



UNA NEWS LETTER

United Nations Association of Sri Lanka

July – December 2015

President of the seventieth session of the United Nations General Assembly



H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft
President of the seventieth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

On 15 June 2015, the United Nations General Assembly elected Mogens Lykketoft of Denmark to serve as the President of its seventieth session, which runs from September 2015 to September 2016. At the time of his election, Mr. Lykketoft was the Speaker (President) of the Danish Parliament, a position he has held since 2011.

Mr. Lykketoft is an economist by training and a veteran parliamentarian and government minister. As chairman of the Social Democratic Party from 2002 to 2005, he was also the opposition leader in Parliament.

A Cabinet Minister for a total of 11 years – beginning in 1981, when he was Minister for Taxation – Mr. Lykketoft served most recently as Foreign Minister, from 2000 to 2001. Earlier, as Finance Minister from 1993 to 2000, he spearheaded economic reforms that led to a rise in employment rates and a strengthened economy. During the same period, Denmark, which has traditionally been an active supporter of international development efforts, dramatically exceeded its development assistance targets.

Mr. Lykketoft's career in Parliament began in 1981 and has spanned a dozen consecutive general elections – including the latest, in June 2015. He has currently taken leave from Parliament while he serves as the President of the United Nations General Assembly.

While Vice-President of the Parliament from 2009 to 2011, Mr. Lykketoft also served on its Public Accounts Committee, from 2006 to 2011, and was the foreign policy spokesman of his party from 2005 to 2011.

When his party was in opposition over the period 1982 to 1993, Mr. Lykketoft chaired several parliamentary committees and was its key negotiator with the government on economic policy and budgets. He also served as his party's parliamentary spokesperson from 1991 to 1993, and again, from 2001 to 2002.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

66th Annual General Meeting

66th Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held in March 2016.
All members are cordially invited to attend this meeting. (**AGM 01st Notice is included**)

We have launched the UNASL new web site www.unasl.org/en

Previously, from 1975 to 1981, Mr. Lykketoft headed a department of the Danish Labour Movement's Economic Council – an economic think-tank established by the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions and the Social Democratic Party.

Since 2010, Mr. Lykketoft has been a regular foreign affairs analyst and commentator with Danish TV2 News, appearing with former Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen of the Danish Liberal Party on the weekly news magazine Ellemann & Lykketoft.

Born in Copenhagen on 9 January 1946, Mr. Lykketoft will turn 70 during the Assembly's seventieth session, a fact he highlighted during his acceptance speech to the world body upon his election. A graduate of the University of Copenhagen with a Master's degree in economics, he has written books and articles on subjects ranging from foreign policy and security to economics and the "Danish Model" for employment and social welfare, including two books he co-authored with his wife, the Danish journalist and writer, Mette Holm. He has two daughters and five grandsons.



The Activities in the year 2014 - 2015

The National Executive Committee having completed the activities for the year, continued meeting up on a monthly basis at the registered office in Panadura meeting on days most suitable for members of the Executive Committee.

The National Executive Committee appreciated the work of the Medarata Unit for the progressive work they do in Kandy area.

1. National Observance of the 70th United Nations Day

The National Observance of the 70th United Nations Day was held at the Bishops College Auditorium on the 19th of October 2014 at 3.00 pm with the singing of the National Anthem and ended at 5.00 pm with many opportunities given to students to showcase their talents in a large audience of around 800 participants from all walks of life. The special invitees and dignitaries present appreciated the work of the Association throughout the year. The keynote address for this grand event was delivered by a student from one of our study circle schools after winning the all island best speaker competition.

The special speeches delivered and cultural items performed were

- Address by the President of the Association Prof. Lakshman Marasinghe.
- The Chief Guest Honorable Prof. G.L. Peiris Minister of External Affairs.
- The Guest of Honor Mr. Subinay Nandy Resident Coordinator of the UN.
- The keynote address was delivered by Mr. P. Ravindu Rasanjana student of K/Sri Chandrasekara Maha Vidyalaya, Keselwatta. He was the winner of the Annual speech contest conducted by the UNASL. His speech was on International Year of Family Farming which was the UN Theme for the year 2014.
- Cultural Items were presented by Ladies College, OKI International School and Asian International School students.
- The European Union Ambassador David Daly , High Commissioner for Canada M/s Shelley Whiting, Brigadier General G V Elapatha, Mr. A H M Azwer MP and Consul General for Sri Lanka in Los Angeles Dr. Hector Weerasinghe and members of the UNA were present at this ceremony.
- Many Annual awards were given to the Best Schools Study Circle, Best Teachers in Charge, the winners and runners up of the speech contest and the Quiz Competition.
- The Secretary General M M Zawahir delivered the vote of thanks.

2. Observance of the International Peace Day

The International Peace Day is an annual event which we observe at some of the schools from our study circles. United Nations Association of Sri Lanka celebrated the UN Peace day on 19th September 2014 at Sri Chandrasekera Maha Vidyalaya at Horetuduwa, Panadura. Executive Chairman of the Association, Brigadier G. V. Elapatha presided the meeting and Mrs. Kumari Wickramasinghe, the Information Officer UN was the Chief Guest. Mrs. S. D. P. J. Abeysena, Principal of the school, teachers and students of the school, teachers and students of the school and Dr. G. P. P. Silva former Editor, Mr. Dharmadasa Vitharana Assistant Secretary General, Mr. E. Karunarathne, Executive Committee Member participated at this ceremony.

Key-note address was delivered by Mrs. Kumari Wickramasinghe, the Information Officer of UN. She explained the objectives of the UN, activities of the UN Agencies and contribution made to maintain peace and harmony among nations as well as contribution made towards education of children in the world. She also appreciated the services rendered by the UNASL.

Dr. Parakrama Silva, the former Deputy Executive Chairman of UNASL stated that the activities of UNASL made a contribution to improve the awareness of school children about UN and its activities through the school program established by UNASL. The principal of Sri Chandrasekera Maha Vidyalaya Mrs. S. D. P. J. Abeysena also spoke at the meeting.

The ceremony was organized and conducted by the prefects and the students of Sri Chandrasekera Maha Vidyalaya.

The Information Officer of UN Mrs. Kumari Wickramasinghe donated publications of UN for raising awareness of student population about UN and its Agencies.

3. The School Study Circle Program

The UNA Study Circle Program inaugurated in 1981 has a membership of 328 partner schools at present.

- The programs held by the schools during the year are evaluated based on their activity reports and the five best schools selected for Annual Awards.
- We organized the Speech and General Knowledge Competition in all the schools that took part in the annual best speaker contest and the General Knowledge competition on the United Nations at the temple in Panadura. A speech contest among the schools based on the UN Theme for the year is held annually and the first – five places are given awards at the UN Day Ceremony. The winner delivers the Keynote Speech at the UN Day Observance.
- Seminars are held by the Education Committee at the partner schools from time to time. It is usual to hold a seminar at a member schools with several member schools in the locality participating.

4. Kanagawa World Art Exhibition

The Association forwarded child art works to the 18th Biennial Kanagawa World Child Art Exhibition in Yokohama, Japan.

5. Annual General Meeting

Annual General Meeting was held on the 29th March 2015 at the National Secretariat General in Panadura starting at 11.00 am. The first Notice was sent to all members before one month prior to the closing date of the nominations on 14th March 2015. The second notice was also sent with the agenda for the meeting subsequently. Two ExCo members kindly consented to host the first 40 members who confirmed attendance at the AGM.

The AGM approved the appointment of **Mr. Rohana Manamperi LLB** (Sri Lanka) B.E.D.-D.I.P. (So) Attorney-at-Law, Notary Public & Commissioner for Oaths as Honorary Company Secretary on the recommendation made by the ExCo.

The new Executive Committee members as recommended by the outgoing Executive Committee were presented to the AGM held on 29th March 2015 and approved.

UNASL INVALUABLE SERVICE & UNASL HIGHEST HONOUR AWARDS



DHARMADASA VITHARANA

United Nations Association of Sri Lanka was founded in December 20th 1950 and reorganized in 1976. Late Mr. Kumaran Fernando became the Secretary General and the Headquarters was moved to the present location in Panadura. On the eve of the reorganization Mr. Dharmadasa Vitharana became a Member of the Association. He was the 13th member among the members. Dharmadasa on becoming a member of the Association unhesitatingly assumed responsibilities in a big way. He contributed to the success of the Association and the many projects and programmes conducted under the auspicious of the Association. He has functioned as the Senior Assistant Secretary General and Assistant Treasurer for many years. Later he was elected unanimously for the post of Editor and continues up to now. His wife Mrs. Chandanie Vitharana is a Life Member of the Association.



BRIGADIER GENERAL G. V. ELAPATA vsv

Brigadier Granville V. ELAPATA vsv has been a member of the Association since 03rd August 1976. He has been the Executive Chairman of the association since 1989. He has taken the work of the Association very seriously and contributed immensely to the activities of the Association since 1989.



MOHAMED ZAWAHIR

Mr. Zawahir joined the Association soon after leaving school and grew with the Association contributing towards the work of the Association. He was appointed as an Assistant Secretary General and thereafter he was elected as the Deputy Executive Chairman during which period he was the trainer for the university students on the "Model United Nations". Then he took the position of the Editor of the Association. Subsequently he was elected to the Executive Chairman. Soon after the demise of the Secretary General Mr. Kumaran Fernando, he was elected as the Secretary General. He has been the Chairman of the UN Day function for several years.



DESHAKEERTHI M.M.M. RUSHANUDEEN JPW

He is one of the most active members of National Executive Committee of United Nations Association. He is also the youngest Life Member of UNASL since 1990. He was the founder and the organiser of the UNA Study Circle at the Zahira College Colombo and become its first President in 1991. In view of his very high record while he was in school, he was the first UNA Study Circle President to be invited by National Executive Committee of UNA, to stand election as a Member of ExCo for the years 1992 and 1994. He has served as an Assistant Secretary from 1995 to 2004 and as Vice Chairman from 2005 to 2008. He has also served as Senior Assistant Secretary General from 1998 to date. He is an old boy of Zahira College Colombo and Hameed-Al-Hussienie College, Colombo. He is a Social Worker, young businessman and Chairman/Managing Director of M/S. MMR Marketing Services (Pvt) Ltd and NIZAM TRADING Colombo. He has contributed in many ways for the success of the programmes implemented by the Association.



CHANDANI KUSUMALATHA SILVA

Mrs. Chandani Silva is an active member of the Association since 23rd October 1979. She has contributed in many ways for the success of the Association. In appreciation for her invaluable service since 1979 to date, she has been awarded the Honorary Membership of the Association.

Sri Lanka National Observance of the 70th United Nations Day

The United Nations Association of Sri Lanka in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and United Nations Sri Lanka organized the 70th National Observance of the United Nations Day; this year celebrating the 60th anniversary of Sri Lanka’s membership to the UN and the 65th anniversary of the United Nations Association. It was held on 18th October 2015 at the Bishops College Auditorium, Colombo.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Harsha De Silva was present as Chief Guest and Acting Resident Coordinator and Resident Representative Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for Sri Lanka and Maldives Bath S. Crawford was present as Guest of Honour.



The Awards were presented to the winners of the Best Study Circle, General Knowledge, Speech Contest, Essay Writing competition among UNA Study Circle in schools in Sri Lanka while also presenting certificates and awards to the Best Teacher in Charge of UNA Study Circles.

Awards were also presented to the highest honorary member and for invaluable service to the UN and Association. Also special awards were presented to those who supported the Association.

Entertainment and Cultural Items were presented by Students of Ladies College Colombo and Kehan Gunatilake and Musthaq Shamail of Colombo Toastmasters Gavel Club. The Ambassadors,

High Commissioners, officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, members of the UN – Colombo, all school teachers and student and members of the UNASL were present at this ceremony.

The welcome address was given by the Executive Chairman Brigadier General G. V. Elapata. The other speakers were the Chief Guest Dr. Harsha De Silva, Special Guest of Honour Ms. Bath S. Crawford, UNIC Officer in-charge Ms. Kumari Wicramasinghe and the keynote address was delivered by Dunya Jayamani Jayasekara of Vishaka Vidyalaya, Colombo 05. The winner of the speech contest.



The vote of thanks was delivered by the Secretary General of the Association Mr. M. M. Zawahir. Finally, the audience joined them in singing the National Anthem.



Address by Bath S. Crawford

“The most rapidly growing economic region in the world”

An interview with Marko Walde, Managing Director of the German-ASEAN Chamber Network, about the ASEAN Free Trade Area and the opportunities for the German Business.

Mr Walde, you are Managing Director of the German-ASEAN Chamber Network. Why are the German Chambers of Foreign Trade in Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam working together in this network?



The ASEAN countries have carried out further integration and harmonisation measures to create a joint single market with duty-free movement of goods, free flow of services, capital, investments and labour. These developments and the extremely positive forecasts for the coming years with the various advantages of the individual member states are also of great interest for German businesses, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises. For these reasons the German-ASEAN Chamber Network was founded in 2012 by the German Chambers of Foreign Trade in the ASEAN region.

The ASEAN Free Trade Area is to come into effect in late 2015. Could you describe this entity?

The ten member states of the ASEAN union, being Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore along with Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar, represent what is currently the most rapidly growing economic region in the world. ASEAN was initially merely a political unit, but is being enhanced by economic harmonisation and standardisation. A joint economic area with a total population of more than 600 million people and an economic output of approximately 2.3 billion US dollars is being created. Over the next five years, average growth in real gross domestic product of 6% is expected in the region. Furthermore, the Southeast Asian economies are proving attractive with expanding industries and a middle-class whose purchasing power is continually increasing.

What opportunities does the Free Trade Area offer for German industry?

There are benefits for the German export sector even today from the economic upturn and the new business opportunities resulting. Products with the label “Made in Germany” are already very popular in the region. The standardisation and focus on international standards and regulations by the ASEAN nations brings further advantages. Inter-ASEAN trade is clearly facilitated by the free movement of goods, so that German companies which have to date perhaps been present only in one location in the region now gain much easier access to all ten markets in ASEAN. What is problematic, however, is that there has been a great increase in the mix of overlapping regional and bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) and the EU is clearly lagging behind in concluding bilateral FTAs. Companies from other countries are therefore currently enjoying competitive advantages and German companies are finding it hard to get their bearings in the dense network of the various regulations of the existing FTAs.

There have already been repeated efforts to develop a free trade agreement between the EU and ASEAN. Wouldn't now be the right time for a new initiative?

That would be very desirable, however the opportunity to do this was initially missed. The EU has now decided to enter into agreements with individual countries. The FTA with Singapore has already been signed, the FTA with Vietnam has been negotiated and is about to be signed. This means that binding commitments exist and there is also a clear course for the EU, so that this development now should not be questioned again. The FTAs with Singapore and Vietnam will perhaps act as a precedent for other countries, so that an EU-ASEAN FTA could be developed de facto. ■

Marko Walde's country check*

Vietnam

The legal framework allows a rapid and lasting entry into the market. The Vietnamese are great Germanophiles and this, along with their great reliability and readiness to learn, are proving to be very enabling location features.

Indonesia

The country offers a variety of attractive elements for foreign investors: a strategic-ally favourable location, an abundance of natural resources, a growing domestic market and the largest market in the region with around 240 million people.

Malaysia

Malaysia has set itself the goal of catching up to the leading economies by 2020. Diverse investments, tax incentives and pri-vatisation should help it reach its target.

Myanmar

Myanmar is still in the early stages of its development, but nevertheless is currently laying out the course to strengthen further its role in the ASEAN region.

Singapore

The geographic location in the centre of the emerging Asian market is just one of Singapore's numerous advantages. As the "gateway to Asia", the country attracts inter-national businesses.

Thailand

The Thai government is attracting foreign investors with a comprehensive reform package. Thailand is already one of the most important investment locations for German businesses among the ASEAN countries.

Philippines

The very stable political and legal framework have resulted in a huge economic upturn in recent years.

* of the countries with a German Chamber of Commerce

Interview: Martin Orth

By courtesy of DE MAGAZIN DEUTSCHLAND 3/2015



65th Anniversary of United Nations Association of Sri Lanka 2015

UNA in Sri Lanka celebrated its 65th Anniversary on 23rd August 2015 at Penthouse Island Resort Bolgoda, Thuduwa, Madapatha, Piliyandala with the participation of over 40 distinguished guest and invitees. The event started with hoisting National Flag by the Former Ambassador Mr. Suhail and the UN Flag by Mis. Nirmala Paranawithana (UNDP)

The welcome address was delivered by the Executive Chairman of the Association Brig. Gen. Granville Elapata. The former Ambassador Mr. Laksiri Mendis, former editor Dr. G. P. P. Silva and Deshakeerthi M.M.M.Rushanudeen delivered short speeches on the role of United Nations Association over the years and highlighted the importance of working together to overcome challenges faced by the country.

The vote of thanks was given by the Secretary General of the Association Mr. M.M.Zawahir. Finally the participants were entertained for lunch.

WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS

UNA Membership July to December 2015

Special Life Members

D. S. C. Waas	- Wattala	(1596)
R. L. C. Silva	- Kelaniya	(1597)
S. Indooshan	- Colombo 10	(1598)
N. Rajkumar	- Colombo 06	(1599)
M. H. Irshad	- Colombo 13	(1601)
M. N. M. Safwan	- Colombo 15	(1602)
M. T. M. Siraj	- Kolonnawa	(1603)
M. S. M. Shameel	- Colombo 01	(1604)

Life Members

P. Manisha Wijesinghe	- Wadduwa	(1582)
P. Bimalka Perera	- Panadura	(1583)
P. A. Don Albert	- Ganemulla	(1595)
P. D. A. S. K. Perera	- Wadduwa	(1600)

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Dr. M. Z. M. Nizar
Special Life Member of ExCo

Winners of the Annual Inter School Study Circles Contest

1. The Best Teachers-in-Charge & winners of Best Study Circles Contest 2014/2015

- 01st Place -M. Z. M. Reza of Mt/Christ Church College, Matale.
02nd Place -D. Renuka Weerakoon of St. Thomas College, Matale.
03rd Place -N. G. Sadani of Halpathota Roman Catholic School, Baddegama.
04th Place -W. M. Chithra Kumari of B / Sri Dewananda Central College, Mirahawatta.
05th Place -R. H. Priyadarshani of G/ Richmond College, Galle.

2. Winners of General Knowledge Contest 2015

- 01st Place -Hasitha Jayanaka Abeygunawardena. G/ Richmond College, Galle.
02nd Place -W. G. V. Rangana Wijewickrama. Kg/ St. Joseph's Balika Maha Vidyalaya, Kegalle.
03rd Place -B. S. Anjana Senadeera. Vishaka Vidyalaya Colombo 05.
04th Place -Shashin Arunoda Punchihewa. B/Sri Dewananda Central College, Mirahawatta.
05th Place -Naween Sampath Nawarathna. Kg/ Swarna Jayanthi Vidyalaya, Kegalle.

3. Winners of Speech Contest 2015

- 01st Place -Dunya Jayamani Jayasekara. Vishaka Vidyalaya, Colombo 05.
02nd Place -D. M. Rishmi Tharushika. Kg/ Swarna Jayanthi Vidyalaya, Kegalle.
03rd Place -I. G. K. Dananjana Wijethunga. Mt/Christ Church College, Matale.
04th Place -Ravindu Iddamalgoda. Sri Chandananda Buddhist College, Kandy.
05th Place -A. M. Mohan Maduwantha. B/Sri Dewananda Central College, Mirahawatta.

4. Winners of Essay Writing Contest 2015

- 01st Place -Tharindi Dilara Pilapitiya. Vishaka Vidyalaya, Colombo 05.
02nd Place -D. B. Amanda Sewmini. Gothami Girl's College, Kandy.
03rd Place -A. D. Kaushalya Thathsarani. B/Sri Dewananda Central College, Mirahawatta.
04th Place -R. A. U. Ardhithya Ranasinghe. Maliyadewa Balika Maha Vidyalaya, Kurunegala.
05th Place -K. D. H. Ashan Devinda De Silva. G/ Richmond College, Galle.



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