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Major Public & Private Stakeholders Undergo Trade Remedy Law Training

Legislation on Anti-Dumping & Countervailing Duties and on Safeguard Measures were passed by the Sri Lankan government in March 2018. Anti-dumping duties, countervailing duties and safeguard measures are mechanisms used to protect domestic industries from the adverse effects of unfair trade practices by exporting countries or of sudden surges of imports into a country. By passing these Acts, Sri Lanka now aligns itself with the majority of its fellow World Trade Organization (WTO) Members that also have trade remedy laws.

In response to demands by the Department of Commerce to enhance understanding and increase knowledge of trade remedy laws and procedures, the International Trade Centre (ITC) organized video-based training sessions for public and private sector representatives from May to June 2018.

These training sessions are part of the EU-Sri Lanka Trade-Related Assistance project, funded by the European Union (EU). The sessions were conducted by experts from the Geneva based Advisory Centre for WTO Law (ACWL), who had also conducted an introductory workshop in 2017. The ACWL advises and trains developing and least-developed countries on all issues relating to WTO law and also assists them in WTO litigation.

The training comprised ten intensive sessions for 30 officials from the Trade Remedy Unit of the Department of Commerce (DoC), the Attorney General's Department and other relevant government agencies such as the Board of Investment (BOI), Department of Inland Revenue and the Sri Lanka Customs. Representatives from the private sector included officials from the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC), Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Sri Lanka (FCCISL), National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka (NCC), and the European Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka (ECCSL). This was the first time that a comprehensive training of this nature on trade remedies had been carried out.

The sessions aimed to provide a platform for participants to understand trade remedies and conduct investigations. Commenting on the relevance and usefulness of the training, **Mrs. Sonali Wijeratne, Director General, Department of Commerce** stated, *"the DoC has now set up a Trade Remedy Unit, which is vested with the responsibility of conducting investigations and making recommendations of appropriate remedial action on possible unfair trade practices. The ACWL-conducted training is very useful to enhance the knowledge of both state and private sector stakeholders who will be closely involved in the implementation of Sri Lanka's trade remedy legislation."*

Expressing her views, Ms. Jayani Ratnayake, a participant and an Economist at the CCC stated, *"this training was very timely and we find it extremely useful for the private sector. These long overdue laws, which are now in place, equip the private sector with tools to remedy unfair trading practices. This training helped both private sector and public-sector participants to understand the implications of the trade remedy law within a Sri Lankan context"*.

Further support by ITC is being provided with regard to the strengthening of the DoC's trade remedy unit. Further to this, an ITC expert is currently preparing a report with recommendations on how to operationalize the implementation of trade remedies in Sri Lanka.