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இலங்கையின் பிரதம அமைச்சர்  
**Prime Minister of Sri Lanka**

**Message**

Today is a special occasion as I deliver my first message as Prime Minister and Minister of Women, Child and Youth Affairs and Sports of Sri Lanka celebrating both International Children's Day and Elders' Day. These two important observances remind us of the vital roles children and elders play in shaping the future and the legacy of our society.

This year, the theme for International Children's Day is "Investing in our future means investing in our children." This is more than a slogan-it embodies a core principle and policy direction of our government.

We are committed to providing a high-quality, public education system that benefits every child in Sri Lanka. Our vision is to equip children with the tools they need to thrive in a world full of opportunities, free from the burdens of financial limitations.

Moreover, we strongly oppose all forms of physical and mental abuse directed at children, particularly within educational institutions. Children deserve to grow up in environments filled with empathy, care, love, and joy-not under the strain of unhealthy competition. By fostering compassion, understanding, and mutual respect, we can raise a generation capable of building a just and equitable future. The best interests of children will always be our top priority in every decision concerning them.

As we mark Elders' Day, we honour those who have contributed so much to our country's progress. The 2024 theme, "Ageing with Dignity: The Importance of Strengthening Care and Support Systems for Older Persons Worldwide," reflects our dedication to enhancing social security and protection for elderly people. Our government is committed to improving retirement benefits for elders and ensuring free and equal access to healthcare, especially for those who have spent their lives contributing to the workforce.

Let us join hands in working for the well-being of both our children and elders, in our journey of building a thriving nation and a beautiful life for all Sri Lankans.

**Dr. Harini Amarasuriya**  
**Prime Minister**  
**Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka**

**30<sup>th</sup> September 2024**