

# Women, Youth Business Centre Opens in Anuradhapura

August 4, 2025 at 7:04 PM



A one-stop Business Service Centre (BSC) for entrepreneurs was launched in Anuradhapura, marking a significant step toward strengthening women's economic empowerment and inclusive entrepreneurship.

The Business Service Centre was launched by UN Women and Chrysalis, joined by Anuradhapura District MP Nimal Palihena.

This BSC simplifies business support for rural women- and youth-led micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) by connecting them to government approvals, technical services, and market access—offering centralized help with registration, product and skills development, and real-time market information.

Housed within the Anuradhapura District Secretariat, the BSC will connect local businesses to a wide range of service providers, including universities, banks, regulatory bodies, and business chambers, and offer tailored support to MSMEs. The BSC will also facilitate innovation and technology, including an e-business registration process aimed at reducing bureaucratic delays. The BSC is part of an initiative approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2020, which continues to be supported and sustained by the Government.

Highlighting the importance of the Centre's streamlined model, MP Nimal Palihena said: "This centre has a 'one step' approach, which is that just by coming here, one will be able to get multiple tasks from different institutions completed under one roof. This will strengthen efficiency by saving time and cost (...) The special target group of this Business Service Centre is entrepreneurs, the backbone of the country, who make significant contributions to the national GDP."

The Republic of Korea, a long-standing partner of UN Women and Chrysalis on women's economic empowerment, supported the establishment of the BSC, through infrastructure, equipment, and training for government staff. In a statement shared, the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Sri Lanka, Miyon Lee noted: "Empowering women through entrepreneurship is one of the most effective ways to drive sustainable development and foster national peace and progress. The BSC in Anuradhapura is an important investment in accelerating women's economic participation – recognizing that inclusive economic growth, driven by women's leadership and enterprise, is essential to building a more stable and equitable society."

The Government Agent for Anuradhapura, Ranjith Wimalasooriya, highlighted plans for the Centre's long-term sustainability, stating: "The District Secretariat will provide human resources by assigning a full-time duty officer to the centre while exploring partnerships with various private sector stakeholders, including through the District Chamber of Commerce, to maintain the centre."

The MSME sector, which the BSC is designed to support, contributes 52% of Sri Lanka's GDP and employs over 2.25 million people. Although women's labour force participation in Sri Lanka has historically remained low, a growing number of micro and small enterprises are being owned and led by women, and the MSME sector plays a vital role in advancing women's economic empowerment.

"The first BSC was launched in Monaragala in 2020, and the opening of the Anuradhapura centre builds on our efforts to make support to enterprises more accessible. These centres reflect our collective commitment to ending barriers that have historically limited women's access to resources and services at the local level, as we work to create a more inclusive and enabling environment for women's economic participation," stated Ashika Gunasena, CEO of Chrysalis.

Ramaaya Salgado, Head of Office at UN Women Sri Lanka, highlighted the broader development impact of the initiative for women: "Too often, women face greater challenges in owning and growing their businesses due to barriers in society and institutions, and limited access to support. These centres aim to change that by simplifying formalisation, expanding access to services, and creating pathways to growth. When women are empowered to lead in business, entire communities benefit. This is not just about enterprise; it's about building an inclusive economy equally shaped by and for women."

Backed by strong government support and local involvement, the BSC initiative offers a practical way to strengthen Sri Lanka's MSME sector and build a more inclusive, resilient economy for everyone, including women. **(Newswire)**