

# Sri Lanka

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*Meeting of Sri Lanka – Germany Fast Track Dialogue in progress.*

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Malik Samarawickrama, the Minister of Development Strategies and International Trade led the Sri Lanka – Germany Fast Track Dialogue.

It addressed central issues faced by German enterprises operating in Sri Lanka under the BOI as well as facilitate new investments. Mangala Yapa, Chairman, Board of Investment and W A D S Gunasinghe, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Development Strategies and International Trade also participated in the event.

The German delegation was led by Jörn Rohde, Ambassador for Germany in Sri Lanka as well as Andreas Hergenroether, Chief Delegate of German Industry and Commerce in Sri Lanka. The German Companies present were DHL, Eskimo Fashion Knitwear, Keells, Go Vacation Sri Lanka, B Braun Lanka, Kramski Lanka, Hellmann MAS Supply Chain, Ceylon Oxygen and Würth Lanka.

The issues specific to German investors which were discussed at the Dialogue include the registration of disinfectant products under the National Medicine Regulatory Authority (NMRA), VAT refunds for several German companies, the recovery of the tourism industry, Cargo handling, monies owed to German companies, tender procedures and payment of demurrages. Many of the outstanding matters were re-solved or studied for a solution to be arrived at under a time-frame to solve them.

Addressing the gathering, Minister Malik Samarawickrama stated that Germany was a very important trading partner for Sri Lanka with a volume of trade totaling 1.2 billion euro, and added that institutions such as BOI and EDB were making a strong effort to facilitate business and eliminate the bottlenecks faced by investors and exporters.

Ambassador Jörn Rohde stated that economic relations should ideally resemble the German autobahns, providing speedy solutions to all issues. Germany welcomed any effort aimed at improving Sri Lanka's business climate and also the resolution of any issues faced by German SMEs. He wanted to see a return of international tourists to Sri Lanka following the Easter Sunday events.

Minister Samarawickrama reassured that security had been strengthened at the airport and hotels.

Furthermore, a tourism promotion campaign will be held in Berlin to address tourists and travel agents and educate them about Sri Lanka.