

## Milinda Moragoda

Asoka Milinda Moragoda was born on 4 June 1964. His career has spanned business, government, politics, diplomacy, academia, public service and the media.

### Education

Mr. Moragoda holds an MBA from the Institute for Management Development in Switzerland and was a Fellow at Harvard University's Weatherhead Centre for International Affairs (1994-95).

### Business & Public Service

Mr. Moragoda is the Founder and Chairman of the MMBL-Pathfinder Group, which is a diversified privately-held investment group whose main interests include financial services, tourism and hospitality, property development, domestic aviation, business logistics, agriculture, new technologies, and the new media. The MMBL-Pathfinder Group has a number of strategic alliances and partnerships with leading international brands and local private-sector blue-chip companies. During his early career in the private sector, he was involved in the founding of the Colombo Stock Exchange (1985) and served as an alternate director on its first board.

He is the Founder of the Pathfinder Foundation which is one of Sri Lanka's leading independent policy research and advocacy organisations. The Pathfinder Foundation's activities encompass the Centre for Indo-Lanka Initiatives, the China-Sri Lanka Cooperation Studies Centre, the Centre for the Law of the Sea and the Hafez Centre for Cultural Understanding. Other non-profit organisations which Mr. Moragoda has founded include the Milinda Moragoda Institute for Peoples Empowerment which carried out the first locally led non-governmental humanitarian de-mining programme both during and after the war.

He also heads *Urumayake Ulpatha* which is actively engaged in interfaith and intra-faith dialogue initiatives and *Purusarana* which carries out work in the area of urban poverty alleviation. In a lay capacity, he also helped initiate the *Dhamma Sammaghi Sansadaya*, a collective of leading Buddhist prelates in the country. Mr. Moragoda has served as Chairman and later patron of the *Dayake Sabhawa* of the *Amarapura Maha Nikaya*, one of the three principal Buddhist sects of Sri Lanka. He is also a Patron and former Chairman of the Prisoners' Welfare Association of Sri Lanka, one of the oldest non-governmental organisations in Sri Lanka.

### Politics & Government

From 2000-2010 Mr. Moragoda served as a member of the Sri Lankan Parliament, first as a national list MP and later as a twice-elected member from the Colombo District. He held several Cabinet portfolios including Minister of Economic Reform, Science and Technology, Minister of Tourism, and Minister of Justice and Law Reform. He has also served as Deputy Minister of Policy Development and Implementation.

As Minister of Science and Technology, he led the E-Sri Lanka initiative, which included the setting up of the Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) initiative as the apex body. In the field of tourism, he conducted a major restructuring of the government agencies dealing in this sector and created a public/private partnership to regulate and promote tourism. As Justice and Law Reform Minister he set up a series of

committees to address issues ranging from identifying causes for legal delays, Right to Information (RTI), juvenile justice, child protection, women in justice, Muslim marriage law, to Prison reform. Furthermore, the rehabilitation programme for former LTTE child soldiers conducted during his tenure was implemented as a partnership between the government, the military, the private sector, international agencies and religious organisations has been cited as a model programme by international authorities. Mr. Moragoda also served as a member of the Cabinet Subcommittee on Defence with special responsibility for the co-ordination of external defence matters.

Mr. Moragoda has also held several senior posts including Senior Advisor to the President, Special Representative of the Government of Sri Lanka, Special Advisor to the Minister of Industries, Science and Technology, Special Advisor to the Ministry of Policy Planning and Implementation, Board Member of the Janasaviya Trust and Chairman of the Institute for Scientific and Industrial Research. He has also served on the Colombo Municipal Council as Leader of the Opposition.

### **International Work**

In the international arena, Mr. Moragoda serves on the Advisory Network of the High Level Panel for A Sustainable Ocean Economy (HLP). The network is comprised of leaders from non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations and global companies working to establish a sustainable ocean economy. The HLP is comprised of Presidents and Prime Ministers from around the globe.

He is also an Honorary Fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) an affiliate of the National University of Singapore. Mr. Moragoda was appointed and served as a member of the United Nations High Level Commission on the Legal Empowerment of the Poor (2005-2008) co-chaired by former US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright. He was also the first Sri Lankan to be named a Global Leader for Tomorrow and subsequently a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum. In recognition for his services as the Honorary Consul for Brazil in Sri Lanka in the 1990s, he was bestowed the honour of the Order of Rio Branco by the President of Brazil.

### **Media**

In the area of the media, for over the past 25 years, Mr. Moragoda has created and hosted a wide range of television and radio programmes in Sinhala and English. For his pioneering TV talk show *In Black and White*, he interviewed world leaders and international personalities. The programme was carried internationally by Channel News Asia. His *Gamin Gamata* TV programme was the first to engage in town-hall style discussions on an islandwide basis. His two current TV shows are *Niyamarthaya* and a recent revival of *In Black and White*.

Mr. Moragoda currently contributes three weekly Sinhala columns to three newspapers, including his column *Milinda Prashna*, which appears in his blog of the same name. His website [milinda.org](http://milinda.org) was the first trilingual Sri Lankan website and was recognised as an honouree in the categories of personal and political websites in 2007 by the Webby Awards, donned by the New York Times as the "Oscars of the Internet".