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## Cooperation among all countries vital - Speaker

Sandasen MARASINGHE

Cooperation among countries is vital to rid this world of armed violence, as armed violence in one country could not be viewed as an exclusively domestic issue, Speaker Chamal Rajapaksa said yesterday.

The Speaker was participating as chief guest at the inauguration ceremony of the 33rd annual forum of Parliamentarians for Global Action on the theme 'The Impact of Armed Violence on Development: Issues, Challenges and Parliament Solutions.'

The forum commenced at the Hilton Hotel, Colombo yesterday. It will conclude on October 30.

The Speaker stated that the Sri Lankan experience had taught that there would have been no armed conflict in Sri Lanka if not for the proliferation of small arms, and light weapons, fundraising by diaspora groups for terrorist networks, money laundering, drug smuggling etc.

Speaker Rajapaksa stated that the participants, the parliamentarians of many countries, needed to speak out against hypocrisy and double standards of their own governments as those double standards and narrow domestic interests would contribute to instability globally.

He said that a few years ago, there would have been a question mark about holding this forum in Colombo due to threat of terrorism.

"Today the country has returned to normalcy following the defeat of the LTTE. The country is now seeking to consolidate the peace the country has won," he said.

PGA Sri Lanka Chapter chairman Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva, PGA president Dr Ruth Wijdenbosch, United Nations Resident's humanitarian coordinator UNDP resident Representative Sri Lanka Subinay Nandy, Ambassador H M G S Palihakkara, Prof Savithri Goonesekara and Chief Opposition Whip of Parliament John Amarathunga also spoke.

Convener of Peace and Democracy Programme PGA Ross Robertson and Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe also participated.



The 33rd annual forum of the Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) is being held in Colombo until October 30. The executive members of PGA called on Speaker Chamal Rajapaksa on October 27 at his residence in Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte. Here Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva, chairman of Sri Lanka Chapter- PGA, Thilanga Sumathipala (MP), secretary Sri Lanka Chapter-PGA, Dr. Ruth Wijdenbosch, President of PGA, Shazia Z. Ra, Secretary General of PGA at the event.

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