

## **Male to back Dhanapala's bid for UN SG post - *Shaheed***

**by Zacki Jabbar**

The Maldives is expected to back Sri Lanka's bid for the UN Secretary General's post which falls vacant at the end of this year, when incumbent Kofi Anan's second five year term expires.

Visiting Maldivian Foreign Minister Ahamed Shaheed speaking to "The Island" in Colombo said that the Maldives was favourably inclined to support Sri Lanka's bid for the prestigious and influential UN Secretary General's position.

"Our decision would be strongly influenced by the fact that Sri Lanka is Maldives closest neighbour."

Shaheed, said Sri Lanka's recent election to the UN Human Rights Council indicates that its candidate Jayantha Dhanapala stands a very good chance of being elected Secretary General .

"I think Asia will be able to put forward a common candidate who could become the UN Chief for the first since 1960."

Asia's last UN Chief U. Thant of Burma (now Myanmar ) finished his second term in 1971.

Shaheed, said he did not want to make any specific comments since no country has declared its official stance as yet .

"Even though South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon announced his candidacy before Dhanapala , I think we would be inclined to support Sri Lanka since it is our closest neighbour."

Anan, himself has said that most countries believe his successor should be from Asia .

However the United States of America is resisting the regional power sharing arrangement, saying it would support the best candidate regardless of his or her region.

Source: <http://www.island.lk/2006/05/30/news16.html>