



UNA NEWS LETTER

United Nations Association of Sri Lanka

January – June 2016

International Year of Pulses 2016

The 68th UN General Assembly declared 2016 the International Year of Pulses (IYP) ([A/RES/68/231](#)). The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been nominated to facilitate the implementation of the Year in collaboration with Governments, relevant organizations, non-governmental organizations and all other relevant stakeholders.

The IYP 2016 aims to heighten public awareness of the nutritional benefits of pulses as part of sustainable food production aimed towards food security and nutrition. The Year will create a unique opportunity to encourage connections throughout the food chain that would better utilize pulse-based proteins, further global production of pulses, better utilize crop rotations and address the challenges in the trade of pulses.

The specific objectives of the IYP 2016 are to:

- Raise awareness about the important role of pulses in sustainable food production and healthy diets and their contribution to food security and nutrition;
- Promote the value and utilization of pulses throughout the food system, their benefits for soil fertility and climate change and for combating malnutrition;
- Encourage connections throughout the food chain to further global production of pulses, foster enhanced research, better utilize crop rotations and address the challenges in the trade of pulses.



What are pulses and why are they important?

Pulses are annual leguminous crops yielding between one and 12 grains or seeds of variable size, shape and colour within a pod, used for both food and feed. The term “pulses” is limited to crops harvested solely for dry grain, thereby excluding crops harvested green for food, which are classified as vegetable crops, as well as those crops used mainly for oil extraction and leguminous crops that are used exclusively for sowing purposes (based on the definition of “[pulses and derived products](#)” of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations).

Pulse crops such as lentils, beans, peas and chickpeas are a critical part of the general food basket. Pulses are a vital source of plant-based proteins and amino acids for people around the globe and should be eaten as part of a healthy diet to address obesity, as well as to prevent and help manage chronic diseases such as diabetes, coronary conditions and cancer; they are also an important source of plant-based protein for animals. In addition, pulses are leguminous plants that have nitrogen-fixing properties which can contribute to increasing soil fertility and have a positive impact on the environment.

International Year of Pulses 2016

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



The Activities in the year 2015 - 2016

UNASL – Annual General Meeting 2016

The Annual General Meeting was held on 27th March 2016 at the National Secretariat, Cyril Jansz Mawatha, Panadura following the hosting of the National Flag and the UN Flag.

The report of the Annual General Meeting of March 2015 and the Financial Report were presented and approved by the members. At the AGM Professor Lakshman Marasinghe was elected unanimously as President for the Fourth year in succession.

The Office Bearers elected are as shown below.

President – Professor Lakshman Marasinghe,
LL.B(Lond) LL.M(Lond) PH.D(Lond) LL.D(Col)

Executive Chairman – Mr. M. M. Zawahir

Secretary General – Mr. Errol G. Smith

Treasurer – Mr. S. I. A. Kabeer

Assistant Treasurer & Editor – Mr. Dharmadasa
Vitharana

Deputy Executive Chairman :-

Chief Commander Dr. D. W. Weerasooria,
MBBS, FRCS, FCGPSL, FCSSL
HRH Prince Dato'Seri Ambassador Deshakeerthi
M. M. M. Rushanudeen, JP (W/I)

Vice Chairman :-

Dr. K. D. S. Ranasinghe, MBBS (Ceylon) FRCOG
(UK)
Mr. D. M. Siriwardene Dip.in Agr.Kundasale,
Bsc.Agr.Peradeniya, PG Dip. Worcestershire
Univercity UK.
Brigadier G. V. Elapata, vsv

Assistant Secretary General :-

Mr. Sampath Priyankara
Mr. E. Karunaratne
Dr. M. Z. M. Nizar
Ms. P. R. Mallika Philips
Desamanya A. T. Malalgoda JP (W/I)
Dr. K. A. Abeywardena

Ordinary Member :-

Deshakeerthi M. Z. M. Hanieffa, JP (W/I)
Desamanya Eng. N. Rajkumar
Mr. M. D. Lalith D. Peiris
Mr. U. L. Abdul Marsook, LL.B Attorney –at- Law
Mr. T. S. N. Fernando
Major General K. D. P. Perera

Honorary Members of the National Executive Committee 2016/2017

Dr. G. P. P. Silva, MBBS (Cey) DPH (Lond) FRIPHH
Mr. M. V. Jayasinghe
Mr. Meril Perera
Miss. Bimalka Madhubhashini Perera
Mr. K. D. A. Jayaratne

President of UNASL visits Chennai

Dr. Lakshman Marasinghe, President of the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka visited Chennai on 13th June, 2016. He was met by Mr. Americai Narayanan who had been the Secretary of IFUNA and Secretary-General of Tamil Nadu FUNA. They discussed matters of mutual interest and benefit and pledged to maintain close ties between the two UNAs.



Dr. Lakshman Marasinghe is a Barrister-at-Law (Inner Temple), Attorney-at-Law (Sri Lanka) and Emeritus Professor of Law of the University of Windsor, Canada.

Assistance to Floods Victims

The United Nations Association of Sri Lanka, recently received a donation from the staff of Emirates National Oil Company, Dubai, UAE which was facilitated by Mr. M.M.M. Rifathudeen, Special Life Member of UNASL, through the initiative of Mr. M.M.M. Rushanudeen, Deputy Executive Chairman of UNASL, and Chairman UNASL Disaster Relief Finance Membership Development Committee.



The donations were distributed among 16 families affected by the Floods, at a simple ceremony held in Colombo on 21st May, 2016, which was attended by Mr Errol Smith, Secretary-General, Mr M M Zawahir, Executive Chairman, Mr M M M Rushanudeen, Deputy Executive Chairman, Mr S I A Kabeer, Treasurer and Mr Dharmadasa Vitharana, Assistant Treasurer/Editor of the UNASL, who took great pleasure in handing over the donations to these affected persons which included one physically handicapped and 3 UNAs Life Members.



Pulses for Better Nutrition

The UN has declared the year 2016 as the Year of Pulses. Pulses richly deserve the recognition by the UN as this variety of food is the main source of Protein - the Body Building component of the diets for the majority of the 7.3 billion people living on the planet, particularly for the Asians and the Africans.

Pulses also called grain legumes are erroneously called Cereals. Cereals are the food grains that are consumed as the staple in most communities. They are :- Rice, Wheat, Corn, Ragi (Kurakkan), Oats, Rye, Bajra, Barley etc. These cereals belong to the family Graminae (Grasses). While the cattle, goats, sheep and buffaloes eat the leaves, we the so called intelligent creatures consume the seeds. Most cereals provide in the main, the calories required as fuel for the daily activities of the body.

Some common edible pulses are :- Green Gram, Black Gram, Cowpea (many varieties), Thoor Dhal, Gram Dhal, Lentil (Mussoor Dhal), Soya been etc.

These items belong to the family Leguminoceae, sub family Papillionaceae. The pulses contain a good propation of proteins. (Almost all the pulses mentioned above contain approximately 25 percent of their dry weight as protein). Pulses also contain a good proportions of energy giving starches and fats and is an ideal complete Breakfast meal. Most varieties of meat in comparison contain 18 to 22 percent of protein. Hence the usefulness of pulses in view of the protein intake and the distinct price advantage over animal proteins.

For Vegetarians pulses are the main the source of Dietary Protein. Soya Bean occupies a prime position as the dried seed contains 40-42 percent of protein in contrast to the other legumes mentioned earlier.

Dambala seeds (winged bean *Psophocarpus tetragonolobus*) varieties also contain 19 to 35 percent of proteins. The dry Dambala seeds could also be processed like the soya beans to produce Milk, cheese, Ice cream etc. The raw Dambala pod itself provides more protein than many other vegetable.

The dry powdered pulses mixed with powdered cereal in the correct proportions is an excellent low cost Infant and Toddler meal which could be produced in the Homes and at Community level.

Cost wise pulses are at a great advantage over animal proteins hence it could be called the poor man's proteins, however pulses no doubt will immensely benefit the Rich too.

- ❖ Sri Lanka imports several hundred thousand tons of pulses from all parts of the world spending billions of dollars, when almost all these items can conveniently be produced locally provided proper policies are put in place. This surely will provide dignified employment for the multitudes that flock to the West Asian region to perform menial tasks that are bordering on slavery.
- ❖ Ground nut or Peanut which belongs to the Family Leguminoceae is usually not classed among the pulses but as a nut also contains about 25 percent its weight of proteins and also very rich in unsaturated fats.

Dr. G. P. P. SILVA

MBBS (Cey) DPH (Lond) FRIPHH (Lond)

Malnutrition in Sri Lanka

The situation

For a country that suffers no significant food shortages and provides extensive, free maternal and child health services, it is rather paradoxical that malnutrition affects nearly one-third of children and one quarter of women.

- Almost one out of five children are born with low birth weight - Around 29 per cent of under fives are reported to be underweight, rising as high as 37.4 per cent, in some deprived districts.
- 14 per cent of under fives suffer from acute malnutrition (wasting) when their weight is compared to the weight of a normal child of the same height.
- Nearly 58 per cent of infants between 6 and 11 months and 38 per cent children between 12 - and 23 months are anaemic.

Main factors contributing to malnutrition

The immediate and underlying causes of childhood malnutrition in Sri Lanka range from disease factors and inadequate dietary intake to knowledge and cultural factors that influence the utilization of health services and available food.

Poverty in its many manifestations (among these, low household income, inadequate basic infrastructure, limited access to media), affects nearly 23 percent of households in Sri Lanka and is closely intertwined with household food security. However, while poverty is an important basic determinant of child under nutrition, it does not solely explain the high rates of child malnutrition prevailing in Sri Lanka. Other major determinants of malnutrition in the country include inappropriate feeding practices, micronutrient deficiencies and disease.

Inappropriate infant and young child feeding practices: While exclusive breastfeeding levels have risen significantly, some babies are still being bottle fed during this period. Not only is the food inferior to breastmilk – babies miss out on colostrums, the first milk rich in proteins and antibodies that protect children from several infectious diseases – there are also risks of over-diluting the infant formula and of contaminating it through dirty water. The first priority therefore is to ensure that for the first six months children are exclusively breastfed.

As children move into complementary feeding, the growth of children might be hampered by a shortage of food. But a more common problem is that children are being given the wrong kind of food. Children are often fed little more than a mixture of cereal and water.

Micronutrient deficiencies which affect healthy child growth and development are less obvious forms of under nutrition but constitute major public health problems in Sri Lanka. The most common micronutrient deficiencies in children and women are iodine deficiency disorders, which affect physical and mental development of children; iron – which leads to anaemia and impairs cognitive development in children; and vitamin A which affects eyesight and immunity to diseases. Vitamin A deficiency affects one third of children less than 6 years of age and iron deficiency affects over one half of children 5-10 years old. One out of every five children suffers from iodine deficiency disorders – the single most important preventable causes of physical and mental retardation.

Disease: Although the incidence of diarrhoeal disease is low and static, it continues to contribute to child undernutrition in Sri Lanka. One of the reasons why the incidence of diarrhoeal disease has not changed over time is poor access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Around one third of households have no

access to sanitation and about one quarter have no access to safe drinking water. While malaria is under control, acute respiratory infection makes a substantial contribution to infant and under five mortality and morbidity, as well as malnutrition.

Impacts of malnutrition – effects on future development: While the image of the emaciated child is not one associated with Sri Lanka, the impacts of malnutrition are visible in other ways. Approximately 14 percent of children suffer from wasting- recording a lower weight than would be expected for their height and 29 percent of children under are under weight, registering a lower weight than would be expected for their age. The greatest tragedy of malnutrition is that it prevents children from reaching their full potential for growth and development. Malnutrition during childhood has serious and long lasting consequences

- Girls that are born with low birth weight grow into women of short stature, who themselves are more likely to have low birth weight babies, especially if they have their babies whilst they themselves are too young. Unless the cycle is broken at some stage, this situation will perpetuate over many generations resulting in an intergenerational cycle of malnutrition.
- Malnutrition impacts children's learning ability and people who survive a malnourished childhood are less physically and intellectually productive and suffer from more chronic illness and disability.

Constraints in dealing with malnutrition

The wide disparities that prevail across the regions and districts of Sri Lanka create major challenges in dealing with malnutrition. As the causes of malnutrition are multifactorial, actions to reduce malnutrition require the concerted efforts of several sectors and the incorporation of nutrition considerations into macro-economic and sectoral policies. The development of a national policy on nutrition will help to define key packages of interventions and efforts needed to be taken by stakeholders.

What is UNICEF doing?

UNICEF is working with a number of government and non-government partners to address problems of malnutrition in Sri Lanka. Initiatives include:

- Care for pregnant mothers: UNICEF is supporting the Government of Sri Lanka in promoting pre-natal nutrition services, including iron and folate supplementation, deworming, monitoring the nutritional status of expecting mothers and nutrition counselling.
- Promotion of appropriate Infant and young child feeding: UNICEF heavily invests in island wide promotion, protection and support to breast feeding, coupled with support to the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative and development of National Policy on the Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitute.
- Growth Monitoring and Promotion: Empowering caregivers to understand the growth patterns of their children and to take appropriate action. To that effect UNICEF supports the printing of 350,000 copies of the Child Development Record annually for use in Growth Monitoring and Promotion - Control of micronutrient deficiencies: UNICEF supports an island-wide vitamin A supplementation programme and Universal Salt Iodisation.
- A study on the causes of child under nutrition: Jointly with the Medical Research Institute, UNICEF has initiated a systematic study that examines immediate, underlying and basic causes of malnutrition in Sri Lanka
- Nutrition policy development: Under the auspices of the Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition, UNICEF is supporting the development of a national nutrition policy for Sri Lanka.

By courtesy of UNICEF

DO YOU PROVIDE THESE FACILITIES TO YOUR CHILDREN

Child population (1 year to 17 years) is the greatest asset in a country as its future, entirely depends upon them. Therefore highly developed countries invest a greater part of their wealth for the development of their children. In economically advanced countries child poverty is monitored by direct measurement of deprivation of children from providing the 14 facilities indicated below.

1. Three meals a day
2. At least one meal a day with meat, chicken or fish (or a vegetarian equivalent)
3. Fresh fruit and vegetables every day
4. Books suitable for the child's age and knowledge
5. Outdoor leisure equipment (bicycle, roller-skaters etc)
6. Regular leisure activities (swimming, playing an instrument, participating in youth organizations etc)
7. Facilities for indoor games (at least one per child, including educational baby toys, building blocks, board games, computer games etc
8. Money to participate in school trips and events
9. A quiet place with enough room and light to do homework
10. An internet connection
11. Some new clothes (ie. Not all second-hand)
12. Two pairs of properly fitting shoes (including at least one pair of all-weather shoes)
13. The opportunity, from time to time to invite friends home to play and eat
14. The opportunity to celebrate special occasions such as birthdays, name days, religious events

It should be emphasized that if you provide unlimited facilities and absolute freedom to your children without proper monitoring of their behavior, you may corrupt not only your child but also the society where he/she lives.

By Mr. E. Karunaratne

An alternative method of Mosquito Control

This method is Natural, Environment Friendly and Bio Dynamic. Two seemingly insignificant, an forgotten species and perhaps unknown to many, namely :- the Dragon Fly (Bathkoora) and the small Insectivorous Bats (Kiri wawula) can contribute appreciably to mosquito control. Both these species are in Danger of Extinction due to loss of their habitat. All that we need to do is to assist the multiplication of these two species.

The Dragon Fly lays its eggs in water or on exposed parts of water plants. Construction of ponds in every possible private and public garden namely :- schools, temples, parks and cemeteries is recommended. A Dragon Fly feeds on 40 -50 mosquitoes per day and a Dragon Fly larva living in water eats up double that number of mosquito larvae. The insectivorous bat (kirivawla) was a frequent visitor to our homes in the evenings, but rarely seen nowadays. However you may come across an insect eating bat even in the city of Colombo occasionally. They inhabit old abandoned buildings, tree cavities and in caves. Construction of artificial caves in public parks etc could encourage them to make such places their homes. Each bat in its wobbly flight consumes thousands of insects including mosquitoes for dinner.

If these two friendly creatures can be nurtured they will no doubt contribute to control of Dengue Fever and perhaps Sica Virus fever if it ever occurs in Sri Lanka. Let this message enlighten the powers that be and act accordingly. More information on the life cycle and breeding patterns of these two species is available if required.

By Dr. G. P. P. Silva

MBBS (Cey) DPH (Lond) FRIPHH (Lond)

WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS

UNA Membership January to June 2016

Special Life Members

S. M. Kafi	- Kolonnawa	(1606)
B. A. I. M. Jayawardane	- Ganemulla	(1612)
N. Sultana	- Bangladesh	(1615)
S. A. H. Sumon	- Bangladesh	(1616)
M. F. Junkeer	- Mahabudgamuwa	(1617)
F. N. Fazeen	- Wattala	(1618)

Life Members

K. R. B. Fernando	- Moratuwa	(1605)
M. A. R. Fernando	- Panadura	(1607)
T. A. Dole	- Moratuwa	(1608)
G. D. U. Jayawardena	- Panadura	(1609)
S. N. Dharmaratna	- Moratuwa	(1610)
M. R. Asiri	- Moratuwa	(1611)
T. Vitharanage	- Panadura	(1613)
K. A. D. R. Christy	- Ja Ela	(1614)
J. A. T. Padmal	- Kuliypitiya	(1619)

INVITATION TO ALL MEMBERS 71ST UNITED NATIONS DAY

National Observance of the 71st United Nations Day will be held on the 23rd October 2016 At 3pm, the Bishop's College Auditorium, No. 11 Perahera Mawatha, Colombo 03.

ALL ARE WELCOME

UNA News Letter Sponsored by

**Special Life Member
Desamanya Eng. N. Rajkumar**

Co-ordinated by
**Desamanya Ananda Tissa Malalgoda
Assistant Secretary General UNASL**



UNA

National Secretariat General,
39/1, Cyril Jansz Mawatha, Panadura,
12500, Sri Lanka.
Tel : 038-2232123, 038-2243080,
Or 038-2232110.
Fax : 038-2232123
E- mail : unasl@slt.lk
Web site : www.unasl.org