

මගේ අංකය
எனது இல.
My No.

ඔබේ අංකය
உமது இல.
Your No.

කොළඹ 1.
கொழும்பு 1.
Colombo 1.

ජනාධිපති කාර්යාලය
சனாதிபதி அலுவலகம்
PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARIAT

Circular No: SP/SB/02/08

My No: SB/3
July 21, 2008

To: All Secretaries of Ministries

Use of E-Mail and ICT in general in Government Business

I would like to bring to your attention that *Mahinda Chinthana* devotes an entire section to the use of ICT in Sri Lanka. That, coupled with the retention of ICT Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA) under this Secretariat, is indicative of the keen interest that His Excellency the President takes in propagating ICT and particularly its application in government business.

Email communication is being increasingly used in government business in many countries. They have also introduced efficient Electronic Records Management Systems for managing public records. However, in Sri Lanka a majority of Government institutions are yet to take optimal advantage of even basic ICT tools such as email.

Electronic communication has several important advantages including significant reduction in communication time and employee time as well as cost savings on stationery, photocopying etc. In fact, we should be working towards a paper-less office.

Although a comparatively small measure for encouraging email use in Government, it has been decided that Minutes of meetings chaired by His Excellency the President will be transmitted henceforth only via email in a scanned PDF format. Such emails should be considered as the official record of the meeting for action and future reference. Later in this letter, I shall draw your attention to recent developments where the necessary legal infrastructure has been provided to make electronic communication, electronic record keeping and other electronic transactions legally valid.

I myself will be using e-mail in future in most of my communications with you, without an additional hard copy. Therefore you run the risk of missing important communications unless you are 'e-alert'.

In order to use this facility, you will need to ensure that your email account is in regular working order, and that you access your email on a regular daily basis. You may use software to give an audio and visual signal whenever an e-mail arrives.

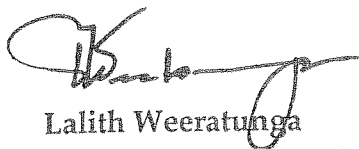
Additionally, I also strongly encourage you to introduce ICT interventions as much as possible in the delivery of public services in your Ministry and in Departments and agencies under you. This may include provision of regularly updated information on your websites, online customer feedback and service delivery systems, online payment systems etc. You can seek the guidance and assistance of ICTA in such matters. I also propose to make an assessment of the level of ICT use by Government Ministries and Departments in the delivery of public services.

ICTA is also in the process of progressively installing the LakGov network of telecommunication (VoIP) in all government agencies. You will find that the use of this network will significantly reduce your telecommunication costs. To learn more about this and other ICTA initiatives I would advise you to visit the ICTA website www.icta.lk.

Earlier in this letter, I referred to the recently introduced e-enabling legal infrastructure. The Electronic Transactions Act No. 19 of 2006, effective from October 1, 2007, provides for the legal recognition and facilitates the use of email and electronic communications for day to day business and also provides for the storage of electronic records. Such electronic communications and records stored electronically would be admissible in courts under the provisions of this legislation. Only a limited a number of transactions such as last wills, power of attorney's and contracts for sale of immovable property have been excluded from this legislation. For further clarifications on this legislation, please contact Mr Jayantha Fernando, Director & Legal Advisor, ICTA - email jfdo@icta.lk; Tel 2369099-100.

You are kindly requested to inform all Heads of Departments and institutions under your Ministry with regard to implementing activities under this Circular.

I shall appreciate if you will kindly email me your official email address to prsec@presidentsoffice.lk within 03 days of receipt of this communication.



Lalith Weeratunga
Secretary to the President

CC: Secretary to the Prime Minister - for information
Secretary to the Cabinet - for information