

Chengdu Delegation Meets BOI Chairman

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Hemasiri Fernando, Chairman, BOI (centre right) and Chen Xia, Secretary General, CAFTEC (far right) in discussion.

A delegation from Chengdu Association for Foreign Trade and Cooperation (CAFTEC) Chengdu, China visited BOI and met with Hemasiri Fernando, Chairman, BOI. The delegation comprised Chen Xia, Secretary General, CAFTEC who was accompanied by two members and by Kosala Wickramanayake, President - International Business Council.

The purpose of the delegates visit was to promote Sri Lanka, and particularly, the projects in Hambantota.

Chen Xia briefed Hemasiri Fernando on the potential of the city of Chengdu. "Chengdu is in the south-western part of China and has a rich history. The city has emerged as a center for Chinese advanced manufacturing industry, clean energy and modern service industry including AI, big data, 5G technology. Of the cities in Western China, Chengdu has the highest economic volume. Our organization has had a close connection with Sri Lanka for about 11 years," Chen said.

Further, he added Colombo and Chengdu are benefiting by direct air connection for many years. Chengdu is also world renowned for the Giant Panda Research Center and the city was named the top 'must-visit' city in main- land China in 2017. One project that is to be built in Chengdu is the South Asian pavilion, will showcase South Asian specialty products. The delegation expressed interest in setting up a steel project in Hambantota. The Chengdu Business Council was the first Chinese Chamber to open an office in Colombo and plans to set up seven regional offices in other South Asian countries. Hemasiri Fernando, the Chairman, BOI welcomed this first move by the Chengdu Business Council stating, "This will mutually benefit both the BOI and the Council."

He also informed Chen Xiu that he would ensure Chengdu authorities receive the fullest co- operation in all their activities in Sri Lanka. He also invited them to extend their study to other BOI Zones, not just to Hambantota. Hemasiri Fernando, strongly emphasized on the strong bilateral relationship that has existed between Sri Lanka and China throughout the years.