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The Statement issued on the solutions proposed by the Presidential Committee appointed by His Excellency Maithripala Sirisena to solve the problems arisen in the Faculty of Medicine at SAIMM

The Presidential Committee to Resolve Issues Related to the Faculty of Medicine of South Asia Institute of Technology and Medicine (SAITM), having considered the recommendations made by numerous stakeholder groups, including the Deans of Faculties of Medicine of all State Universities, has proposed the following proposals to arrive at a permanent solution that is reasonable to all stakeholders and in keeping with Government Policy.

It is a timely requirement in the spirit of democracy that all parties cooperate to ensure the implementation of the proposed solutions, to cease disruptions thus far caused to the smooth functioning of universities and especially to provide an opportunity to students to return for education.

In keeping with the principle of justice to all stakeholders, the Government hopes to implement the following courses of action:

1. **Abolishing SAIMM (hereinafter SAIMM means its Faculty of Medicine):**  
This shall be done in a manner legally acceptable to the current shareholders, lending institutions and the new entity interested in taking over all operations and management of SAIMM on a not-for-profit basis, thus ending the ownership and management structure of SAIMM. The profit oriented entity owned and managed by Dr. Neville Fernando and family would thereby cease to exist.
2. By an agreement reached by the above parties, the assets, liabilities, staff and students of SAIMM shall be transferred to a non-state, not-for-profit making (that will utilize any excess income over expenditure of the organization for development or research or scholarships, without distributing among shareholders) degree awarding entity that will comply with the Minimum Standards on Medical Education and Training (to be legislated).
3. The Government has consulted several already established non-state, not-for-profit entities with the objective of establishing the proposed not-for-profit entity for this purpose. Detailed discussions in this regard with interested parties shall start very soon.
4. The new entity shall recognize all students currently enrolled at SAIMM, who possess the required entry qualifications. Opportunity will be afforded to these students to continue medical education in the proposed new institution.

5. Issues in respect of former students who have completed their degree course at SAITM should be addressed on the advice of the Sri Lanka Medical Council, based on the determination of the Supreme Court case filed on the same. Arrangements shall be made for the said students who have completed the degree at SAITM to undergo clinical training at recommended government hospitals.
6. Admission of medical students to SAITM has been suspended by the letter issued by the Secretary of the Ministry of Higher Education on September 15<sup>th</sup> 2017. This suspension will continue. Accordingly, all new admissions shall be made to the new entity (as described in 2 above), when only complying with the Minimum Standards on Medical Education and Training (to be legislated). The Government shall cooperate on all endeavors to make available, through financial institutions, subsidized student loan schemes to eligible students from low-income families to meet the cost of tuition and fees.
7. Current shareholders of SAITM shall not participate in the ownership or management of the new entity. The cooperation of Dr. Neville Fernando and family is extremely important in this regard.
8. The Ministry of Health shall gazette and place before Parliament the agreed Minimum Standards for Medical Education and Training based on the Draft submitted by the Sri Lanka Medical Council (SLMC), upon conclusion of discussions with the SLMC, the Hon. Attorney General and other relevant stakeholders. This task must be mandatorily completed within one month from today.

The chronology of implementing the mentioned solutions shall be, as follows:

- i. Ministry of Health to gazette the agreed Minimum Standards for Medical Education and Training, and place before Parliament,
- ii. SAITM, the selected party and lending institutions to reach agreement on the transfer of assets, liabilities, staff and students to the proposed not-for-profit entity.
- iii. Establish the new entity, under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education and the University Grants Commission.
- iv. Abolishing SAITM: Transfer assets, liabilities, staff and students of SAITM to the new entity.

- v. Establishment of new not-for-profit medical education degree awarding institute.

It is expected to immediately appoint a Committee of high level officials to coordinate the implementation of the above measures. This entire process shall be mandatorily completed by December 31<sup>st</sup> 2017.

Signed/ Sudarshana Gunawardana

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Director General Government Information

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