



UNA NEWS LETTER

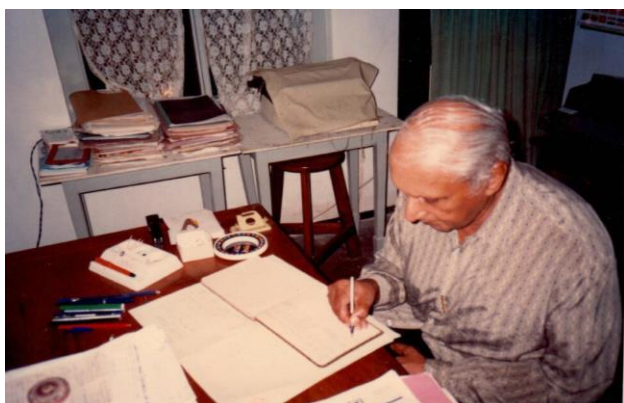
United Nations Association of Sri Lanka

January- June 2017

BRIFE HISRORY OF THE UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF SRI LANKA

The United Nations Association in the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (UNASL) was established under the guidance of the late Right Honorable D.S. Senanayake PC, MP, the first Prime Minister of Ceylon, on the 19th August, 1950, five years before Sri Lanka was admitted as a Member State of the United Nations on 14th December 1955, together with 15 other countries.

The Association is registered under the Companies Act No. 17 of 1982 and with the Department of Social Services as well as the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Council.



Dr. Gamini Corea's visit to the Secretariat in 1992 after He became the president of the United Nations Association for the first time here he is writing the visitors Book. (Date 1992/05/10)



Brigadier Granvil Elapatha Cutting the cake at the United Nations Association's 65th Anniversary Commemoration in 2015.

INVITATION TO ALL MEMBERS 72nd UNITED NATIONS DAY

National Observance of the 72nd United Nations Day will be held on Sunday the 22nd October 2017
At 3 pm, at the Bishop's College Auditorium, No. 11 Perahera Mawatha, Colombo 03.

ALL ARE WELCOME

In 1951, the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka was admitted as the Sole National Affiliate of the World Federation of United Nations Association (WFUNA), joining the rest of the world comprising around 100 member Countries, in hosting seminars, lectures, Educational Session and inter-school competitions throughout the country, Thus creating a better understanding among communities. UNA Sri Lanka is today one of the most senior members of the federation, actively involved in the work of WFUNA.

The Governors General and subsequently, the President of the Republic of Sri Lanka has always been the patron of the association, Honorable Prime Minister, the Chief Vice Patron, Honorable Speaker of Parliament and the Honorable Leader of the Opposition are Vice Patrons. His Excellency the Late Justice Chistopher Gregory Weeramanthry, former Vice President of the International Court of Justice, was a Honorable Vice President of the Association.

UNASL Holds it's Annual General Meeting on the Last Saturday of March every Year and the members of the newly elected Committee are sworn in on this day.

The Committee consists of the President who is an eminent citizen of the country and an Executive Committee consisting of an Executive Chairman, Secretary-General, Treasurer, Editor, Two Deputy Executive Chairmen, Five Assistant Secretaries, Vice Chairmen and committee Members. Several categories of members form the association, namely Annual, Life, Special Life, Complimentary, Honorary members and corporate members.

It also has a conferred category of membership called Diplomatic Membership for Ambassadors and High Commissioners currently accredited to Sri Lanka. A unique feature is that UNASL is perhaps the only organization which has Diplomatic Members. The Diplomatic members have been contributing immensely towards the activities of the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka, in the past.

UNASL currently has over 1600 members, comprising Special Life, Annual, Honorary and Corporate Members as well as 325 Schools (reaching around 165,000 Students) registered under an island wide UNA Study Circles programme which was introduced in 1981 and is approved by the Ministry of Education.

Through the numerous activities carried out by the UNASL, there are ample opportunities to reflect on the success and challengers of the common people as well as to consider the significant accomplishments the organization has contributed to maintaining peace and security, promoting human rights and democracy, providing solutions to environmental issues, the alleviation of poverty and economic development.

The UNA Sri Lanka is moving forward as a vibrant organization through the tremendous commitment of its volunteers taking the message of the United Nations to the grassroots of Sri Lanka with the co-operation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme in Sri Lanka which includes the United Nations Information Center.

Compiled by:

Errol Smith

FIM (SL), FCPM, AMIA (UK), MJF, OSt. J

Secretary-General

UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF SRI LANKA

Global challenges facing food and agriculture

Rapid changes in food systems call for effective national and international governance

Several key conclusions can be drawn from the preceding review and analysis of the global trends that are influencing food security, poverty and hunger, and the sustainability of agriculture and food systems.

First, overall demand for food will continue to increase, and will do so in the context of increasing scarcity of natural resources and important changes in the structural composition of the demand for food and agricultural products. Climate change and increased competition for natural resources will continue to contribute to natural resource degradation and scarcity, with negative impacts on people's livelihoods and food security. Problems of extreme poverty, hunger, food insecurity and undernourishment will persist, along with increases in overweight, obesity and diet-related chronic diseases.

Natural disasters are increasing in number and intensity and, along with climate change-related extreme weather events, are expected to deepen the global need for humanitarian assistance and resilience building for farmers and rural households. At the same time, trans boundary plant pests and diseases and other emerging threats continue to provoke crises in agricultural and food systems and impact productivity and human health. Conflicts are continuing and could intensify in many parts of the world, with widespread economic and social consequences, beyond the afflicted countries.

Dynamic rural transformation is happening in most low-income countries and is expected to continue. This will have impacts on agricultural production systems, employment, nutrition and migration and will present society with the challenge of finding ways to include everyone in the development process.

Rapid changes and transitions in food systems increasingly call for effective national and international governance systems, and evidence-based and well-targeted policy responses. More investment in agriculture and agrifood systems, including increased spending on research and development, is needed to enhance agricultural productivity and promote innovation for sustainable agriculture, rural prosperity and food security.

Based on the conclusions of the analysis of global and regional trends, this chapter outlines a set of 10 Challenges that are the most pertinent to FAO's mission to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, achieve food security for all, improve rural livelihoods, and make agriculture, fisheries and forestry and their natural resource base more resilient, productive and sustainable. The overarching challenge facing food and agriculture will be how to address them as a whole.

Challenge 1

Sustainably improving agricultural productivity to meet increasing demand.

Challenge 2

Ensuring a sustainable natural resource base.

Challenge 3

Addressing climate change and intensification of natural hazards.

Challenge 4

Eradicating extreme poverty and reducing inequality.

Challenge 5

Ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition.

Challenge 6

Making food systems more efficient, inclusive and resilient.

Challenge 7

Improving income earning opportunities in rural areas and addressing the root causes of migration.

Challenge 8

Building resilience to protracted crises, disasters and conflicts.

Challenge 9

Preventing trans boundary and emerging agriculture and food system threats.

Challenge 10

Addressing the need for coherent and effective national and international governance

E. Karunaratne (Assistant Secretary General) From Future of Food and Agriculture Trends & Challenges-FAO

Climate Change and Global Warming



Paris Agreement in turmoil

The Paris Agreement on Global Warming and Climate Change which was adopted in December 2015 with nearly 150 countries ratifying the agreement, is in turmoil due to United States indicating its intention to withdraw from the agreement. This agreement was ratified by President Obama in December 2015.

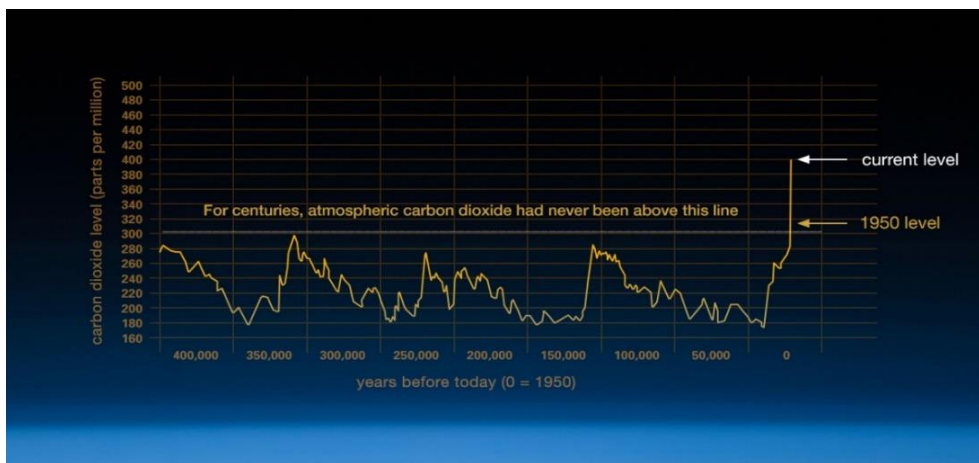
Paris agreement was the final result of the global community agreeing to create a consensus on the need for collective action on Global Warming and Climate Change. Discussions on this topic commenced after the United Nations Conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1990. After a series of detailed discussions the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) came in to existence in 1995.

After further discussions the Kyoto protocol was established in 1997. Nearly 150 countries agreed to this protocol by agreeing to restrict Carbon Dioxide emissions on an agreed formula. Paris Agreement moved a step further in getting individual countries to agree to limit such emissions voluntarily to 2.5% above the past limits.

Over the years, the fact that this Green House gas emissions were humanly induced was accepted by the scientific community after series of studies conducted by various Scientific and Research organizations. It has been proved beyond any reasonable doubt, that increases in carbon dioxide emissions during the recent past are humanly induced. Studies carried out have indicated that there has been a sharp increase in the global warming due to increases in Carbon Dioxide emissions.

The diagram below indicates that average level of Carbon Dioxide has never been as high as in the recent past. The reason being, the humanly induced emissions by the Global Community for which the Global community has to take the collective responsibility. Over 95 percent of the scientific community agreed that reasons for global

warming are humanly induced. 18 scientific organizations commenting on climate change state that "Observations throughout the world make it clear that climate change is occurring, and rigorous scientific research demonstrates that the greenhouse gases emitted by human activities are the primary driver."



(2009) "Climate change is real. There will always be uncertainty in understanding a system as complex as the world's climate. However there is now strong evidence that significant global warming is occurring. The evidence comes from direct measurements of rising surface air temperatures and subsurface ocean temperatures and from phenomena such as increases in average global sea levels, retreating glaciers, and changes to many physical and biological systems. It is likely that most of the warming in recent decades can be attributed to human activities (IPCC 2001)." (2005, 11 international science academies)

Over the years the global community seemed to have realized the gravity of the situation and accepted the fact that common activity is needed to rectify the situation.



It has been noted that many cities all round the world have decided on the need to reduce the use of fossil fuel by encouraging investment in other types of fuel.

Therefore it is clear that urgent action is needed to rectify this situation. Discussions initiated by the UNFACC has resulted in the acceptance that global warming has been humanly induced and action needs to be taken to reduce the level of Carbon Dioxide emissions with all countries agreeing on a voluntary basis. Based on discussions at UNFACC it was agreed at the Paris conference voluntary reductions in the level of emissions. The Paris Agreement was signed on this basis.

However the change in the attitude of the United States has resulted in a confusion. At the follow up meeting held recently all developed countries inclusive of European Union including Germany, France and Canada and the UK and also other countries such as Russia, China, India and Brazil were keen to go ahead with the agreed formulas but there could not be consensus due to the attitude of the United States. This issue came up at the meeting of the G20 held recently. However the leaders were unable to agree on a common formula.

Even though the United States Administration is not enthusiastic about fulfilling the commitments under the Paris Agreement the general Public, local Government authorities, academia, and the business sector who are keen to invest in environmentally friendly sources of energy are very keen that USA remains in the agreement. However, the situation is confusing and we may have to await the conclusion of discussion scheduled for November 2017 to get a definite picture of the future of the Paris Agreement.



However it is imperative that common sense should prevail.

**Sumathi Fernando
(Ex-Co. Member)**

The Activities in the year 2017 – 2018

UNASL – Annual General Meeting 2017

The Annual General Meeting was held on 26th March 2017 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 2016 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

Editor & Assistant Treasurer – 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
Univcity 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

Executive Members :-

Deshakeerthi M. Z. M. Hanieffa, JP (W/I)

Mr. T. S. N. Fernando

Mr. Meril Perera

Mr. M. D. Lalith D. Peiris

Desamanya Eng. N. Rajkumar

Mr. M. A. Rohan Fernando

**Honorary Members of the National Executive
Committee 2017/2018**

Dr. G. P. P. Silva, MBBS (Cey) DPH (Lond) FRIPHH

Mr. U. L. Abdul Marsook, LL.B Attorney –at- Law

Ms. Savani Jayasooriya

RECENT FLOODS AND LANDSLIDES IN SRI LANKA

The recent torrential rains in Sri Lanka resulted in severe flooding and landslides in many parts of the country. Roads were severely inundated whilst several people lost their lives as well as over 500,000 persons were displaced due and rendered homeless in many areas.

It was observed that the government machinery had also moved in, in a big way providing immediate necessities and medical aid.

The United Nations Association of Sri Lanka also worked closely with the government and other voluntary organizations in providing relief to the affected persons.

The damage caused by the floods and landslides were huge and the government along with other NGO's addressed these issues promptly including the environmental clean-up or debris management which needed urgent attention. The Sri Lanka Security Forces and Police played a major role along with the NGO's in this endeavor.

The UNA Sri Lanka has plans to identify schools within the UNA Study Circle and provide any educational equipment which had been damaged and needs replacement.

SOUTHERN CONFERENCE IN GALLE

Southern Conference of UN Study Circles organized by United Nations Study Circle of Richmond College, Galle was held on 13th March 2017 at Richmond College Auditorium. Children from other schools in the vicinity of Galle also participated in the conference conducted under the distinguished patronage of Mr. Sampath Weeragoda Principal, Richmond College and attended by Vice Principals Mr. Piyasiri Kumarage and Ms. Devika Haputhanthri and Ms. R. R. H. Priyadarshani and Ms. M. N. D. Abeysinghe teachers in charge of the study circle at Richmond. UNASL was represented by the executive chairman, Secretary General and other members of the Executive Committee. The Principal welcomed all those who were present inclusive of the students from nearby schools and teachers in charge, Ms. Kumari Wikkremasinghe information officer of the UNDP conducted a session on Sustainable Development Goals. Mr. M. M. Zawahir executive chairman of the UNASL, Dr. G. P. P. Silva former Chairman, Sumathi Fernando Member, and Executive Committee made presentations on various aspect of activities of the UNASL and SDGS. There was also the contest to develop a logo for the Southern conference.

An opportunity was also given to representatives of other schools to express their thoughts and conference ended after the vote of thanks by Ms. Priyadarshani.

The UNASL wishes to convey their thanks to the Principal and the staff and the senior pupils of Richmond College who has spared no pains in making this event a complete success.

MEETING WITH THE DIRECTOR, UN INFORMATION CENTER, NEW DELHI

Senior Officials of the UNASL had an Experience Sharing Session with Mr. Derk Segaar, Director, UNIC, New Delhi on 4th July, 2017 at the United Nations Office in Colombo.

UNA – Sri Lanka was represented by Prof. Lakshman Marasinghe (President), Mr. Errol Smith (Secretary-General), Brig. Granville Elapata (Vice Chairman), Mr. Dharmadasa Vitharana (Assistant Treasurer/Editor) and Dr. G.P.P. Silva (Executive Committee Member).

It was a very fruitful discussion where many views and experiences were exchanged. UNASL highlighted its programme of work for 2017/2018 which included the collaboration with the UN Information Center, Sri Lanka in our Study Circle programme and Teacher Seminars, Public Lectures, Tree Planting Programme, the United Nations National Observance which is a high profile event and also our partnership in the Sustainable Development Goals programme. The work of the UNASL was highly commended by the Director of the UN Information Center in New Delhi as well as officials of the UNDP Sri Lanka.

APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE FOR MALAYSIA

The Executive Committee of the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka appointed Mr. Abdul Azeer Irshad Ahamed (Special Life Member) as the Honorary Resident Representative of the UNA – Sri Lanka in Malaysia with effect from 1st June, 2017 to 31st May, 2018.

Mr. Irshad Ahamed has been serving in this position for the past few years in promoting the United Nations and fostering support and co-operation for UNA Sri Lanka.

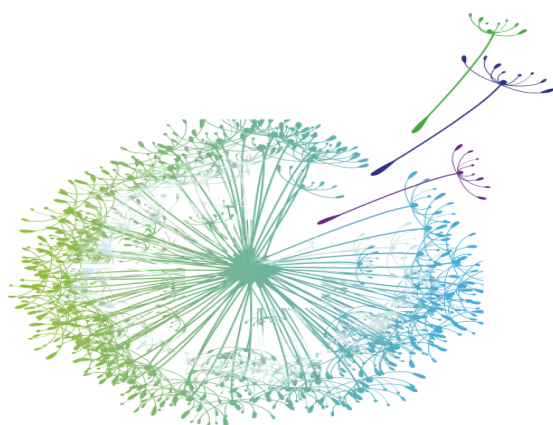
WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERSHIPS

Special Life Members

Ahamed Ajmal Ishfahani Uwise – Colombo (1644)	Punsiri Tennakoon	(1661)
G. M. Rohan P. Dayaratne – Dehiwala (1645)	M. Ansar M. Anfas	(1665)
Mohamed Siyad Mohamed Rasvi (1660)	M. Naufer M. Naushad	(1666)

Life Members

M. B. M. Bilal – Aluthgama (1646)	S. M. P. Bandara Abeywardhana (1657)
F. A. Mohamed Azaad – Mawanella (1647)	Kuruwita
Anthony Dexter Fernando – Colombo (1648)	Naushalya Manjari Rajapakhsa (1658)
P. H. Asoka Perera – Panadura (1649)	S.M. Aravinda ravibhanu (1659)
W. G. Chandima Kumara – Galle (1650)	Sumanarathne
Wasana Saranga Sudusinghe – Galle (1651)	T. Ramal Suvin Fernando (1662)
J. M. Lalith Presantha Bandara (1652)	
Asoka Rajini De Silva – Galle (1653)	Waruna Udith Maddumage (1663)
R. K. A. Gamini – Ratnapura (1654)	D. P. Nadeeka Pathirana (1664)
R. K. A. Dilanjan Sonal – Ratnapura (1655)	Sinduja Sundareshan (1667)
K. A. D. S. Maduwantha Abeysena (1656)	Banduja Sundareshan (1668)
Kuruwita	Fathima Majitha Basheer (1669)
	Anthea Lakshani Shehani (1670)



Theme for This Year

2017
INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
FOR DEVELOPMENT



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