

Persons with disabilities

Mr. Vice President,

There were questions regarding the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that was ratified by Sri Lanka in 2016** as well as the rights of persons with disabilities.

-Draft legislation to give effect to the provisions of the **Convention have been prepared by the Legal Draftsman** and we hope to be able to have the draft Bill presented to Parliament soon.

-Sri Lanka ratified the **Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled** in September 2016.

-The Cabinet of Ministers, in September 2017, approved drafting a **Bill on Sign Language**, with the objective of making legal provision to establish the Sign Language as a **recognized language** in the country.

-Recognising the need for affirmative action to increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, the Ministry of Public Administration had instructed all Ministries, Departments and Corporations that, with regard to vacancies in the Public Service and Public Corporations to, 'fill up 3% of such vacancies by disabled persons possessing the requisite qualifications and whose disability would not be a hindrance to the performance of their duties' by Public Administration Circular No. 27/88 dated 18th August 1988.

-The Government has initiated several **welfare programmes** to provide support to persons with disabilities (PwD) including financial assistance to low-income families with PwD while public officers are trained on sign language, Braille

methodology, mobility and orientation, to enable them to provide a better service to PwDs.

-An employment database is maintained by then Ministry of Labour in order to collect data of persons with disabilities to direct them to suitable employment opportunities and connect with the employers based on the qualifications they possess.

-To overcome difficulties in access, Disabled Persons (Accessibility) Regulations, No. 1 of 2006 was gazetted on 2006, provisions of which would be applicable to all public buildings, public places and to places where common services are available, to which buildings, places and services persons with disabilities have access.

-In the **Budget for 2018, Rs. 2.7 billion** has been proposed to be allocated to **construct homes** for the **differently abled women in the North and the East.**