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News Letter

UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF SRI LANKA

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Annual General Meeting 2023 / 2024

The 73rd AGM of the United Nations Association of Sri

Lanka (UNASL) was held on 26th March, 2023, at 11.00 am, at the National Secretariat, 39/1, Cyril Janzs Mawatha, Madakumbura,

Panadura. Over 75 members were present at the AGM.



The event commenced with the hoisting of the National flag and the UNASL flag. The National Anthem was sung followed by observing a minute of silence as a mark of respect for departed members of UNASL and affiliated organizations during the past year.

President Mr. M. M. Zawahir, delivered the Welcome Address. This was followed by a comprehensive presentation of the varied UNASL activities during 2022-2023, by Mr. Errol Smith (Secretary-General). The Minutes of the 72nd AGM (2022) were presented and duly adopted. The Secretary-General presented the Annual Report for 2022, which was duly adopted by the House. The Treasurer, Mr. N. D. Kumudu Weerasinghe, tabled the financial statements for 2022, which were duly adopted.



Sumathi Fernando was elected as the Pro-tem Chairperson to conduct the election of the new President. Mr. T. S. N. Fernando announced that only one nomination had been received for the Office of President, and he declared that Mr. M. M. Zawahir was duly re-elected as President for 2023-2024. The Pro-Team Chairperson invited the new President to come forward and take the Oath of Office before him,

and then invited Mr. M. M. Zawahir to take the Chair.

Mr. M. M. Zawahir proceeded to read out the names of those members whose



nominations for election to the 2023-2024 National Executive Committee had been received by the Nomination Board which evaluated and presented at EXCO meeting. The recommendation was presented to the AGM and duly approved at the AGM. The elected twenty-three members to the NEC took their Oath of Office collectively before the President. K.S. Karunadasa & CO., Chartered Accountants of No. 580, Galle Road, Panadura were re-elected as the Auditors.

The newly re-elected President, in his presidential address at the gathering highlighted the objectives of the association and its role in supporting the activities of UN in informing the irreplaceable work of the UN to the common people. He also highlighted the need for the association to play an active role in SDG- Sustainable Development Goals. The association has long been working closely with ministry of foreign affairs and appreciated the support extended by the ministry. He also highlighted the activities done in association with

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the UN and emphasized the need for closer working network to be built. He also invited the members of the association to take part in the activities of the association unfortunately we are unable to continue our normal educational programs due to the Covid pandemic. The Vote of Thanks was delivered by the unanimously re-elected Secretary-General. The AGM was successfully concluded with fellowship and Lunch.

Mr. Dharmadasa Vitharanage Editor & Assistant Treasurer United Nations Association of Sri Lanka



UNITED NATIONAS ASSOCIATION OF SRI LANKA National Executive Committee 2023 / 2024

President:

Mr. M. M. Zawahir MBA (Manipala), MABE (UK), Dip IR (BCIS)

Executive Chairperson:

HRH Prince Dato' Seri Ambassador Deshakeerthi Dr. M.M.M. Rushanudeen,

Secretary General:

Mr. Errol G. Smith - FIM (SL), FCPM, AMIM (UK)

Treasurer:

Mr. N. Kumudu D. Weerasinghe

Editor & Assistant Treasurer:

Mr. Dharmadasa Vitharanage

Deputy Executive Chairpersons:

Mr. Sampath Priyankara Dr. Rohan P. Dayaratne

Vice Chairpersons:

Mr. D. M. Siriwardana Dr. M. Z. M. Nizar (JP) Mr. R. H. Asoka Perera

Assistant Secretaries General:

Dr. Sarath Samarage

Dr. T. Anver Dole

Dr. K. D. Upali Jayawardane

Ms. Shyama Wijekulasuriya

Mr. R. H. Nagarajah

Ms. Panchali Rathnayake

Executive Members:

Dr. S. M. K. Abeywardane

Ms. Arthie Javawardana

Mr. M. A. Rohan Fernando

Mr. K. D. Ajith Jayarathne

Mr. Chameera Udesh Morawaka

Mr. E. Karunaratne

Honorary Members of the National Executive Committee 2023/2024

Dr. G. P. Silva Brigadier Gen. Granville Elapata vsv Ms. Chandani Vitharanage

Observance of the United Nations 78th Chater Day



The 78th Charter Day Observance was held on 26th June 2023, Participation from intellectuals, UN officials and public. The event took place on the day of signing of the Charter 78 years ago. The colorful event was held at the Renuka Hotel Galle Road Colombo 03.

Under the able leadership of the President of the United Nations Association Mr. Mohamed Zawahir and the National Executive Committee the program designed and executed with the participation of people of various walks of life. The event started off with the National Anthem. The president of the association gave the welcome address highlighted the significance of the event and the values UN.

Former Ambassador and Representative for the UN Dr Laksiri Mendis was the keynote speaker who gave an insight into charter and the reforms of the Charter and the changers necessary in the charter for it to be more effective. The special guest for the occasion was the former president of the Association Ambassador S A C M Zuhyle who highlighted the role of UNA in taking the message to the grassroot level.

The Association with the support of many were able to translate the Charter of the UN to Sinhalese and Tamil and distributed to the youth of the country free of charge.

The discussion session was very insightful and opened out many interesting aspects of the charter. The technical support and program designed by Executive Committee member Mr. Sampath Priyankara. The association's overall event coordinator Executive Committee member Mr. Dharmadasa. While all other members of the executive committee members contributed in their own way to make this grand event a success.



WFUNA Youth Advisory Council 43rd Plenary Assembly



The 43rd WFUNA – (World Federation of United Nations Associations) Plenary Assembly focused on "Boosting Partnership for a Better United Nations" was held in Tbilisi Georgia recently.

The assembly elected Sri Lankan Rakeeb Mohamed Zawahir to the **Youth Advisory Council for Asia** from 2023-26. He is currently serving as President of UNA-Sri Lanka's Youth Forum leading and directing the executive committee and its members. Through this role, he engages the youth of the association in relevant projects related to the SDGs, as well as directing members and conducting training to ensure the projects are executed effectively.

Once a month, Rakeeb presents the activities of UNA-Sri Lanka's youth division to the National Executive Committee. He is a life member of the association. A notable project organized by the UNA youth forum was headed by Rakeeb includes a beach cleaning project, through which he selected a committee to develop a project proposal to submit to the government municipality council for approval and to raise funds for implementation. The project was approved. Rakeeb and members of UNA- Sri Lanka gathered with friends and young members of the community for a day of listening to music while all helped to clean the beach. Rakeeb saw this as an example of how youth can gather to enjoy working hard together to create a clean and safe environment for the community. Among other projects are book donation drives and blood donation camps very successfully implemented in various parts of the country

Mr. M. M. Zawahir President United Nations Association of Sri Lanka

78th Anniversary of The Signing of the Un Charter Dr. Dayantha Laksiri Mendis

May I first of all thank the President Zawahir of the UN Association of Sri Lanka for inviting me to speak few words on the 78th Anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter on 26th June 1945 at Renuka Hotel, Colombo.

The UN Charter was negotiated and concluded by the Leaders of the Allied Powers (President Franklin Roosevelt of USA, Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill of UK and President Stalin of USSR) during World War II in Dumbarton Oaks, Yalta and San Francisco. It was signed by fifty-five countries on 26th June 1945 in San Francisco and came into force on ratification, on 24rd October 1945. India was not an independent State at that time, but she was allowed by the Allied Powers to sign the Charter as a founding Member of the United Nations.

The UN Charter is the most important multilateral treaty established by mankind in the history of the world. It provided for a system of collective security and thereby prevented the use of force by individual States to resolve any international conflict except as provided in Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The Charter also recognized the sovereign equality of States and non-intervention in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State. It also required Member States to fulfill their obligations in good faith and refrain from giving assistance to any State with which the United Nations is taking preventive enforcement action.

The UN Charter contains six organs — UN General Assembly, UN Security Council, UN Economic and Social Council, Trusteeship Council, International Court of Justice and the UN Secretariat. The International Court of Justice was established in the Hague where very important decisions were made in regard to the interpretation of the UN Charter. The UN Charter was expanded subsequently by establishing subsidiary organs such as the UNICEF, UNDP, UNEP, International Law Commission, etc. These subsidiary organs have played an valuable role in providing protection to children, development programs, environmental protection and the codification of customary international law into multilateral treaties.

UN Charter was further expanded by establishing several Specialized Agencies such as IMO, ICAO, FAO, UNESCO, WIPO, WHO, ILO, ITO, etc. These Specialized Agencies have played an enormous role in providing technical and financial assistance in the development of policies and institutions within their mandate. The work of IMO and ICAO are of particular interest to Sri Lanka in the preparation of necessary legislation to ensure maritime and aviation security, safety and prevention of pollution. It is strange that Sri Lanka has not consulted the IMO in regard to the MV X-Press Pearl or New Diamond incidents in the maritime areas of Sri Lanka.

In this context, Professor James Rosenau of George Washington University in the USA has stated that the UN System has established some form of global governance without a government through a network of international organizations and legal regimes (**Global Governance**, 1995, Lynne Rienner Publisher, USA).

Successes of the UN System

The UN System has had many successes. UN has negotiated and concluded many multilateral treaties relating to human rights, international humanitarian law, protection of the environment, transnational organized crime, corruption, cyber-crime, intellectual property rights, maritime safety and protection, aviation safety and protection, money laundering, terrorism, ozone depletion, climate change, nuclear non-proliferation, etc.

UN Specialized Agencies have also assisted developing countries to give effect to these multilateral treaties at national level by way of implementing legislation. Presently Sri Lanka has presented a draft Bill to Parliament to give effect to United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) without much reference to the treaty provisions or its record at the negotiating process (*travaux preparatoire*).

The UN General Assembly Resolutions generally deal with many policy issues. In 2005, the Resolution on Millenium Development Goals was approved by the General Assembly and UN prepared a Plan of Action to achieve its objectives. Likewise, Sustainable Development Goals was approved by the General Assembly in 2015 with a Plan of Action to achieve these goals by 2030. These are binding Resolutions on States to improve the quality of life of their citizens in a sustainable manner.

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Security Council Resolutions are of a binding nature. They resolve conflicts among Member States. However, the "Bush Doctrine" on pre-emptive self-defence under article 51 of the UN Charter appears to be controversial. The Security Council Resolution on Pan Am Flight 103 subjected to a terrorist attack in Lockerbie was heard by the International Court of Justice. ICJ held that this case can be heard outside Libya notwithstanding the rule *aut dedere aut judicare* as recognized by the 1971 Montreal Convention. The determination of the ICJ demonstrates that multilateral treaties can be modified by Security Council Resolutions in appropriate circumstances.

The specialized Agencies have contributed to social and economic development of UN Member States. For example, WHO has eradicated or limited the spread of smallpox, poliomyelitis, malaria and other communicable diseases such as HIV AIDS and Covid 19. WHO provided covid vaccine free of charge to developing countries.

Likewise, IMO and ICAO have helped developing countries to draft legislation on IMO and ICAO standards and provided expertise to develop shipping and aviation industries. It is of paramount importance for Sri Lanka to be closely associated with these organizations if Sri Lanka were to develop into a shipping or aviation hub in the Asian Continent.

The UNDP has provided assistance in training local personnel in developing countries in many areas including climate adaptation and mitigation. In this way, the UN System provides benefits and expertise in accordance with the relevant treaty norms and standards to developing countries.

Failures of the UN System

The UN has failed to deter the spread of nuclear weapons, although the IAEA has made every effort to deter, monitor and impose sanctions on those violating IAEA norms and standards. It is a difficult task to achieve without building confidence among state parties.

The UN has also failed to deter terrorism, although the Security Council has taken action to curtail terrorist financing, money laundering and drug trafficking associated with such activities. Hence, there is a duty on all member states in the UN System to prevent proceeds of crime are not used for financing of terrorism.

Reform of the UN Charter

Reform of the UN Charter has been debated for a very long time.

The reform of the UN Security Council is necessary, as there has been changes in geo-politics in many parts of the world. For example, India and Japan have become major powers in the Asian Continent. Germany is the biggest economy in Europe. South Africa has assumed leadership in the African Continent. Likewise, Brazil has the largest economy and population in South America. Hence, their admission to the Security Council as permanent members is necessary to ensure that the Security Council representation is balanced to act in regard to peace and security in the world.

Former Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Annan in a Report titled "In larger freedom towards development, security and human rights for all" advocated that the UN Charter should reflect the realities of today. He also advocated enlarging the membership of the Security Council, the repeal of the Trusteeship Council - Chapter XIII and the anachronistic "enemy clauses".

Any amendment of the Charter must include Peace Keeping as a separate chapter with expanded provisions, so that it can be considered as an important measure to prevent internal and international armed conflicts. Any references to Military Staff Committee in articles 47, 26 and 45 and 46 be deleted. Peace keeping has been referred to by UN scholars as chapter 6+ of the UN Charter

Concluding remarks

It can be concluded that the UN System is absolutely necessary to maintain international peace and security, at a time when all countries face economic and political crises. It has been said that if the UN has not been created, it has to be created now, as the world faces many challenges in the 21st century. The High-Level Panel of Experts appointed by SG/UN highlighted diseases, environment, climate change, terrorism, drug trafficking and other unknown issues are likely to be faced by humanity in the coming years.

Hence, we have a common crisis as outlined by the Brandt Commission 1983 and therefore cooperation is an absolute necessity to meet the challenges through the UN multilateral process. The ultimate objective of the UN System is, in Dag Hammers jold's words, a "world community living in peace, under the laws of justice." (Dr. Dayantha Laksiri Mendis was formerly Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Vienna. He has also served as UN/DTCD Legal Expert in the West Indies/Caribbean, ICAO Legal Consultant in Pakistan and presently the Honorary Consul of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana in South America). Email: mendis law@yahoo.com

Some Reflections on the UN & current challenges



The United Nations was founded in 1945 by 51 countries after the Second World War, with the principal objective of never wanting to experience the horror of war and holocaust again.

It is the only forum where where peace and security, human rights and development are discussed and debated by all countries in the world. UN membership has grown to 193 members among the 197 states it recognizes. (The Vatican and the Palestinian State enjoy only 'observer status' and the Cook Islands and Niue are non-member States since they are in free association with New Zealand.) Interestingly the Vatican City is the world's smallest UN recognized country by population.

The UN Security Council has five permanent members: China, France, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. In addition, 10 non-permanent members are elected for two-year terms.

Decisions in the UN Security Council are made with a majority of 9 votes of the 15 Council members' votes. However, a decision taken is rejected if any one of the 5 permanent members makes use of its Veto power.

The United Nations functions under the purview of the Secretary-General who is in overall charge. Currently Antonio Guterres of Portugal, is the ninth Secretary-General and assumed office on 1st January 2017. Guterres is a former Prime Minister of Portugal and has served as the UN's High Commissioner for Refugees.

The main focus of attention is the UN Sustainable Development Goals - the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. All 17 Goals are interconnected and the UN emphasizes

the need for member nations to achieve them by 2030.

Goal 1: No Poverty

More than 700 million still live in extreme poverty.

Goal 2 : Zero Hunger

A third of the world's food is wasted, and yet 821 million people are undernourished.

Goal 3: Good Health & Well-Being

Emphasizes vaccination of family. Vaccinations resulted in 80% drop in measles deaths between 2000 and 2017.

Goal 4: Quality Education

Emphasizes educating the children in your community. 617 million children and adolescents lack minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics.

Goal 5 : Gender Equality

Empower women and girls and ensure their equal rights.

Goal 6: Clean Water & Sanitation

Water scarcity affects more than 40% of the world's population - avoid wasting.

Goal 7 : Affordable & Clean Energy

Use only energy efficient appliances and light bulbs.

Goal 8: Decent Work & Economic Growth

Create job opportunities for youth. One-fifth of young people are not in education, employment or training.

Goal 9: Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure

Need to fund Projects that provide Basic Infrastructure. Roads, water, sanitation and electricity remain scarce in many developing countries.

Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities

Need to support the Marginalized and Disadvantaged. The poorest 40% of the population earn less than 25% of global income.

Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
Bike, walk or use public transportation. Nine out of 10

Bike, walk or use public transportation. Nine out of 10 urban residents breathe polluted air.

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Goal 12: Responsible Consumption & Production Recycle paper, plastic, glass and aluminum.

Goal 13: Climate Action

Need to act now to stop Global Warming. Global emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) have increased by almost 50% since 1990.

Goal 14: Life below Water

Avoid plastic bags to keep the oceans clean. Over 3 billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods.

Goal 15: Life on Land

Plant a tree and help protect the environment. Forests are home to more than 80% of all terrestrial species of animals, plants and insects.

Goal 16: Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions Stand up for Human Rights. In 2018 over 70 million people were fleeing war, persecution and conflict.

Goal 17: Partnerships

Lobby your Government to boost Development Financing. Achieving the SDG's could open up US \$12 trillion of market opportunities and create 380 million new jobs by 2030.

The world is at a moment in history where we are at risk of dividing into power blocs, which compete for supremacy over each other. The need of the hour is to work together to address the unprecedented challenges and existential threats that lie ahead.

Currently the UN has a host of fresh challenges. Antonio Guterres has warned that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being used to spread disinformation and hate, and backs proposal to form watchdog to monitor AI. has also become a focus of concern over its ability to create misinformation and deep fakes,

which are AI-generated images and videos that mimic people.

The rise in sea level poses 'unthinkable' risks for the entire planet

At the time of writing this article, Secretary-General Guterres is concerned of the possibility that in mid-July Russia will quit a deal allowing the safe war time export of grain and fertilizers, from three Ukrainian Black Sea ports.

Moscow has been threatening to walk away from the deal referred to as the Black Sea grain initiative - brokered by the UN and Turkey in July last year - in the event obstacles to its own grain and fertilizer shipments are not removed.

We do live in a global village where actions of one nation affects other nations, emphasizing the need to move forward in peace and harmony - more easily said than done!

Dr. T. Anver Dole Assistant Secretary General United Nations Association of Sri Lanka

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is broadly defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. But, while many people seem to limit sustainable development to the environment, it is equally rooted in social justice and economic development.

Sustainable development is an integrated approach to achieving long-term, sustainable prosperity that integrates the three dimensions of environmental, social and economic.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals – Sustainability is the foundation of today's dominant global framework for international cooperation.

What are the Sustainable Development Goals?

In September 2015, all 193 UN member states endorsed a plan to achieve a better future for all. Over the next 15 years, they set a path to end extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and protect our planet.

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At the heart of this "2030 Agenda" are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which clearly define the world we want. This applies to all nations so that no one is left out.

The new Global Goals are the result of a process that has involved businesses, civil society and citizens from the very beginning, with governments more engaged than ever before. We all agree on where the world should go. In order to meet these aspirations, every sector of the society must make an unprecedented effort and as the Sustainable Development Council we are committed to take Sri Lanka towards a sustainable development for everyone.

17 Sustainable Development Goals



- 01. Eradication of all forms of poverty, everywhere.
- 02. Eradicate hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
- 03. Promoting well-being and promoting healthy living, for all people of all ages.
- 04. Ensure complementary and equitable quality education for all and promote lifelong learning opportunities.
- 05. Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.
- 06. Ensuring access and sustainable management of water and sanitation facilities for all.
- 07. Ensuring affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy access for all.

- 08. To promote lasting, full and sustainable economic growth for all, full and productive employment and decent work opportunities.
- 09. Building resilient infrastructure, promoting full and sustainable industrialization and innovation.
- Reducing inequality within and between countries.
- 11. Making cities and human settlements whole, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- 12. Ensuring sustainability of consumption and production patterns.
- 13. Taking urgent action against climate change and its impacts.
- 14. Security, sustainable use of oceans, marine and marine resources for sustainable development.
- 15. Sustainable use, promotion, protection and restoration of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainable management of forests, prevention of desertification and halting and restoration of land use and loss of biodiversity.
- 16. Promote a peaceful and inclusive society for sustainable development. Provide access to justice for all and create effective and accountable institutions at all levels.
- 17. Strengthening the mechanisms and innovation of global cooperation for sustainable development.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals can be divided into five pillars.

01. People

To end poverty and hunger in all its dimensions and to ensure that all human beings fulfill their potential in an environment of dignity, equality and health.

02. The World

To sustainably manage natural resources through sustainable consumption products to support the

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needs of current and future generations, and to protect the planet with respect through prompt responses to climate change.

03. Prosperity

To ensure that all mankind enjoys a prosperous and fulfilling life and that economic, social and technological progress is in harmony with nature.

04. Peace

Empowering a peaceful, just and inclusive society free from fear and violence.

05. Partnership

To provide the necessary facilities for the implementation of this agenda, based on global cooperation, with a special focus on poverty and the most affected people for sustainable development, with the contribution of global partners and all countries, all stakeholders and all people.



Mr. R. H. Asoka Perera Vice Chairman United Nations Association of Sri Lanka

Welcome Our New Members 2023 01 01 to 2023 06 30

Special Life Members	
Dr. Mohamed Ameer Mohamed Najeeb	- 1978
Mr. Mohamed Fulail Abdul Basith Ali	- 1980
Mr. Mohamed Ikthiyar Mohamed Farshadh	- 1983
Mr. Mohammad Farook Mohammad Hirfan	- 1989
Ms. Afran Rafeek	- 2001
Life Member	
Mr. Chirantha Bandara Dasanayake	- 1973
Mr. T. D. Harsha Perera	- 1974
Mr. K. P. Kannangara	- 1975
Mr. Kidnasamy Vasikaran	- 1976
Mr. Nadarajasundaram Ragavan	- 1977
Mr. G. W. Amila Kumara	- 1979
Mr. Mohamed Rusdy Riza Ahamed	- 1981
Mr. K. K. Sarath Jayathilake	- 1982
Ms. Shanika Madurangi Bopitiya	- 1985

Life Member	
Mr. Nagaratnam Easan	- 1986
Mr. Vallipuram Shivalingam Rajeepan	- 1987
Mr. Loganathan Risheikeshan	- 1988
Mr. Yoganathan Mayuran	- 1989
Mr. Al Ameen Mohamed Amanullah	- 1990
Mr. Abdul Saththar Zacky Ahamed	- 1991
Mr. E. M. Kasun Ekanayake	- 1992
Mr. Asitha Indika Gardiye Punchihewa	- 1993
Mr. A. Neranjan Padmalal Pigera	- 1994
Mr. M. A. Thusitha Deshapriya	- 1995
Mr. Ravindra Ajantha Jayawardena	- 1996
Mr. Hussain Mubarak Mohammed Ahkam	- 1997
Mr. Upali Nissanka Iddamalgoda Elapata	- 1998
Mr. Sivapalan Thivijan	- 1999
Ms. Fathima Shara Ismath	- 2000
Mr. Mohamed Fassy Mohamed Faslan	- 2002



National Secretariat General 39/1, Cyril Jansz Mawatha, Panadura - 12500 Sri Lanka. Tel/Fax: 038-2232123

Tel: 038-2243080 E-mail: unasl@slt.lk Web: www.unasrilanka.org