A warm welcome for the female Sri Lankan parliamentarians at the New Zealand Parliament

Date : 08-08-2023

While engaged in a study tour in New Zealand recently (Aug. 01), the Women Parliamentarian's Caucus, received a warm welcome who visited the Parliament to witness a New Zealand Parliament session.

The Speaker of the New Zealand Parliament announced to the House that the Chair of the Women Parliamentarian's Caucus, Member of Parliament Hon. (Dr.) (Mrs.) Sudarshini Fernandopulle, and the delegation is warmly welcomed. Members of the Sri Lanka Women Parliamentarian's Caucus witnessed the parliamentary session from the Speaker's gallery. A standing ovation was given by the Members of the New Zealand Parliament to the Sri Lankan female parliamentarians.

The Women Parliamentarian's Caucus who arrived at the New Zealand Parliament was welcomed by the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament Greg O'Connor and a group of Parliamentarians singing a song of blessing according to the Māori culture of New Zealand.

The Sri Lankan delegation then engaged in a special discussion with the Speaker of the New Zealand Parliament, Adrian Rurawhe, Deputy Speaker Greg O'Connor and Assistant Speaker Jacqui Dean.

During this study tour, there was a special meeting between the Secretary General of the New Zealand Parliament, Mr. David Wilson and the Secretary General of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, Mrs. Kushani Rohanadeera, and members of the parliamentary staff. A discussion at about the functioning of the Parliaments of the two countries were held at the meeting.

The New Zealand Chief Executive - Parliamentary Service Rafael Gonzalez, New Zealand's Minister of Women and Education Jan Tinetti, Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, Priyanca Radhakrishnan, Labor Party President Jill Day, Women's Deputy Chair for New Zealand Carol Beaumont, Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, Vanushi Walters and other Labor Party members also met the Sri Lankan Parliamentarians engaging in discussions with a group of gentlemen.

Members of the Sri Lanka Women Parliamentarian's Caucus were able to participate live in the New Zealand Parliament's Social Service and Community Standing Committee to gain experience and participate in interviews recorded by the New Zealand Parliament's Communications Team.

A tour of the New Zealand Parliament was also organized for Women Parliamentarian's Caucus.

Hon. (Dr.) (Mrs.) Sudarshini Fernandopulle, Hon. (Dr.) (Mrs.) Seetha Arambepola, Hon. (Mrs.) Rohini Kumari Wijerathna, Hon. (Mrs.) Pavithradevi Wanniarachchi, Hon. (Mrs.) Geetha Samanmale Kumarasinghe, Hon. (Mrs.) Thalatha Athukorala, Hon. (Mrs.) Rajika Wickramasinghe, Hon. (Mrs.) Manjula Dissanayake, Hon. (Dr.) (Ms.) Harini Amarasuriya, and Secretary General of Parliament Kushani Rohanadeera, Assistant Director (Administration) Indira Dissanayake and Media Manager of Parliament Nimmi Hathialdeniya were also present at this tour.

This study tour is fully sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) organized by NDI with the aim of empowering women's leadership in Sri Lankan politics, securing gender equality and strengthening the actions taken by the Forum of Women Parliamentarians for the advancement of Sri Lankan women.