

**Profile of Hon. Dr. Rajitha Senaratne**  
**Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development of Sri Lanka**

Hon. Dr. Rajitha Senaratne was born on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1950. He graduated from the then University of Ceylon as a Dental Surgeon in 1974. He was a Student Leader and was the General Secretary of the Inter-University Students Federation from 1971 to 1973. He represented then the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka in the Sri Lanka Delegation to the Asian Youth Conference 1973 in Japan.

Dr. Senaratne held the post of Hon. Secretary of the Government Dental Surgeons' Association for 14 years continuously from 1975 to 1989 and was a popular trade union activist. He was awarded the Fellowship of the International College of Continuous Dental Education (F.I.C.C.D.E.) in 1992.

Dr. Senaratne represented Sri Lanka at the Asian Inter-Parliamentarians Conference on HIV/AIDS, Goa in India from its inception in 2008. He has also represented Sri Lanka at the International Medical Parliamentarians' Conference, Bangkok in the years of 1995 and 1997.

As a Member of Parliament continuously for 16 years from 1994 up to date, he has held many portfolios: the Minister of Lands (2001-2004); the Minister of Construction and Engineering Services (2007 to 2010) and as the Minister of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources Development from April, 2010 to date. As a Member of Parliament, he has represented both the Government and the Opposition. Dr. Senaratne's oratory skills are well known.

As the Minister of Construction and Engineering Services (2007 to 2010) he was instrumental in the formulation of the "National Construction Policy". Dr. Senaratne also initiated the project on desalination of sea sand for construction under the Hungarian Tied Aid program. During his tenure Sri Lanka entered the over-seas construction projects. He was also the architect of the "one hundred thousand housing project".

As the Minister of Lands, Dr. Senaratne was responsible in formulating "The National policy for Land in Sri Lanka" and the introduction of an efficient, transparent land registration and titling system. The Land Data bank he established facilitated issuance of 1.3 million ownership deeds to those occupying state land.

Dr. Senaratne assumed duties as the Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development in April 2010. Soon after assuming office he embarked on a programme to increase national fish production from 380,000 Mt to nearly 600,000 Mt by 2013 laying much emphasis on developing the fishing industry in the North and East where the industry has been severely affected due to terrorism for over 30 years.

Fisheries infrastructure development has become one of the key areas in the national fisheries development plan and included the construction of 06 fishery harbors in the North and the East and upgrading of May harbours in other parts of the island.

Dr. Senaratne strongly believes in sustainable utilization and management of our resources. This is exemplified by his strong initiatives to eradicate Illegal, Unreported and Unregistered (IUU) fishing through both national and international initiatives. One such move is the planned

introduction of Vessel Monitoring System to all multiday boats in Sri Lanka. This will also strengthen safety at sea and fisheries communication.

At international level he has strengthened country's rapport with the regional fisheries management organization, Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC). In fact credit goes to Dr Senaratne for hosting the most successful and best attended IOTC sessions in Sri Lanka from 17<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> March 2011 with the participation of 25 countries. His dynamic, development oriented programmes have caught the attention of many countries and international organizations. His thought provoking key note address to the 11<sup>th</sup> INFOFISH world Tuna Trade Conference in Bangkok in September 2010 was given wide publicity in the world media.

Hon. Dr. Senaratne is married to Dr. Mrs. Sujatha Senaratne who herself is Dental Surgeon and presently the Director of the National hospital, Colombo. They are blessed with two sons, the elder a medical Student and the other an Aerospace Engineering student at Kent University UK.