

## **AmCham Sri Lanka's Strategic Communications Forum Underscores Power of Narrative in Driving Investment, Exports, and Growth**

**Colombo, Sri Lanka – 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025:** The American Chamber of Commerce in Sri Lanka (AmCham SL), in collaboration with Wijeya Newspapers, successfully concluded its *Topic in Focus* forum titled **“Narrating Sri Lanka’s Story: How Strategic Communications Can Fuel Investment, Talent & Global Partnerships,”** bringing together business leaders, policymakers, media, and communications professionals for a timely and impactful discussion.

The forum focused on the critical role of strategic storytelling and national narrative in accelerating Sri Lanka’s economic recovery and positioning the country for sustainable growth in an increasingly competitive global environment.

Deliver keynote speaker Ms. Farzana Baduel, CEO and Co-Founder of Curzon PR (UK) and President-Elect of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR UK), highlighted the need for Sri Lanka to sharpen and confidently communicate its economic value proposition to the world. Her address emphasized that credible, consistent narratives – grounded in reform, capability, and ambition – are essential to attract investment, unlock exports, and build long-term global trust.

Farzana underscored the importance of export-led growth as a key driver of job creation, pointing to strong opportunities within manufacturing, digital services, agribusiness, and tourism. She noted Sri Lanka’s competitive strengths, including high-quality human capital, STEM capabilities, English-language proficiency, and niche agricultural products, while calling for targeted investments in digital infrastructure, skills development, and branding to move up the global value chain.

Tourism was highlighted as a major growth lever, with potential in high-value segments such as wellness, MICE, experiential travel, and nature-based tourism. Improved connectivity, destination development – especially in the north and east – and coherent global positioning were identified as essential to achieving ambitious tourism targets in the years ahead.

The discussion also emphasized the importance of fiscal consolidation and policy stability as enablers of public investment in infrastructure, alongside stronger public-private collaboration to mobilize capital, drive innovation, and sustain competitiveness. The role of development partners in supporting reforms and private sector-led growth was acknowledged as a key component of Sri Lanka’s recovery journey.

The keynote was followed by a high-level panel discussion featuring leading Sri Lankan business and policy voices:

- Ms. Neela Marikkar, Chairperson and Managing Director, Dentsu Grant Group & Director, AmCham SL
- Ms. Renuka Weerakone, Director General, Board of Investment of Sri Lanka
- Mr. Dilshan Wirasekara, Managing Director and CEO, First Capital Holdings PLC
- Ms. Rishini Weeraratne, Editor, The Sun (Daily Mirror) and HIII Online, Head of Social Media, Wijeya Newspapers Limited, Ambassador for Sri Lanka, Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR, UK) who moderated the panel discussion

Panelists shared practical perspectives on, how organisations – and the country – can better align strategy, policy, and communications to strengthen investor confidence, expand exports, and attract global partnerships.

Quote – Farzana Baduel (to be inserted):

“-----”

Commenting on the forum, AmCham Sri Lanka reaffirmed its commitment to facilitating high-impact dialogue that supports Sri Lanka’s global positioning and business environment.

The Country Manager - Sri Lanka & Maldives at Mastercard, and President of AmCham Sri Lanka Mr. Sandun Hapugoda stated that “Today’s conversation reaffirmed that Sri Lanka’s recovery and long-term competitiveness depend not only on sound policy and reform, but on how clearly and confidently we communicate our strengths to the world. As AmCham Sri Lanka, our role is to convene business, policymakers, and global voices to help shape a credible, compelling narrative that builds investor confidence, attracts talent, and strengthens international partnerships.”

The event concluded with a shared recognition that Sri Lanka’s next phase of growth will depend not only on reform and performance, but on how effectively its story is told – with authenticity, ambition, and confidence – by both the public and private sectors.