestic, global, and regional economies, offering perspectives on key sectors.



**Trade Insights:** The fifth Export Barometer Survey presented insights from over 100 exporters of goods and services.

## Symposiums

**EPR:** The first ever Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Symposium, a joint initiative of the EPR Consortia of the Ceylon Chamber, and Biodiversity Sri Lanka.

**Plastics:** Innovations in recycling and sustainability in food contact materials, and the economic, environmental, and social impacts, of plastic packaging.

**The Role of Science in Food Reformulation:** Stakeholders from the government, academia, and the private sector, deliberated policymaking for a robust food safety system in Sri Lanka.



**VISA Roundtable:** The 2nd Roundtable on Digital ID Ecosystems, co-hosted with VISA, focused on the importance of the Digital ID for the economy.

## Enhancing Awareness

**Data Protection Seminar:** Draft guidelines for integrating data protection practices into business operations.

**Tax Return Filing:** A joint initiative with the Inland Revenue Department, to promote compliance.

**Human Trafficking:** Awareness session on the impact of, and strategies to combat human trafficking - SLCHB

**Asset Declaration:** Seminar on asset declaration to the IRD

# ENGAGEMENT

## Entrepreneurship & Youth Development

**SALE:** The Ceylon Chamber is the principal implementing partner of the ILO's South Asia Leadership in Entrepreneurship Project. SALE aims to foster an entrepreneurial culture amongst youth aged 15-24, through a series of key interventions. Following the conclusion of Phase I of the project from 2021 – 2024 during which over 7500+ youth benefitted from entrepreneurship training, Phase 2 is focusing on inclusivity and turning youth entrepreneurial aspirations into reality.

- **SPARK 2024:** The Grand Finale of the SPARK Youth Entrepreneurship Competition, saw some of the country's most innovative young entrepreneurs pitch their business ideas as they competed for the top prize. The Grand Finale was the culmination of several months during which competitors received training, mentorship and exposure through various programmes and events.
- **Training:** Entrepreneurship training workshops conducted for youth from marginalised communities in the Maskeliya plantation area.

**PAVE:** Working with ILO on the Promoting Advancement of Vulnerable Persons and Enterprises project, the Ceylon Chamber embarked on a Growth Diagnostic Study, travelling across Mannar, Jaffna, Killinochchi, and Vavuniya, to gather insights into the Northern Province's investment landscape.

**MDF:** A Business Coach Training Programme for Women, in collaboration with MDF Training & Consultancy, trained 30 women in entrepreneurship, e-commerce, inclusivity, and sustainability.

**GIZ:** The GIZ-funded Cost-Saving Business Processes Project kicked off with a Focus Group discussion to assess SMEs' operational challenges and willingness to adopt cost-saving business practices.



# ENGAGEMENT

## Agriculture & Sustainability

**ADB:** Meeting with an Asian Development Bank consultation mission which aims to prepare an investment project to boost Sri Lanka's agribusiness.



**Sustainable Finance:** Sustainable Finance Week, organised by the UNDP, Ceylon Chamber, CSE, UN Global Compact, and UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, featured several events promoting green finance, impact investing, and sustainability

## Capacity Building

Conducted a field-level coaching programme for EDB officers in collaboration with USAID's PARTNER Activity and the Sri Lanka Export Development Board, culminating in a certificate awarding ceremony for participants. This initiative followed a broader capacity-building programme implemented by the Ceylon Chamber with USAID PARTNER from August 2021 to April 2023.



## Partnerships & Collaborations

**Disaster Risk Reduction:** The Ceylon Chamber is the principal implementing partner of the World Food Programme's project to 'Enhance the Capabilities of the Private Sector on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management'.

JICA: Training Programme on Supporting Differently Abled Workers, to support employees who are differently abled, and promote a truly inclusive workforce.

## Memoranda of Understanding

**Global Alliance for a Sustainable Planet:** To tackle urgent climate change issues and promote sustainable development globally.



**Sri Lanka Banks' Association:** To promote sustainable finance and financial inclusion in Sri Lanka.



**University of Jaffna:** Opportunities for students in training events, internships, research collaborations, and curriculum consultations.

# ENGAGEMENT

## Flood Relief

As floods ravaged parts of the country, we thank our Membership for answering our call to assist those affected by the floods. In Kaduwela, Kalutara, and Kolonnawa, aid packages we distributed enabled 500 families to meet their most pressing needs.



## Awards

The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce was recognised for outstanding commitment to excellence in reporting and governance, for the Chamber's 2023/24 Annual Report.

**Gold Award:** Not-for-Profit / Non-Governmental Organisations Category - TAGS Annual Report Awards 2024, organised by the Chartered Accountants Sri Lanka.



**Sector Award & Certificate of Compliance:** Annual Report Awards 2024, organised by the Institute of Certified Management Accountants of Sri Lanka.

## Other Services

\*Arbitration Services

\*Business Information Publications

\*Commercial Document Registration

\*Visa Facilitation

\* Business Advisory Services

\*Certificates of Origin

\*GS1 Barcodes



# ASSOCIATIONS

(AIDA) All Island Dairy Association  
(CMTA) Ceylon Motor Traders Association  
(IAASL) IATA Agents Association of Sri Lanka  
(PATA) Pacific Asia Travel Association  
(SAPPTA) Spices and Allied Products Traders' Association  
(SLAITO) Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators  
(SLSC) Sri Lanka Shippers' Council

(BAR) Board of Airline Representatives  
(CRTA) Colombo Rubber Traders Association  
(IASL) Industrial Association of Sri Lanka  
(POIA) Palm Oil Industry Association  
  
(TAASL) Travel Agents Association of Sri Lanka

<b>AIDA</b>	* Workshop on Opportunities for Productivity and Business Model Innovations in the Daily Value Chain
<b>BAR</b>	* Meeting with the Manager of IATA to discuss airline concerns such as CASS Implementation and the APJC Meeting
<b>CMTA</b>	* Panel discussion on Mobility and Economic Growth
<b>CRTA</b>	* Forum to address and provide clarity on Member concerns relating to Value Added Tax in the Rubber industry. * Presentation sharing insights on the European Union Deforestation Regulations and potential impacts on the industry
<b>IAASL &amp; TAASL</b>	* Meetings with the Civil Aviation Authority, Qatar Airways and Singapore Airlines, to discuss industry concerns * Training programme for employees on achieving work-life balance * Bowling Challenge 2024 * Organised the Motor Rally 2024
<b>IASL</b>	* Session on the Green Building Concept, Certification and Sustainability * Session on Occupations Stress and Sedentary Behaviour
<b>Import Section</b>	* Panel discussion on Navigating Trade Waves in 2024
<b>PATA</b>	* Airport familiarisation tour * Christmas party at Galle Face Hotel
<b>POIA</b>	* Organised the Asian Palm Oil Alliance Meeting
<b>SAPPTA</b>	* Seminar on spice market trends, challenges, and regulations
<b>SLAITO</b>	* Organised the 11th edition of travel and tourism exhibition Sancharaka Udawa * Christmas party at Jetwing Colombo 7
<b>SLSC</b>	* Session on Proper Utilisation of Incoterms and Contract of Carriage
<b>TAASL</b>	* Christmas party at Waters Edge

