

Here's a lovely pocketbook-it's our constitution really!"-South Africa

The Rainbow Nation of the world has come forward to assist in Sri Lanka's political transformation process, thereby greatly strengthening the unity government's efforts in its constitutional exercise.

Minister of Industry and Commerce Rishad Bathiudeen (right) receives a copy of the pocket book version of South Africa's constitution from Geoffrey Doidge (HE South Africa's Ambassador to Sri Lanka) on 21 January in Colombo.

With its rich, power-packed experience of its historic transition from an apartheid tyranny to a well-functioning democracy, it's now venturing into assist Sri Lanka's crucial transformation.

- S-Africa to share historic Constitution making experience with Sri Lanka
- 'Post Geneva, Sri Lanka in a better footing'- Amb Doidge
- Says already started support work in Sri Lanka's transformation
- 'We are confident'-Rishad
- 'We pack rich experience, expertise'- Amb Doidge

"We don't market anything in particular in terms of politics but we have an experience which is very rich. Sri Lanka's acceptance back into the international community, post Geneva Resolution, is very obvious-and it augurs well for Sri Lanka to take those opportunities and exploit them" stressed Geoffrey Doidge (HE South Africa's Ambassador to Sri Lanka) on 21 January in Colombo. (HE) South African Ambassador Doidge was responding to Minister of Industry and Commerce Rishad Bathiudeen's query on how South Africa would partner in Sri Lanka's new phase, during a meeting with Minister Bathiudeen in Colombo on 21 January.

"We welcome the fresh changes in Sri Lanka. They came at a good time-when Sri Lanka needs them to move forward. I think the International Community has responded well to changes in Sri Lanka. Certainly from our Embassy in Colombo, besides promoting bilateral trade in Sri Lanka, we are also keen to play a significant role here by sharing our rich experience in Constitution making and political transformation. We don't market anything in particular in terms of politics but we have an experience which is very rich. We certainly look forward to share it. Hon Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, in the aftermath of his election victory called South Africa back to work closely with Sri Lanka. We welcome this invitation and we appreciate that!" said Amb Doidge.

Ambassador added: "We are now working very closely with the Government of Sri Lanka. We feel that through political diplomacy there can be an awareness of Sri Lanka in South Africa. Also through political diplomacy there will be a different perception about Sri Lanka in South Africa-that Sri Lanka is moving away from the conflict it once faced and Sri Lanka is now on a new trajectory, finding peace within itself and peace with international community. I think Sri Lanka's acceptance back into the international community post Geneva Resolution, is very obvious-and it augurs well for Sri Lanka to take those opportunities and exploit them in an economic way so that prosperity of Sri Lanka is assured. As for opportunities for investment, the Sri Lankan Embassy in South Africa is very active and strategically placed towards bringing South African business to Sri Lanka, with all committed staff. I invite you to read the South African constitution, one of the biggest victories of our nation."

During the positive and friendly meeting, Amb Doidge also gifted Minister Bathiudeen with a pocket-book version of the South African constitution, elaborating on the various challenges South Africa faced to make the draft document a reality. "We warmly welcome your cooperation and support in our critical national exercise. I am confident that solutions proposed by Hon Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, integrated with your experience of helping the

multitude of ethnic groups in South Africa, would serve towards the betterment of all Lankan communities too.”

South Africa’s present democratic constitution is a product of the South African Constitutional Assembly, chaired by Cyril Ramaphosa, the present Deputy President of South Africa, who also visited Sri Lanka in 2014 & ’15 as a Special Envoy.

During 21 January meeting, both HE Amb Doidge and Minister Bathiudeen also delved into deepening of bilateral economic cooperation as well.

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