

Secretary Clinton Appointed Professor Mendis to the US National Commission for UNESCO

WASHINGTON, DC – United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has appointed Professor Patrick Mendis as a commissioner to the US National Commission for UNESCO. The Commission is a federal advisory committee at the Department of State that provides advice regarding the US government’s activities as a member of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Former Senate Majority Leader Thomas Daschle wrote to Secretary Clinton, “Dr. Mendis has extensive experience in foreign policy and international trade having served previously in the Department of State.”

At the Department of State, Dr. Mendis advised the US Delegations to the United Nations, coordinated the science and technology policy with the White House, and served as the secretariat director of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. He has also worked for the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Minnesota House of Representatives.

Minnesota Congresswoman Betty McCollum said, “The depth of knowledge and experience as diplomat possessed by Dr. Mendis makes him a natural choice to join the US National Commission for UNESCO. His leadership on the commission will be extremely valuable to our country.”

Professor Mendis joined a distinguished group of American leaders drawn across government organizations, universities, and civil society. Commissioners offer insights to the US National Commission using their expert knowledge in specific subject areas. Mendis will serve a minimum of three years. “This is a distinct honor to serve my adopted country through the UNESCO Commission,” said Mendis, who was born in Sri Lanka and educated in Minnesota.

Senator Amy Klobuchar from Minnesota wrote to President Barack Obama, saying, “Dr. Mendis is a respected leader and award-winning public servant, teacher, and diplomat” who has served in “the US Departments of Agriculture, Energy, Defense, and State” during the Clinton and Bush administrations.

Dr. Mendis is an affiliate professor of public and international affairs at George Mason University. Previously, he authored two acclaimed books on America’s secret mission in the world while serving as a visiting foreign policy scholar at Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies.

A fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science, Dr. Mendis has worked in, and traveled to, more than 100 countries and visited all 50 states. He is an alumnus of the Harvard Kennedy School and the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

Dr. Mendis and his Scandinavian wife (and their son and daughter at Purdue University and the University of Virginia) live in Northern Virginia but they all consider Minnesota their home.

