

## Message from the Guest of Honour



**Dr. Seetha Arambepola**

*Hon. State Minister of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research and Innovation*

It is my greatest pleasure and honour to send a message to the National Conference on “COVID 19: Impact, Mitigation, Opportunities, Building Resilience”, under the theme “From Adversity to Serendipity”, to be held on 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

The conference is a most needed timely event that attempts to capture a widespread and dangerous pandemic that is seriously affecting our nation as well as many other nations in the world. For the first time, we are grappling with a pandemic of this magnitude which has devastated many affluent nations across the globe. Some countries such as Vietnam have experienced similar epidemics such as SARS and were somewhat prepared for a pandemic similar to it to an extent. However, even certain powerful countries in Europe and also North America have been drastically affected. Our neighbouring country, India has already reported over a million cases. We were successful in controlling the first wave but unfortunately have had to face formidable challenges in containing the second.

It is in these uncertain times that the National Science Foundation has come forward to document and share the experiences of Sri Lanka, in addressing the COVID – 19 pandemic at different stages. The conference plans to bring scientists, professionals and experts together from a wide range of disciplines and sectors to deliberate and reflect on how to cope with the situation and build a robust and resilient community. In addition, global experiences in coping with the situation will be shared by Sri Lankan expatriate scientists from all over the globe.

This national conference will provide an opportunity to share and document a vast volume of knowledge for the benefit of posterity.

I make this an opportunity to wish NSF my heart felt gratitude on this initiative which would be an invaluable support given to the entire nation in containing the pandemic in order to establish a safer atmosphere within our community.

Good luck!