Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) hosted a “Seminar on JICA Survey on Cross-Border Maritime Traffic in South Asia” with support from the Ministry of National Policies & Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Ports & Shipping, Sri Lanka Ports Authority on December 14th and 15th in Colombo.

This seminar was held to discuss interim results of the “Data Collection Survey on Cross-border Maritime Traffic in South Asia” among stakeholders of the South Asian countries. In order to strengthen the international transportation trunk line network, it is crucial not only to enhance the land transportation within South Asia, but also to improve the maritime transportation (ports and sea route) and to reinforce connectivity with land transportation through port infrastructure development for both “hard” and “soft” aspects. With the expectation that the strategic development of maritime transport infrastructure in South Asia will play an important role in the formulation of supply chains in and out of Asia and also to support international business community planning to expand into the markets in South Asia and surrounding regions, this study is being carried out by JICA. The Survey team in their presentation stated that “the GDP of the South Asian region has reached a level comparable to ASEAN region and will experience a rapid expansion of consumption”. Therefore taking actions out of findings of the survey will be an urgent need.

Ninety participants including senior officials from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and SAARC Secretariat held discussions on economic growth of the South Asian region and the critical role of logistics and ports.

Mr. Toru Arai, Director General of South Asia Department of JICA in his opening speech said “Maritime connectivity is a key to regional prosperity of South Asia. Thus JICA is willing to continue and even enhance its support for a win-win approach among the regional countries.”

H.E Ambassador of Japan Mr. Kenichi Suganuma, and the Secretary of the Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, Mr. M I M Rafeek, also addressed the participants. The comments by participants included appreciation of this seminar as an optimal
opportunity for South Asian countries to exchange views. Following the dialogue, the participants visited the Colombo Port, endorsing the view that the Port of Colombo is a logistical hub for the South Asian region.

Since the 1980, Colombo Port has been developed with both financial and technical support from Japan, with total assistance exceeding 78 Billion JPY, equivalent to LKR 90 Billion at the current exchange rate.

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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.