For more information please contact
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Sri Lanka Office
Email: sl_osr_rep@jica.go.jp
Tel: +94-11-2303700

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Contact: Namal Ralapanawe (Email: ralapanawenamal.SL@jica.go.jp, Ext: 3125)

**Title:** From E01 to E02 and beyond: JICA continues assistance for transportation in Sri Lanka

“Connectivity and ease of access are crucial for improvement of economy and quality of life. Road development in synergy with public transport modes is the key to sustainable accessibility. That is why JICA assists expressway development, as well as the urban transport master plan which we hope will lead to dramatic improvement of public transport in Colombo”, says Mr. Harumi Ao, Chief Representative of the JICA Sri Lanka office.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is the implementing agency for Official Development Assistance from the Government of Japan, and has provided financing for both the Kottawa- Kaduwela and Kaduwela-Kadawatha sections of the Colombo Outer Circular Expressway (E02). The first section (Kottawa-Kaduwela) of this toll expressway will be ceremonially opened by His Excellency, President Mahinda Rajapakse on March 8, 2014.

The Outer Circular Expressway effectively extends the Southern Expressway northwards from Kottawa Interchange. Similar to the Southern Expressway -66km of which was financed by JICA- Outer Circular Expressway will also allow vehicle speed up to 100km/h, and will expand the outreach of the expressway network. Once the 3rd section from Kaduwela to Kerawalapitiya is completed, the Outer Circular Expressway will link Southern Expressway and Colombo Katunayake Expressway. It will also act as a North-South artery for Colombo bypassing the inner city area, thereby easing traffic congestion.

The Outer Circular Expressway project is implemented by the Road Development Authority of the Ministry of Highways, Ports and Shipping. To construct the first section, JICA provided a concessionary long term loan to the value of JPY 21,917 million (approx. LKR 28 billion). The 11 km long section includes the 3.3km long Mahawewa viaduct – currently the longest in Sri Lanka, and Kottawa Interchange which was completed and opened earlier to facilitate Southern Expressway. Savings in the contract are currently being utilized to construct an additional interchange at Pore-Athurugiriya to provide closer access to the administrative service points in Battaramulla.

In addition to financing the largest portion of the expressway network in Sri Lanka, JICA will also finance the second new Kelani Bridge for easing congestion at the access to Colombo-Katunayake expressway. “Construction of expressways will ease inter-city transportation issues. But for intra-city transport, the sustainable solution is a high quality public transport system. Colombo really needs one now, and JICA would be proud to support such an initiative as well”, says Mr. Ao.

*Attachments: 5 Photos with captions*
Photo 1: Outer Circular Expressway – Phase I includes the longest viaduct in Sri Lanka

Photo 2: Outer Circular Expressway – Phase I extends Southern Expressway northwards
Photo 3: Outer Circular Expressway – Phase I includes several overpass bridges for local roads

Photo 4: Outer Circular Expressway – Phase II is expected to complete in 2015

Photo 5: Architectural perspective of 2nd new Kelani Bridge, pledged to be financed by JICA
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is the executing agency of Japan’s Bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA). JICA, the world biggest bilateral aid agency, works in over 150 countries and regions. In accordance with its vision of “Inclusive and Dynamic Development,” JICA supports the resolution of development issues in developing countries. In Sri Lanka, Japan has been providing financial and technical assistance since 1954 and is one of the largest donors to the country. On behalf of the people and the Government of Japan, JICA contributes to improve the lives of people in Sri Lanka.