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of Sri Lanka**

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# ANNUAL Report 2025



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National Observance of 80th United Nations Day 2025

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# ANNUAL <sup>Report</sup> 2025



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75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



International Year  
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Cooperatives Build  
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### **His Excellency President Anura Kumara Dissanayaka Addresses 80th Session of UN General Assembly**

\* Let us commit ourselves to creating a safe world for future generations

- President urged world leaders

President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, addressing the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly, urged world leaders to commit themselves wholeheartedly to building a safe world for future generations. The President stressed that nations must walk hand in hand, not apart.

Speaking at the UN Headquarters in New York on the 25th morning Sri Lanka time, the President expressed deep concern over the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip. He called for an immediate ceasefire, the unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid and the release of hostages by all parties, in line with agreements reached by the United Nations and other stakeholders. He further emphasized that strong international pressure must be applied to halt the continuing violence and killings.

Furthermore, President Dissanayake emphasized in his address the issue of poverty, which has led to numerous global challenges. He asserted that both inequality and poverty ought to be regarded as a worldwide catastrophe that requires urgent attention.

The President emphasized the constructive measures implemented by Sri Lanka to address the global drug issue, a multifaceted challenge impacting millions worldwide. He urged world leaders to collaborate in advancing the global initiative aimed at eradicating the drug menace, which endangers global health, democracy, politics and the overall well-being of society. He proposed stricter enforcement of laws against traffickers, limiting their ability to migrate across borders and establishing more rehabilitation centers for drug addicts.

Turning to corruption, President Dissanayake described it as a destructive force that undermines development, democracy and social well-being while perpetuating poverty. He noted that Sri Lanka has

already embarked on this difficult but essential fight for the sake of future generations and urged all countries to embed the culture of anti-corruption within their governance.

Concluding, the President said that the Sri Lankan people, who have chosen the path of light over darkness, are united around the vision of “A Thriving Nation – A Beautiful Life.” He explained that this historic goal is being advanced step by step through corruption-free and ethical governance, poverty eradication, digitalization and environmental sustainability, with equal emphasis on strengthening education and healthcare.

The full speech delivered by President Anura Kumara Disسانayake at the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly is as follows:

Madam President, Mr. General Secretary, honoured invitees and distinguished delegates,

Allow me, Madame Annalena Baerbock, representing the beautiful country of Germany, to begin my speech by offering my warmest congratulations to you on being elected the President of the 80th session of this organization, formed with the noble aim of bringing about a just and lasting peace among the nations of the world.

I would also like to use this opportunity to express my country's appreciation to His Excellency Philemon Young for the exceptional leadership he provided during the 79th session. We are gathered here today to plan the future path of this organization, which has worked tirelessly for eight decades to bring about a world of peace. It is my honour to address this August Assembly for the first time as the President of Sri Lanka.

As representatives of nations, we all bear the responsibility to work towards fulfilling the aspirations of our people. The decisions we make now will impact people across the world and play a decisive role in the future of this planet, our common home.

Distinguished delegates,

Our decisions will have a very important impact on our future. Poverty, a tragedy as old as human civilization, has accompanied humankind on its journey through time. For centuries, countries across the world have faced this painful and relentless struggle. Poverty and problems stemming from it are also casting an oppressive shadow on our future. This assembly must pay special attention to eradicate extreme poverty. I believe our conscience dictates us to do so.

Distinguished delegates,

For centuries, many countries in the world are struggling against poverty. Poverty is a terrible enemy with many faces. Even as we gather here in the countries we represent, including in my own, children are suffering from hunger. A child's right to education is an internationally accepted fundamental right.

This right is enshrined in the constitutions of most of our nations. Yet, across the world, poverty has denied this right to hundreds of thousands of children. In a world which boasts of its technological advances, how can there be children without access to education? Education is the foundation of every great nation. It is the most vital factor deciding one's future. We firmly believe that investment in education is an investment in global progress. Many developing countries are constrained in their struggle against poverty by indebtedness.

Low-income countries allocate twice as much on debt servicing than on education or healthcare.

Our people and our countries are caught in debt traps. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development pledges to leave no one behind and to reach the last first. The Agenda acknowledges the most critical challenge before the world is the challenge to end poverty.

I would also like to recall the decisions taken at the Global Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995.

However, wars and political upheavals and the COVID pandemic have obstructed the fulfilment of these hopeful agendas. I propose to you that the time has come to accept that inequality and poverty are a global catastrophe and we should act accordingly.

Madam President, esteemed guests,

Drugs and organized crimes linked to drugs have become a serious concern to this world. This has been acknowledged in the World Drug Report 2025 published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

The drug problem is a complex issue affecting millions of people globally. The market for drugs and the related criminal organizations are creating issues globally. Drug cartels are turning entire states into their hunting grounds. They pose a major threat to global health and politics and eventually global well-being as well.

While Sri Lanka is taking effective steps to address this challenge, I respectfully request all of you to join in the effort to implement the global agenda on drugs and crime.

I bring to your notice the need to implement the law strictly against these drug traffickers and prevent drug traffickers from taking refuge in our countries and also to set up rehabilitation centers for rehabilitation purposes.

Madam President, honoured guests,

We regard corruption as an epidemic causing widespread harm to broad swathes of society. We believe corruption to be an obstruction for development, a decisive threat to democracy and global well-being and also a cause for poverty. Let me remind you that fighting corruption is dangerous, but not fighting corruption is even more dangerous.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 was a remarkable victory for the people of the world. Civilizational achievements were never accomplished overnight. They were all results of unwavering efforts and sacrifices. And the struggle against corruption is also a difficult one. We must take the necessary steps here. The first step may be difficult, but if the courageous first step we take is correct, a thousand steps will follow. That is what I believe.

Madam President, delegates, be brave. All the rest will follow.

Sri Javaharlal Nehru has once stated so. I represent a small island of nearly 22 million people. Sri Lanka's population is about 0.30 of the global population. It is true that we are small in size and in numbers, yet we

have begun the struggle against corruption for the future generations of our country and the world. I propose that an integral part of the culture of all UN member countries should be to fight against corruption.

Madam President,

I feel confident that all of you will join me in condemning war. There is no nation in the world that desires a war. The result of a war is a tragedy wherever it happens. We all know that. Even now, many countries of the world are experiencing the pain of that tragedy. As a country that lived through a three-decade war, we know well the futility of war. No one who sees the pain and the suffering of parents, spouses and children of the victims of war would never dream of another war.

We have witnessed these painful sights with our own eyes. Even as suffering caused by conflict has reached unprecedented levels, the international community has become reduced to bystanders.

Opportunistic power politics has turned the lives of children and innocent civilians into a game. No one has the right to inflict pain and suffering on another to enhance one's own power. The duty of a ruler is not to destroy lives but to protect them.

We are deeply distressed by the ongoing catastrophe in the Gaza Strip. Gaza has been turned into an open prison full of pain and suffering, echoing with the cries of children and the innocent civilians. The United Nations Organization and all related parties must work towards an immediate ceasefire, enable adequate humanitarian aid to these areas and to ensure the release of hostages of all parties. We recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to their own state.

We also believe that legal, security and humanitarian concerns of Israel and Palestinian people need to be acknowledged.

Sri Lanka reiterates the importance of early implementation of the UN General Assembly resolutions regarding a two-state solution on the basis of the 1967 borders. The time has come for the international community to stop being a mere spectator and to move decisively to end the suffering of millions.

Religious extremism and racism have been major causes of wars and conflicts, bringing suffering to millions of people. Although a century has passed since the abolition of slavery, the poison of racism still lingers in many places. Extremist and racist ideas are as deadly as epidemics. We must ask ourselves how these extremist and racist ideas survive like sparks under the ashes in a world that has witnessed so many advances on so many fronts.

I believe that we must awaken our conscience to oppose racism and religious extremism in protection of human rights and freedoms. We must be brave enough to speak up for peace. We must not be afraid to speak up against war. We must be afraid to speak up for war. In a world where millions of children die of hunger, we spend millions on weapons. When tens of millions die of inadequate health facilities, hundreds of millions are spent on futile wars. When hundreds of thousands of children are denied the right to an education, millions are spent on invading another's land.

If every inch of this world can be turned into peaceful communities, what a wonderful world would it be. As a country that suffered the horrors of war for decades, where families still weep in remembrance of their loved ones, we have a duty to make that heartfelt proposal.

I would like to remind you that at the last election, the people of Sri Lanka decided in favour of a centuries old dream. A legislature has been established according to that decision, reflecting the ethnic and religious diversity of the country.

A parliament has been established with women and other marginalized communities in representation. We believe that the duty of legislatures is to develop the country and the people, not to develop themselves. And we have established that idea.

Madam President, distinguished guests,

Our people have chosen light over darkness. They have given their approval to realize the vision of a thriving nation, a beautiful life. To fulfil this historic mandate, we have focused on establishing non-corrupt administration, poverty eradication, and digitalization. And we have also placed great emphasis on education health as well. We are moving towards these goals step by step. Digital democracy is one of our aims.

Ensuring that every person and every country can enjoy the opportunities of the digital age is a global challenge. If we succeed in our task, we will be able to open doors to technology, accelerate development, and to strengthen governance. If we fail, technology will turn into one more force, worsening inequality, insecurity, and injustice.

The digital gap between states that can and cannot establish access to digital tools is clear. An even greater gap is being created in relation to artificial intelligence. Sri Lanka and many other developing nations in Asia and also many other nations are facing challenges in using AI as a development tool due to the inadequate infrastructure facilities.

Madam President, distinguished delegates,

I ask the international community to work together and we have to develop a dignified society, a dignified world. I present this August assembly a proposal to set up a neutral sovereign Artificial Intelligence zone. We must build a new and better world, a world which represents the dignity of humankind. You as members of this assembly must be the architects of that better world.

As President Harry Truman stated on the occasion of founding the United Nations, in your hands rests our future. We must not act in fear or under compulsion, but with hope for a better and more secure world.

Today we must commit ourselves not to lead the world to another disaster, but to make it a better place for the next generation.

I have dreams and expectations for my country. Similarly, you have dreams and expectations for your countries. My dream is to ensure that my people are rich and they have happiness. I believe that you too have such dreams. We must try to achieve these dreams not in competition with each other, but by working arm in arm, peace, dignity, and equality on a healthy planet. That is the motto of the United Nations organization. Therefore, let us become the true healers of the world.

Thank you very much.

President's Media Division (PMD)

25.09.2025



# Secretary-General's remarks at the Opening of the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

9<sup>th</sup> September 2025



Congratulations, once again, on your election — which holds added significance as you become only the fifth woman in history to be elected to this important role.

And I thank the outgoing President — His Excellency Philemon Yang — for so ably guiding this Assembly over the last year.

I pledge my support to you, Madam President, as you take on this important role in an important year — the 80th anniversary of the United Nations.

You bring a wealth of government and diplomatic experience to this task — including serving as your country's Foreign Minister.

And as you work to fulfill your inspiring vision — “Better Together” — and address your priority issues of peace, development, reform and transparency.

Excellencies,

Eight decades ago, the founders of our organization gathered in San Francisco.

Emerging from the fires of a world war, they envisioned something different.

A global-problem-solving body that could not only prevent calamities like war, but could forge solutions to other age-old problems haunting humanity — poverty, hunger, illness and inequality.

These efforts, built by the world for the world, and grounded in the values and principles of the United Nations Charter, are what this Assembly is all about.

Excellencies,

The United Nations provides the place.

The Charter provides the tools.

And the Pact for the Future, adopted last September, provided a shot in the arm for the multilateral system and the values that have defined this organization from day one.

The Pact reminds us that, eight decades on, we can and must continue rising above division and working together.

To make our world a better, more peaceful and prosperous place for all.

To heal divisions and end conflicts.

To re-commit to the letter and spirit of international law.

To summon the resolve to help all countries climb the development ladder and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

To protect our planet and make the shift to renewables — supporting developing countries every step of the way.

To adapt to the challenges and opportunities of a digital world.

And through the Declaration on Future Generations, to ensure that the decisions we make today benefit those who will inherit and shape the future tomorrow.

But nothing can happen without this Assembly — all of you — working as one.

The Charter is not self-executing.

By design, it requires countries looking beyond their national interests and re-building trust and faith in one another, and in what we can accomplish through collaboration and solidarity.

And it requires realizing that, while we cannot solve all the world's problems here, we can unite behind solutions that will ultimately move humanity closer to a better, fairer, more peaceful and equal world for all.

So as we begin this 80th session, I call on all Member States to summon the same resolve and spirit of determination that brought delegates to San Francisco in 1945.

Let's live up to their vision — and most importantly, to the expectations and hopes of today's people around the world.

Thank you.

**António Guterres**  
Secretary-General of the United Nations



Honorable H. M. Vijitha Herath MP Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign  
Employment and Tourism





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Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism

#### Message from the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism

On the occasion of the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations, it is my privilege to acknowledge and commend the invaluable contributions of the UN in maintaining international peace and security.

We live in times where both peace and security face unprecedented challenges, with profound consequences for ordinary people, the growth of conflicts among nations, and the pressures of global economic crises. In this context, the UN's remarkable achievement in preventing a third world war over the past eight decades stands as a testament to its enduring relevance particularly in an era where technological advancement has made weapons of mass destruction increasingly accessible.

Sri Lanka has proudly supported the United Nations since becoming a member in 1955. Over the years, our engagement has yielded significant benefits, both for our nation and for the global community.

I wish to acknowledge the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka for organizing this National Observance of the **80th United Nations Day on 25th October 2025**. Since its establishment in 1950, the Association has remained steadfast in its mission, and I extend my congratulations to the President and the Members of the Executive Committee for their continued dedication. This year, our focus is on Sustainable Development Goal Four: *Quality Education* a theme that has guided the Association's year-round programs, including the study circle initiatives endorsed by the Ministry of Education.

The Association's engagement with Sri Lanka's youth deserves special mention. Young people have been actively involved in numerous projects, and we take pride in the fact that the President of the UNA Sri Lanka Youth Forum serves as the Youth Leader representative for the Asia-Pacific Region to the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA).

On this momentous occasion, I extend my best wishes to the United Nations and the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka for continued success in the years ahead.

Hon. H. M. Vijitha Herath, M. P.  
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism, Republic Building, Colombo 01, Sri Lanka.



# 80th Anniversary of the United Nations

24<sup>th</sup> October 2025



As the United Nations, our United Nations, celebrates 80 years of existence, I speak on behalf of the World Federation of UN Associations (WFUNA), the global movement of citizens who have pledged to defend and advance the principles of diplomacy and cooperation in the hope of building a better world for all. Ours is a simple conviction: a rules-based international order is not an option – it is the keystone that makes peace possible, human dignity attainable, and cooperation practicable in a fractured world; and the only all-encompassing organization that represents this international order is the United Nations.

The UN remains humanity's most ambitious and inclusive experiment in collective security. With near-universal membership and unparalleled expertise, it can set norms, deploy peacekeepers, mediate conflicts, protect civilians, and coordinate relief when disaster strikes. It can drive long-term change through the Sustainable Development Goals and mobilize governments, civil society, and business to confront poverty, climate change, ill health, and inequality. It is fully equipped to act as a forum that can address the most complex issues threatening humanity and serve the needs of future generations.

We commemorate this milestone with clear eyes. The UN faces the hard test of reality driven by geopolitical antagonism, wars, and humanitarian catastrophes – yet, the Charter's authority stands. Its legitimacy is rooted in its principles, set in 1945 but forged long before that, and distilled

through centuries of diplomatic practice. They remain our most developed guide to shared peace and purpose; the most advanced framework of its kind that humanity has yet devised.

As the inheritors of those principles, and precisely because the system is strained, we must rally behind the Charter's commitments and maintain the UN as the indispensable table around which the world sits and argues, negotiates, gives voice to the most marginalized and vulnerable, finds common ground, compromises, and shapes solutions.

WFUNA exists to make these principles of multilateralism understood by people everywhere. We represent and coordinate a network of over 100 United Nations Associations—millions of citizens who connect their local concerns to global decision-making, who translate UN values into daily action, and who insist that “we the peoples” is to be taken literally. Through education, advocacy, and hands-on programs, we help young people gain the skills to engage the UN system and lead change at home. Our Movement's heartbeat lies with youth: through mentoring project leaders, training human-rights defenders, and running the most accurate simulations of the UN, WFUNA is equipping the next generation to be problem-solvers. By investing in their capacity, we invest in strengthening the UN's resilience to weather the challenges in the decades to come.

During this 80th anniversary year, let us rededicate ourselves to the Charter's promise and to the UN's agenda: defend international law; protect human rights; close the implementation gap on the SDGs; keep the door of dialogue open, even when a solution seems beyond grasp. This agenda is in the hands of governments, yes – but it is also the work of citizens. It is the work of WFUNA and its UN Associations.

The United Nations was born of the determination to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.” Today, let us add our determination to prevent our own generation from the scourge of indifference and disenchantment—forces that can deprive the UN of its popular support when it needs it most. May our voices be many and our resolve unshakeable: the founding vision of the United Nations in 1945 was to replace competition and conflict with compromise and cooperation. That vision remains as relevant and essential today as it was eight decades ago.

**Aziel - Philippos Goulandris**  
**Secretary-General**  
**World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA)**



Hon. Dr. Rizvie Salih

Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka.

On the occasion of the 80th United Nations Day and the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka, I am pleased to reflect on the invaluable role these institutions have played in shaping our world and our Nations.

Sri Lanka became a member of the United Nations in 1955, while the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka was founded in 1950—five years earlier. Since its inception, the UN has worked to maintain international peace and security, foster friendly relations among nations, and promote social progress and human rights. We are indeed fortunate that the world has been spared a third world war over the past eight decades.

The UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and, subsequently, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) have guided nations toward a more just, inclusive, and sustainable future. Yet, the global pandemic and ongoing conflicts have slowed progress toward these shared aspirations.

Amid these challenges, the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka continues to make commendable contributions in spreading awareness of UN values and initiatives among our people. With the support of the Ministry of Education, the Association engages students in programs that promote peace, human rights, and gender equality.

This year's focus on Goal 4 – Quality Education is especially timely. I am encouraged by the Association's community projects, youth leadership training, and teacher development initiatives that strengthen the foundation of education in Sri Lanka.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the leadership and Executive Committee of the Association for their dedicated service, and wish them continued success in promoting the ideals of the United Nations for generations to come.

Thank you.

**Mr. Mohamed Zawahir**  
**President**  
**United Nations Association of Sri Lanka**  
**National Observance of the 80<sup>th</sup> United Nations Day**



On the 80<sup>th</sup> United Nations Day – the world celebrates the irreplaceable achievements it has made in the field of peace between nations, development through Sustainable Development Goals, implementation of Human rights and list goes on.

So, Is Contribution to the UN a moral obligation for all nations?

Morale obligation is a duty that an individual or a nation feels compelled to do based on their conscience, especially when the outcomes can benefit both individuals and the society. The UN with its development programme and upholding human rights undoubtedly helps the society and the Nation.

Every year on UN Day, we reaffirm our global mission. We reassert the universal values of tolerance, mutual respect and human dignity and we appreciate the progress UN has made together with its nations large and small

We at our association are committed to disseminate the irreplaceable good work of UN to the common people especially with our dynamic youth and study circle program across the country approved by the ministry of education

Since the adoption of Sustainable Development Goals our association embarked on the journey of education amongst the youth and adults. We also conducted programs for the train the trainers in Sabaragamuwa for over 75 Principals in that region while we conducted another program for nearly 200 teachers from the southern province. Our interschool speech contest focused on Quality Education - Goal 4 of Sustainable Development Goals where large number of students took part. While our Essay contest also focused on the same topic.

During the year we also organized the International Women's Day with the participation of the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Over 300 participants took part in the ceremony held at SLFI. International Peace Day was observed on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2025 at the auditorium of Sri Lanka Medical Association with the participation of School children and parents.

Now let's join hands to commit as a responsible association and ourselves to contribute even more to realize the great vision set out in the UN Charter 80 years ago on a day like this the UNA Day! Happy Birthday.



**Dr. M. M. M. Rushanudeen JPWI**  
**Secretary – General**  
**United Nations Association of Sri Lanka**  
**National Observance of the 80th United Nations Day**



On the 80th Anniversary of the formation of the UNITED NATIONS (1945 - 2025) and 75th Anniversary of UN Association of Sri Lanka (1950 - 2025) I take pleasure in giving the message, for publication in our 2025 Annual Report issued to coincide with Annual UN Day National Observance to held in Colombo, at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute Auditorium on Saturday 25th October 2025.

I am happy to announce, that the Association has continued to work towards fulfilling its many objectives, of creating better awareness of the significance of the UNITED NATIONS, and the role played by the United Nations Association in the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka was established on 19th August 1950 (five years before Sri Lanka was admitted as a Member State of the United Nations on 14th December, 1955). The UNASL, is a non-profit organization with its liabilities limited by guarantee and incorporated in the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka under the Companies Act No.17 of 1982 under Registration No. N (A) 133 (GA 465) and under the amended Companies Act of 2007. It counts over 75 years of active operations in Sri Lanka the UNASL is registered with the Department of Social Services (Reg. No. 0097 dated 4th May, 1994) as a Non-Governmental Organization under Regulation No. 1 of 1993 promulgated under Section 5, of the Public Security Ordinance Chapter 40, National Secretariat of Non-Governmental Organizations in Sri Lanka – Certificate of Registration of Voluntary Social Service Non-Governmental Organization under Voluntary Social Services Organizations (Registration & Supervision) Act No.31 of 1980 as amended by act No. 8 of 1998 (Reg. No.L.16104 dated 25th August, 2000) and National NGO Council of Sri Lanka – Life Membership with effect from 1993. sole affiliated to with The World Federation United Nations Associations WFUNA Resolution Adopted in United Nations General Assembly in 137 (1) of 17th November, 1947 and 92 (1) of 7th December 1946, We recognize the UN as an organization for international cooperation and are aware that it has an extraordinary effect in feeding the hungry, caring for the sick and operating as a platform for countries to resolve their issues amicably, with the support of each other, for the common good of our people.

In the context of the recent global Covid 19 pandemic & financial crisis and its impact on the economic, social and environment aspects of the UN member countries, an occasion has arisen where member states and their respective UN Associations could pledge their commitment to manage and overcome the challenge to human civilization in the 25th century and create a peaceful and environmentally friendly world for the future Generations. It is said that every generation is only a custodian of the resources on earth. As such, it is their duty to use these resources sparingly and thereby safeguard it for the benefit of future Generations, whatever race, religion or culture, across the world.

This year, our Association has decided to organize the UN Day activities on the theme of Better Together: 80 years and more for peace, development and human rights". This theme emphasizes global solidarity, multilateralism, and collective action to address challenges and renew commitments to achieving the

Sustainable Development Goals. "Peace and Education" in a world full of poverty, disputes, conflict and even wars, continuous emphasis on peace and education, would be one important strategy to resolve these issues.

Therefore, we believe that it is our sacred duty and obligation to society to ensure that we give our children of today and those to come every opportunity to educate themselves and benefit from the significant and rapid advances in science, technology, Communication and even religion, so that they realize and understand their duties and responsibility and endeavor to fulfill them to the best of their abilities.

I have no doubt that we are all saddened by the countless wars the conflict, disputes and natural disasters that take away the lives of innocent people and damage the social and economic framework of society and the environment. I strongly believe that it is the responsibility of the all those holding high positions in the UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION and the UN Associations and WFUNA to promote the importance and the benefit of peace and education as a meaningful programme for our people, that should be treated as a high priority.

The UNA Study Circle Programme in 328 schools introduced in 1981 and is approved by the Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka. is a commendable imitative towards this end and all Members of the Association should endeavor to extend and enhance these programmes with the active support of those in the public and private sector engaged in education throughout the country. The end of the armed conflict in Sri Lanka which ravaged tge country for three-decade s provides a turning point of our history and we must endeavor to seize this opportunity to educate and enlighten our people with a view to transforming the nation to one that is forward thinking build on principles of peace, justice, equality and dignity for all.

As the new Secretary - General of the Association, Proud be a Past President UNA Study Circle of Zahira College Colombo & a product of UNA Study Circle Programme in Sri Lanka was joined to National Executive Committee since 1992 upto date. Thanks to The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Director General UN HR Division MOFA, The Ministry of Education, Government Authorities, UN, WFUNA, Diplomatic Missions and our membership for their voluntary contribution to the Association's activities and appeal to them to solicit the support and cooperation in the business community and the philanthropist to enable the Association to be more actively involved and engaged in pursing our noble cause.

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## 79<sup>th</sup> UNITED NATIONS DAY – 2024



The United Nation Association of Sri Lanka conducted the National Observances of the 79th United Nations Day at a function held at the Sri Lanka Medical Associations Auditorium, No 6, Wijerama Mawatha Colombo 07, on Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 3.00 p.m. The ceremony commenced with the Hoisting of the National and UN Flags, an important symbolic gesture, by the President of UNASL and the Chief Guest. This was followed by the National Anthem of Sri Lanka, a moment of patriotic unity.

To honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, a One Minute's Silence was observed in memory of those who lost their lives under the UN Flag, over the past year. The event continued with an Opening Performance by the Sri Lanka



Police Dance Troupe, showcasing a rich cultural presentation. Following the performance, the Introduction of the Head Table took place, introducing key dignitaries and participants.

The Introduction of the President - UNASL was done by Ms. Panchali Ratnayake, Assistant Secretary-General of UNASL, and the President, Mr. Mohamed Zawahir, delivered the Welcome Address. The event then saw the Presentation of the UNASL Annual Report 2024 to the Chief Guest and other dignitaries.



A spirited Performance by the Nakkawatha National School Dance Troupe followed, adding a touch of youthfulness and energy to the ceremony. The President of the UNASL Youth Forum, Mr. Rakeeb Zawahir, then addressed the audience. Dr. Anver Dole, Vice-Chairperson of UNASL, introduced the Guest of Honor, Dr. Chathura Warnasuriya, Senior Lecturer at Sri Jayawardenapura University, who shared his insights during his Address.

Ms. Shyama Wijekulasuriya, an Executive Member of UNASL, introduced the Keynote Speaker, Ms. Manomi Seneviratne, Principal of Visakha Vidyalaya in Colombo. Ms. Seneviratne delivering the Keynote Address, focused on relevant themes of the event. The Presentation of Awards was the highlight of the ceremony, which followed, celebrating the achievements of the students and institutions that excelled in the UNASL School Study Circle – 2023/2024. These competitions are a platform for academic excellence and fostering a spirit of intellectual collaboration among Sri Lankan schools.



The President of UNASL, Mr. Mohamed Zawahir, and the Secretary-General, Mr. Errol Smith, took center stage to present the awards to the deserving institutions, recognizing their hard work, dedication, and commitment to academic growth.

The winners of the UNASL Best Study Circle – 2023/2024 are as follows:

- Winner: *St. Joseph's Girls College, Kegalle*
- 1st Runner-Up: *Vijaya College, Matale*
- 2nd Runner-Up: *Kegalu Vidyalaya, Kegalle*
- 3rd Runner-Up: *Pushpadana Girls College, Kandy*
- 4th Runner-Up: *Mahinda College, Galle*

The Best Study Circle Teacher-In-Charge Certificates were presented to the educators who had demonstrated exceptional leadership, dedication, and mentorship in guiding their students throughout the UNASL School Study Circle – 2023/2024. These teachers have played a crucial role in motivating and supporting their students, helping them achieve academic excellence and contribute to the success of their schools. The winners of the UNASL Best Study Circle – Teachers-In- Charge 2023/2024 were as follows:

- Winner: *Ms. R. Priyadarshani Pushpakanthi* from St. Joseph's Girls College, Kegalle
- 1st Runner-Up: *Ms. D. R. Weerakoon* from Vijaya College, Matale
- 2nd Runner-Up: *Ms. Ranaweera Arachchilage Kumudunee Ranaweera* from Kegalu Vidyalaya, Kegalle
- 3rd Runner-Up: *Ms. Ajini Kumari Weliwita Rambukwella* from Pushpadana Girls College, Kandy
- 4th Runner-Up: *Mr. Nuwan Cathuranga* from Mahinda College, Galle



## BEACH CLEANUP PROJECT – 2025



The United Nations Association of Sri Lanka along with the UN Association Youth Forum conducted a Beach Cleaning Project towards CLEAN SRI LANKA Programme introduced by the Sri Lankan Government, at the Panadura Beach on Saturday, 18th January 2025.

This Project was carried out successfully in collaboration, with the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka, Study Circle Members of Visakha Vidyalaya Colombo and St. John's College Panadura.

Also participating in this project were members of the Sri Lanka Police, Public Health Inspectors and volunteers from the MOH Office Panadura, Panadura Urban Council and other volunteers for Civil Society Organizations invited by the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka. The project was extremely successful with over 50 participated.





## FOUNDER & FORMER UNASL SECRETARY – GENERAL’S 15<sup>TH</sup> DEATH ANNIVERSARY

The 15<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary Commemoration of the Founder and Former Secretary – General of the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka who was also the Founder Chairman of the Kumaran Fernando Foundation, was held on 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2025 at the Kumaran Fernando Foundation premises in Panadura.

A simple ceremony with religious observances by the maha sanga followed by an alms giving, was held to invoke merit on the Late Kumaran Fernando.

Members of the board of directors of the Kumaran Fernando Foundation and United Nations Association of Sri Lanka Executive Committee Members participated in the meritorious Even.





## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY - 2025



The International Woman's Day for The Year 2025 Organized by The Una Sri Lanka Chapter Was Held On 22nd March with The Attendance Of the Honorable Prime Minister Dr. Harini Amarasuriya Accompanied by The Honorable Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath, Prof Rohan Fernando & Dr Jayaruwan Bandara.

The Recipients Were Chosen by A Panel of Judges Who Have Excelled in Their Individual Life Achievements Towards Humanity. This Was Held at The Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, Colombo 07 With Over 250 Personalities in Attendance. Awards Were Given to The Distinguished Ladies with Cultural Dances and Music Performances Through Out the Function as Planned.



All Sponsors Were Given Their Due Place at The Function with A Digital Backdrop and Side Screens. This Function Was Fully Funded by Sponsors with No Cost to The UNASL Coffers Which Is A Big Achievement by The Working Committee of UNASL Comprising of Mrs. Panchali Ratnayake, Assistant Secretary General as The Project Chairperson Backed by Dr. Madhavi Bandara, Assistant Secretary General and Dr Ravi Nagarajah Vice Chairman.





## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 2025/2026



The 75<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka was held on 06<sup>th</sup> April, 2025 at the National Secretariat, 39/1, Cyril Jansz Mawatha, Panadura. The event commenced with the hoisting of the National Flag by Secretary General Dr. M. M. M. Rushanudeen, and the UN Flag by the President Mr. M. M. Zawahir. Over 70 members were present at the Annual General Meeting. The National Anthem was sung followed by two minutes silence being observed as a mark of respect

of those members who had passed away. They were remembered in particular for their contribution to the Association.



The Welcome Address was made by the President Mr. M. M. Zawahir. Secretary-General Dr. M. M. M. Rushanudeen made a presentation on the various activities carried out by the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka during the year 2025/2026. The report of the Annual General Meeting of March 2024 and the Financial Report were presented and approved by the members. Professor Rohan Fernando was elected as Pro-tem Chairman and the new office bearers were elected/re-elected to the National Executive Committee for 2025/2026.



At the Annual General Meeting Mr. M. M. Zawahir was reelected unanimously as President and Dr. M. M. M. Rushanudeen was elected unanimously as Secretary General, by the members. The elected members of the National Executive Committee took their oath of office collectively.

The members were given an opportunity to express their views on the activities of United Nations Association of the Sri Lanka.

President enlightened the new members regarding the history and the activities of UNASL. Finally, the Secretary-General delivered the Vote of Thanks. 75th Annual General Meeting – Sponsored by Mr. S. Kumarandiram.





## **EYE CAMP IN PANNALA – 2025**



The United Nations Association of Sri Lanka (UNASL) successfully conducted a special eye clinic at the Pannala Galayaya Rajamaha Viharaya on Sunday, June 15, 2025, providing vital eye care services to the local community. The initiative was spearheaded by Dr. Chrishantha Dissanayake, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka, and offered comprehensive range of services, including eye examinations, distribution of free eyeglasses, referrals for further medical treatment, and recommendations for free intraocular lenses. A total of 120 individuals from villages surrounding the Galayaya Rajamaha Viharaya in the Pannala Divisional Secretariat benefited from the clinic. Of those examined, 18 received complimentary eye glasses, 15 were referred for medical treatment for conditions such as cataracts and other eye diseases, and 10 were recommended for free eye lens implants.

The successful execution of the clinic was made possible through the dedicated participation of numerous UNASL members and local dignitaries. Notable attendees included Kurunegala District Additional General Secretary Priyankara Aruna Shantha, UNASL Secretary General Dr. M. M. M. Rushanudeen, Executive Chairman Dharmadasa Vitharana, Vice Chairman Ravi Nagarajah, Assistant General Secretary Ms. Panchali Ratnayake, Dr. Darshana Weerakoon, Grama Niladharis, and other esteemed members of the community.

The medical relief program received significant financial and organizational support from Mr. Dhammika Sisira Kumara, Mr. Sujeewa Nuwan, Mr. Nirosan Indrawansa, Mr. Subramaniam Prabhakara, Mr. Jayatissa Athauda Hetti, Dr. Chrishantha Disanayake, Dr. Madhavi Bandara, Mrs. Renuka Disanayake, and Mrs. Chamika Jayaweera. Complementing the eye clinic, Mr. Chaminda Nishantha also organized a special ‘Belimal

Dansala’ (a traditional offering of refreshing drinks) for all attendees. Crucial professional support was extended by the staff of Pannala Makandura Eye World Optical, including Director Mrs. Sakura Panditharathne and Dr. Asanka Bandara, who ensured the high quality of the eye examinations. W.K.S Medical Service played a vital role in facilitating the procurement of eye lenses.

The event commenced with religious rituals performed by the Venerable Thero of the Galayaya Rajamaha Viharaya, who invoked blessings upon all present. Mr. Dharmadasa Vitharanage, Executive Chairman, Dr. M. M. M. Rushanudeen, Secretary General, Dr. Ravi Nagarajah, Vice Chairman, and Ms. Panchali Rathnayake, Assistant Secretary General, participated this event. Dr. M. M. M. Rushanudeen, Secretary General of the UNASL addressed the gathering, enlightening them about the mission and role of the United Nations. Priyankara Aruna Santha, the Additional District Secretary of Kurunegala, commended the initiative and pledged his continued support for future endeavors. The Additional District Secretary of Kurunegala, commended the initiative and pledged his continued support for future endeavors.

## UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF SRI LANKA HOSTS SUCCESSFUL 5TH NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ANNUAL CONFERENCE



The United Nations Association of Sri Lanka (UNASL) held its 5th National Executive Committee Conference on Sunday, 27th July 2025, at Waters Edge, Battaramulla, bringing together esteemed members, youth representatives, and national thought leaders to reflect on the Association’s legacy and chart a collaborative course towards a sustainable future. Mr. M.M. Zawahir, President of UNASL, delivered the Welcome Address, setting the tone for the day’s proceedings. He was followed by Mr. Dharmadasa Vitharana, Executive Chairman, who took participants “Down Memory Lane” with a compelling account of UNASL’s rich history and its contributions to Sri Lanka’s development through global engagement.

A session on volunteerism and leadership experiences was presented by Dr. M.M.M. Rushanudeen, Secretary-General of UNASL.

The morning keynote on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), titled “A Common Agenda, A Shared Responsibility: Bridging Generations to Localize Global Goals in Sri Lanka,” was delivered by Mr. Ashan Perera, Founder of The Road to Rights and recipient of the United Nations SDG Action Award 2018. His address emphasized intergenerational responsibility and collective action for sustainable development. The role of the United Nations and the critical contribution of national UN Associations was articulated by Prof. Rohan Fernando, Chairman of the National Science and Technology Commission and Senior Professor in Geology at the Open University of Sri Lanka.

The Chief Guest, Admiral Prof. Jayanath Colombage, delivered a keynote address reflecting on multilateral cooperation and Sri Lanka’s engagement with the UN. Further insights into the current and future direction of the Association were shared by President M.M. Zawahir, followed by a dynamic session titled “Youth in Action and The Way Forward,” led by the UNASL Youth Members, showcasing the vibrancy and potential of youth-led initiatives. The afternoon saw the launch of a fundraising project featuring the unveiling of the official UNASL T-shirt, a symbolic step to bolster public awareness and resource mobilization and Token Appreciation Presentation.

Two key governance meetings followed:

- 3rd National Executive Committee Meeting (2025/26)
- Special General Meeting (2025/26)

The event concluded with a Vote of Thanks delivered by Dr. Sarath Samarage, Vice Chairman of UNASL, who acknowledged the contributions of all members, partners, and stakeholders in making the conference a resounding success.

The UNASL remains committed to advancing the values of the United Nations in Sri Lanka through advocacy, education, and action. This annual gathering reinforced the Association's vision to empower communities, engage youth, and promote sustainable development across generations.

The Token Appreciations Receipts are Chief Guest, Admiral Prof. Jayanath Colombage, Guest Speakers Prof. Rohan Fernando, Mr. Ashan Perera, Mr. S. Kumarendiram – Chairman Yashi Holdings Private Limited Colombo, Mr. Buddika Perera Father Rev. M. Matheesan, of Jaffna, Mrs. Fathima NAZRA Rushanudeen Mohamed Nizar, Mr. Chaminda Perera Editor – News Daily News National Paper Lake House, President Mr. M. M. Zawahir, Executive Chairman Mr. Dharmadasa Vitharanage, Secretary-General Dr. M. M. M. Rushanudeen dedicated his daughter Miss. Nabeeha Rushanudeen, Treasurer Mr. Kumudu Weerasinghe, Editor Mrs. Shiyama Wijekulasuriya, Mrs. Chandani Kusumalatha Vitharanage, ASG Mrs. Panchali Rathnayake VC, Dr. Ravi Nagaraja, Dr. Sarath Samaraghe, ASG, Dr. Madavi Bandara, ASG, Dr. Krishantha Dissanayake.

This 5th National Executive Committee Conference, 3rd Exco & Special General Meetings was Sponsored by : Honorary Exco Member S. Kumarendiram Chairman- Yashi Holdings Private Limited, Buddhika Perera, Father Rev. M. Matheesan (Gold Sponsors) M. S. M. Mafriz (Bronze Sponsor) I. M. Ijilan, M. S. M. Saleem, A. A. Azeez, Dr. Jayaruwan Bandara, M. H. M. Ibrahim, Lalith Peris, M. H. M. Abdeen (General Sponsors) all Special Life / Life Members of United Nations Association of Sri Lanka affiliated to with The World Federation United Nations Associations WFUNA.

Our sincere appreciation and thanks to Mr. Dharmadasa Vitharanage, Executive Chairman & Assistant Treasurer, Mr. Sampath Priyankara, Deputy Executive Chairman and Ms. Shehani Tharika, Office Assistant they have ungrudgingly devoted their time in compiling the Annual 2025, and to the learned contributors who have demonstrated their scholarship in providing articles. We also wish to thank for the contribution made by our valuable sponsors to the annual.

***Mrs. Shyama Wijekulasuriya***  
***Editor***  
***United Nations Association of Sri Lanka***





## RECEIVING ENGLISH DIPLOMA COURSE FOR 200 PRE SCHOOL TEACHERS



The United Nations Association of Sri Lanka (UNASL) and the Institute of Professional Studies and Skills Development Sri Lanka (IPSSD) jointly launched a English Diploma Course for 200 preschool teachers in free of charge in the Galle District on 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2025 at Sussex International College, Galle.

This program was initiated based on the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4) of the United Nations: the right to quality education. The course aims to enhance the English language proficiency of preschool teachers and provide them with special training on understanding children's minds and delivering effective education.



The program was led by Dr. Madhavi Bandara, Senior Executive Director of the Institute of Professional Studies and Skills Development Sri Lanka and Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka. During the session, participating preschool teachers received specialized training on understanding children's psychology and providing them with appropriate education.



Furthermore, Mr. M.M. Zawahir, President of the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka, conducted a special training session on positive thinking for the teachers.

The event was attended by President Mr. M.M. Zawahir, Secretary-General Dr. M.M.M. Rushanudeen, Executive Chairman Mr. Dharmadasa Vitharanage itarana, Vice Chairman Mr. Ravi Nagaraj, and Assistant Secretaries-General's Dr. Chrishantha

Dissanayake, Dr. Madhavi Bandara and Ms. Panchali Ratnayake, all directors of the Executive Board of the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka. Also present were UNASL members Mr. Dhammika Sisira Kumara, Mr. Sujeewa Nuwan, Mr. Asindu Induwara and along with course instructors from the Institute of Professional Studies and Skills Development Sri Lanka, Ms. G. Chandrani, Mr. Vihaga Deshapriya and Mr. Hemantha Vitharana.

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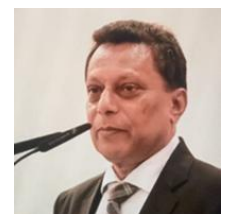
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IN THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC  
**OF SRI LANKA**

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- Hon. Ranil Wickremasinghe. MP
- Hon. Chandrika Bandaranayake Kumaratunge. MP
- Hon. Mahinda Rajapaksa. MP
- Hon. Rathnasiri Wickramanayake. MP
- Hon. D.M. Jayaratne. MP
- Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena. MP

#### Complimentary Members:

- |                          |                                 |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • J.V.W. Nainankada      | • T.A. Damayanhi Fernando       |
| • W.H. Jayaratne         | • J.A. Chandani Jayasinghe      |
| • Nadeeka Perera         | • W.M. Chithra Kumari           |
| • Daniel Bollegala       | • M. Nimali Dhammika Abeysinghe |
| • Arjuna Ranatunga       | • R Hemali Priyadarshanie       |
| • Nandawathi Nanayakkara | • Ms. Mohamed Munnawar Shukra   |
| • Mahendra Amarasuriya   | • Munnawar                      |

## **History of the UN Association of Sri Lanka (1950 – 2005)**

**Late Mr. Kumaran Fernando**

After the grant of political independence by Great Britain in February, 1948 and the prompt steps taken by the Government of Ceylon to be admitted as a Member State of the United Nations, it became apparent that the country was not going to gain admission soon owing to 'cold war' differences between the two superpowers within the Security Council.

This prompted a group of young people who had heard of worldwide interest in setting up UN supportive groups calling on Prime Minister D S Senanayake to indicate to him their interest in setting up a United Nations Association in Ceylon. They felt that it was not necessary to wait for formal admission of the country to the UN but that support by the people to the whole concept could begin at once.

The Prime Minister who was also the Minister of External Affairs agreed with this view and gave the group his unreserved blessing and support. What is more at the inaugural meeting of the United Nations Association of Ceylon held at 'Sravasti' meeting hall, Major Montague Jayewickreme, M P, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry was unanimously elected as its first President and Yogendra Duraiswamy as its first Secretary-General. The author was also present.

His Excellency the Right Honourable Hereward Ramsbotham, the Governor-General was graciously pleased to accept Office as the first Patron, while Prime Minister the Right Honourable D S Senanayake, became its Chief Vice Patron. This practice became a firmly established tradition and has continued unbroken to this day.

Immediately after the inaugural meeting, the author personally called on Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, then Minister of Home Affairs and invited him to enrol, to which he promptly agreed and became the highest-ranking political figure to become a Member. Later, in the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory 1954, on his assumption of office as the third

Governor-General, Sir Oliver became the Patron of the Association. In 1951, the new Association gained admission to WFUNA - the World Federation of United Nations Associations - which had replaced the League of Nations Union - as a national affiliate. The WFUNA which had been founded in 1946, became the chief voluntary promoter of the United Nations among the Peoples of the World. Other national UNAS admitted that year were Jamaica, Burma and South Korea.

There was another landmark achievement that year. The UNA had held its first AGM at which the author was elected as the youngest member of the Committee of Management and in that capacity traveled to Europe as a representative of the UNA. In the United Kingdom he successfully established a firm link with British UNA, an arrangement that persists to this day, some 54 years later. He also met John A F Ennals, the first Secretary-General of the WFUNA with whom he established a warm personal friendship which persisted until his sudden death in China while on a visit to the UNA in that country. This representative also met with M Francois Dausset in Paris who was running the WFUNA Office in that City where the Sixth Sessions of the UN General Assembly were being held in the Palais des Chailliot. He went on to meet the first Secretary-General, Trygve Halvdon Lie, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Ralph Bunche. He also called on Shamaldharee Lall (India) Assistant Secretary-General and officials of the Department of Public Information who promised to supply printed material in bulk to the new UNA.

Most of all the most important and lasting contact in Paris was with Sir Gladwyn Jebb, one of Britain's top diplomats who had attended the Charter Conference in San Francisco and been elected at the end of it as the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission of the United Nations. His first task was the launching



of the United Nations, which he successfully carried out on 24 October 1945. Sir Gladwyn, together with British UNA and with the full support of his Majesty King George VI and British UNA, organized preparatory meetings at Church House, Westminster, London during the autumn of 1945 followed by the the first sessions Of the UN General Assembly at Methodist Central Hall Westminster beginning on 10 January, 1946 at which Sir Gladwyn was elected as the first and only ever acting Secretary-General of the United Nations.

When Trygve Halvdon Lie was elected as the UN's first Secretary-General on 01 February, Sir Gladwyn stepped down from the high pedestal on which history had placed him and returned to his diplomatic duties elsewhere with the sobriquet "Father of the United Nations" following him around. Many, many years later, the UNA of Sri Lanka discovered him living in retirement in a government flat and asked him to his surprise and pleasure to accept an Honorary Life President office which he did most promptly and remained so until he passed away in 1999.

Later the author was introduced to Luis Padilla Nervo, Sixth President of the UN General Assembly who was delighted to hear the news of a UNA in Ceylon. This took place at the annual concert to mark the third anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in that same City. The concert took place in the underground theatre of the Palais in which the General Assembly was in session. Sometime later, the UNA was able to get elected to the Executive Committee of the WFUNA.

Senator the Honorable Dr M V P Peiris, succeeded the first President of the UNA and continued until 1970 when the Honorable Felix R Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Justice was elected President with Nihal Jayewickreme, Secretary, Ministry of Justice as Secretary General.

In 1976, Liyanage Henry Horace Perera, Secretary-general of the WFUNA (1966-76) worried that his home UNA was inactive and

decided to pay a visit just before relinquishing duties as the WFUNA Secretary-General. He also found out that the UNA was having many difficulties in paying its annual dues to the WFUNA. He felt that the UNA needed to be re-activated and after hearing of Felix Dias Bandaranaike's request to be relieved of his duties as President, he spoke with Nihal Jayawickrema and Kusala Abhayawardhana, MP and asked if they could recommend a successor to Jayawickrema. Kusala Abhayawardhana said she could think of only one person whom Jayawickrema also knew very well.

At a meeting held (at the Justice Ministry Conference Room in Hultsdorf on 07 July, 1976) presided over by Haji S. M. A. Raschid, J P, Senior Vice President, he announced from the Chair of the letter of resignation sent by Felix Dias-Bandaranaike and proposed the name of Nihal Jayawickrema as President which was unanimously accepted. After taking the Chair Nihal Jayawickrema in his first act as President, proposed the name of Kumaran Fernando, the author, for the post of Secretary-General. After that Dr Mackie Ratwatte (Private Secretary to the Prime Minister) was also elected a Vice President and the election of J. A. Ramanayake, (Secretary of a powerful Teachers' Union) Professor K. Kularatnam (Professor of Geography of the University of Colombo) and Ms. Irangani Ratwatte (Private Secretary to the Governor-General) as Exco Members. Elliott Gunasekera a practising lawyer and Secretary of the Legal Aid Commission who was elected Treasurer pleaded soon afterwards that he found it difficult to find time from his professional duties to carry out the responsibilities as Treasurer and so Indrajith Wijekulasuriya, recommended by the new Secretary-General, took over as de facto Treasurer. Next, the new President proposed that L H Horace Perera, WFUNA Secretary-General be elected as the first Honorary Life President of the UNA and this too was unanimously approved.

Back at the WFUNA Headquarters at the Palace of the Nations, Geneva, Horace Perera quickly

got in touch with Hilary Barratt-Brown a former British Army Officer who had served in Sri Lanka during the Second World War and had taken a deep liking to the people of the country. After demobilization he had become a UNA enthusiast and married a rich lady whose home was in Majorca, among the Balearic Islands of Spain. He promptly agreed to Horace PERERA's suggestion to meet the annual dues to the WFUNA and also settle some accumulated arrears as well.

The new Secretary-General got together a small team to help him. They were, among others Dharmadasa Vitharana, Brigadier Granville Elapata, a serving Army Officer, Ms. Verna Karunatileke, and Lakshman Ranatunge all mercantile employees who remain supporters to this day. They were followed later by Henry Karunaratne (now deceased) and Shelton Peiris. There was also Chandani Silva, and Leelawathie Silva who became the hostesses at the National Office which continued to be visited by Ambassadors, High Commissioners and even Ministers. These two ladies continue to serve the UNA in different ways to this day. Enthusiastic and firm support also came unexpectedly from the then Director, UN Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Karen Breckenridge who not long afterwards died from a motor accident in Geneva. His support was followed by that of K Manikkalingam. Ambassador Susantha De Alwis after his return from serving in Geneva, also became a close supporter.

In 1978, Y Duraiswamy was elected as its new President. Friendly relations were then established with the UNAS of the Soviet Union, India, Poland, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Canada and Japan. The UNA of China which had been a Founder Member of the WFUNA during the Chiang Kai-Shek regime, had been disbanded after the Revolution of 1949 and Sri Lanka joined other UNAs worldwide in writing separate letters to the Government of the People's Republic of China appealing for the re-activation of the UNA, an appeal which was heeded and which led to China taking its rightful place in the Councils of the WFUNA in 1985. The UNA of the Soviet Union became the

largest benefactor not only of the UNA but also of WFUNA itself which too was on the verge of financial collapse many times but was saved by the Soviet UNA.

Many distinguished citizens enjoying high public standing came forward to support the UNA and remain unswervingly loyal to the Association to this day. Among the distinguished personalities who became Life Members and are still with us with two exceptions, 30 years later, are Desamanya Ambassador Dr Gamani Corea, Desamanya Ambassador Dr Vernon Mendis, Desamanya Ambassador Neville Kanakaratne, Desamanya Ambassador Nissanka Wijewardene, Desbandu Dr Hudson Silva Desbandu Dr Siran Deraniyagala. Dr Kim Hak-Su, currently a UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UNESCAP and Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala, former Under Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs of the UN and a leading contender for the world's top job of UN Secretary-General in 2006. The exceptions are the passing away of Desamanya Ambassador Neville Kanakaratne and Desabandu Dr Hudson Silva. The former's demise dealt a severe blow to the Association and this is felt over and over again to this day.

UNA Study Circles project was launched in 1981. This project was converted into a programme in 1990 with the formal approval of the Education Minister Lalith Athulathmudali, who too had been in his student days a Founder Member of the UNA in 1950, and was only too happy to give the project his blessing and instruct the Ministry officials to issue a general circular to all secondary schools to establish UNA Study Circles and deal directly with the UNA. Today, in 2005, the programme reached the beginning of its silver jubilee year with 300 secondary schools on its register and constituting the largest ongoing activity. Y Y Kim the then UNDP Resident Representative and Director of the UN Information Centre in Colombo, extended his support by offering a UNDP vehicle with driver and fuel for the

Best wishes from

**Amāna Bank**







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 தேவிய பந்தோபஸ்து அமைச்சு, காவப்பது இலையம், 21, வாக்ஷால் வீதி, கொழும்பு 2  
 MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY, Rakshana Mandiraya, 21, Vauxhall Street, Colombo 2

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 எனது இல  
 My No.

LA/PJ/rm/79

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 உமது இல.  
 Your No.

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 க. பெ. இல.  
 P. O. Box

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 Telephone

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 திகதி  
 Date } November 21st, 1988.

Mr. Kumaran Fernando,  
 Secretary-General,  
 United Nations Association of Sri Lanka,  
 National Secretariat General,  
 Cyril Jansz Mawatha,  
 Panadura.

Dear Kumaran,

I write with reference to your letter of 4th October, 1988,  
 regarding the application to the Registrar of Companies for  
 the registration of your Association.

I understand that the Registrar of Companies has informed  
 the Secretary of Trade & Shipping that it is possible to grant  
 approval for registration in the name of the UNITED NATIONS  
 ASSOCIATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA.

I have no objection to your adoption of this name.

Yours sincerely,

*Lalith Athulathmudali*  
 Lalith Athulathmudali, P.C., M.P.,  
 Minister of National Security,  
 Minister of Trade & Shipping,  
 Deputy Minister of Defence.





**Certificate of Registration of Voluntary Social Services/  
Non Governmental Organization under Voluntary Social  
Services Organizations (Registration & Supervision)  
Act, No. 31 of 1980 as amended by Act, No. 8 of 1998**

*By virtue of the powers vested in me under section 5 read with section 2 of the above Act.*

I ..... HEMAKA ASIRI DAYAL RAYMOND PERERA ..... the Registrar  
of Non Governmental Organizations do hereby certify that..... UNITED NATIONS  
ASSOCIATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA  
.....  
(Name of the Organization)

of ..... 39/1, CYRIL JANZ MAWATHA, PANADURA ..... has been  
(Address of the Organization)

*registered as a Voluntary Social Services/Non Governmental Organization, at the National  
Secretariat for Non Governmental Organizations in the Ministry of Social Services, in  
Sri Lanka.*

Registration No. : L.16104 .....

Date : 25.08.2000 .....



Ministry of Social Services,  
"Sethsiripaya",  
Battaramulla,  
Sri Lanka.

*H. A. D. R. Perera (SLAS),  
Registrar of Non Governmental  
Organizations.*



### *From the 32nd page ...*

Study Circle Mobile Unit to visit a Member school once or twice a month or for an overnight stay involving two days.

In 1987, Secretary-General Javier Perez De Cuellar appointed the UNA as an official UN 'Peace Messenger' the only NGO in the country almost 20 years later to be so honored. In 1989 the Association was incorporated by the Registrar of Companies under the Companies Act No 17 of 1982. Then in 1991 the UNA launched its monthly public lecture programme and up to the end of 2005, had conducted 60 public lectures. Ambassadors, Judges, university professors, NGO leaders, and others from different groups have delivered lectures under this ongoing programme which is very much in demand.

In 1995, the Foreign Ministry set up a National Committee to organize the UN50 celebrations to mark the golden jubilee of the founding of the United Nations and invited the UNA to serve on the Committee as the sole NGO. On a proposal made by the UNA it was decided to run an exhibition train on the entire railway network. The proposal was accepted by the Nat Com and the UN50 Secretariat in New York allocated more than half the required amount. The entire balance was met by the Seylan Bank and with the cooperation of the Railways Department the whole project was successfully conducted over a period of four months. It was declared open at the Fort Railway Station by the then Foreign Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar.

The fiftieth anniversary or golden jubilee of the UNA was held in 2000 with a message from UN Secretary - General Kofi Annan who said "Since its birth in 1950, the UNA of Sri Lanka has been a valuable ally of the United Nations - a two-way link between the Organization and the people it exists to serve. As long as there are people like you willing and able to dedicate themselves to the betterment of all, there is hope". And the Committee established under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Foreign Minister, Professor Wiswa Warnapala.

In 2005, the Association began by electing Rienzie T Wijetilleke one of Sri Lanka's bestknown Bankers and Chairman of the Hatton National Bank as its new President. He led the Association in the observances for the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Signing of the UN Charter by propagating an article on the subject widely reproduced in many newspapers with a photograph of the Ceylon National flag being hoisted at the UN for the first time and TV interviews on two State channels in Sinhala and English.

With a splendid performance, the National Observance of the Diamond Jubilee UN DAY was held in an unbroken chain of 55 years, in the glittering Main Saloon of the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall after 28 years and where every seat was occupied with the Speaker of Parliament, the Honorable W J M Lokubandara, as the Chief Guest.

UNA's final bow for the memorable year was the assistance given to the Foreign Ministry National Committee to organize a brilliant and spectacular ceremony and performance to mark Fifty Years of Sri Lanka with the United Nations in honor of which this book is being published by the National Committee.

# Five Years to Go: The Stark Reality of Sri Lanka's SDG Progress

*Dr. Sarath Samarage*

*Vice Chairman - UNASL*

Sri Lanka has pledged its commitment to the United Nations' 2030 Agenda, aiming to meet all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their 169 targets. The Sustainable Development Council (SDC) leads the national effort, tracking progress through regular Voluntary National Reviews. With just five years left until the 2030 deadline, the country's progress is a mixed bag—there are clear wins, but also deep-rooted challenges and emerging risks that could derail some goals.

## What's Going Well

- **Health:** Sri Lanka has made impressive strides in healthcare. Maternal deaths dropped from 28.8 per 100,000 live births in 2020 to 18.3 in 2023. Infant immunization rates are stellar, consistently above 98% for WHO-recommended vaccines.
- **Gender Equality:** Women's representation in Parliament nearly doubled—from 5.3% in 2024 to 9.8% in 2025. It's a small but meaningful step toward more inclusive governance.
- **Energy:** The shift toward renewables is gaining momentum. Renewable energy made up 29.3% of total consumption in 2021, up from 28.4% in 2020, thanks to new laws encouraging private investment and modernization.
- **Jobs and Education:** Unemployment fell from 6.6% in 2024 to 4.9% in 2025. Universities are showing slight improvements in performance.
- **Climate Action:** There's progress in managing emissions and deforestation. Greenhouse gas emissions from imports are down, and permanent deforestation has reportedly dropped to near zero by 2023.

## Where the Road Gets Bumpy

Despite these gains, Sri Lanka's path to the SDGs is hampered by economic turbulence. A heavy debt burden, inflation, and tight budgets have made it hard for the government to invest in key areas like infrastructure, social services, and climate resilience.

- **Education:** Primary school enrolment is slipping, and fewer children are attending pre-primary programs—down from 49.4% in 2018 to 48.6% in 2023.
- **Innovation & Infrastructure:** Still lagging behind regional peers, with limited progress in industrial development.
- **Waste Management:** Rising municipal and electronic waste is a growing concern. Unrecovered e-waste jumped from 6.3 kg per person in 2019 to about 8 kg in 2022.
- **Governance:** Corruption and weak institutions continue to hinder progress, especially toward SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).
- **Poverty & Inequality:** The economic downturn hit hard. Poverty rates surged from 13.1% in 2021 to an estimated 25% in 2022, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable.

## How Sri Lanka Stacks Up Globally

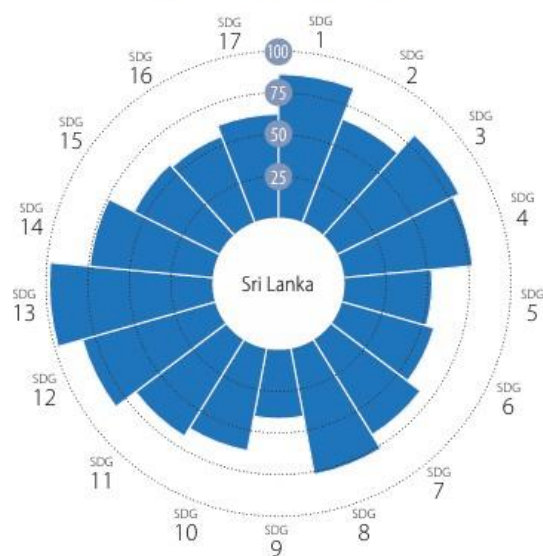
Sri Lanka's SDG Index score nudged up slightly—from 67.4 in 2024 to 67.9 in 2025—but still ranks 93rd out of 167 countries, below the regional average of 69.5. While there's steady progress in health, energy, and some social indicators, many goals remain out of reach—especially those needing major investments and stronger institutions.

### Overall Performance



Source: Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025

### Average Performance by SDG



## What Needs to Happen Next

To meet the 2030 targets, Sri Lanka will need bold and strategic action:

- **Finance:** Innovative funding tools like green bonds, concessional loans, and public-private partnerships can help bridge the resource gap.
- **Governance:** Tackling corruption and improving institutional efficiency is crucial.
- **Investment Priorities:** Focus on early childhood education, infrastructure, and innovation ecosystems.
- **Social Protection:** Strengthen safety nets to support those most at risk.
- **Environment:** Improve waste management and ramp up renewable energy deployment, alongside broader climate adaptation efforts.

## Final Thoughts

Sri Lanka's SDG journey reflects both promise and vulnerability. Without faster, better-funded, and more resilient systems, the country risks falling short on key goals—especially in education, infrastructure, and inequality. But the progress in health, gender equality, and energy shows what's possible. With a strong final push, Sri Lanka can still turn the tide.





Dengue fever, a mosquito-borne viral disease, poses a significant global health challenge, with a rapid increase in cases over the past few decades. The burden of dengue is particularly epidemic or outbreak in tropical and subtropical regions, including Sri Lanka, where the disease is endemic. This presentation explores the imperative of vaccination as a critical strategy in combating dengue, highlighting the latest advancements and recommendations in dengue vaccine development.

Globally, dengue has seen a 30-fold increase in cases over the last 50 years, with half of the world's population at risk of exposure. Annually, 390 million people are infected, leading to approximately 40,000 deaths due to severe complications. This shift underscores the need for targeted vaccination strategies to protect vulnerable populations.

Sri Lanka, like many dengue-endemic countries, faces a substantial burden from dengue infections. The disease impacts all age groups, with severe manifestations more common among adults with comorbidities such as hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes. The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes the increased risk of severe outcomes in older adults and those with pre-existing conditions, considering vaccination in these high-risk adult population.

The introduction of the Tetravalent Dengue Vaccine (TDV) represents a significant advancement in dengue prevention. TDV has demonstrated efficacy against virologically confirmed dengue, hospitalization, and dengue hemorrhagic fever, with a favorable safety profile. Clinical trials of TAK003, including the TIDES study, have shown that TDV provides robust protection across all dengue serotypes, offering a promising tool for reducing the dengue burden. The TIDES study involved over 20,000 participants and demonstrated significant efficacy in preventing dengue across diverse age groups and serostatuses.

WHO guidelines recommend the strategic deployment of dengue vaccines, particularly in endemic regions, emphasizing the importance of vaccination for individuals with comorbidities and older adults. A well-implemented dengue vaccination program integrated with effective vector control measures could bring significant public health benefits to Sri Lanka, reducing the incidence of dengue and its severe outcomes. In conclusion, dengue vaccination is an imperative component of global health strategies aimed at combating this endemic disease. By prioritizing vaccination in children and high-risk populations and integrating it with vector control efforts, countries like Sri Lanka can achieve substantial public health benefits, reducing the morbidity and mortality associated with dengue fever.

**Keywords:** Dengue, Vaccination, Tetravalent Dengue Vaccine, Public Health, Comorbidities, Vector Control.

## UNASL Study Circle School 2024/2025



### Best Study Circle School Southlands College, Galle

1<sup>st</sup> Row from Left to Right - H. L. Lihini Lochana, Mrs. K. H. A Peshala (Teacher in Charge), K. Inuri Umada

Second Row (Left to Right) - B. L. Methuni Chanulya Karunarathne, H. H. Chenara Lakduli, R. M. Medhya Hansaki Ratnayake, S. Nuveena Nathari De Silva

### Best Study Circle School 2nd Place Kegalu Vidyalaya, Kegalle



Seated from Left to Right  
R. A. K. Ranaweera (Teacher in charge), A. L. P. Amarasooriya (Principal), U. G. J. S. Rathnayaka (Vice principal)

Second row Left to Right - W. P. T. D.

Samarasinghe, J. R. M. P. Rathnayaka. S. M. S. K. Samarathunga.

Third row Left to Right - W. J. Lakwin. A. A. N. C. Amarasinghe, G. T. M. Senathilaka

### Best Study Circle School 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Mahinda College, Galle.



## UNASL Study Circle Teacher – In – Charge 2024/2025



**Best Teacher – In - Charge**  
**Southlands College- Galle**  
**Mrs. K. H. A. Peshala**

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Place



**Ms. R. A. Kumudini Ranaweera**  
**Kegalu Vidyalaya, Kegalle**

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Place



**G. H. Nuwan Chathuranga**  
**Mahinda College, Galle.**

## UNASL General Knowledge Competition - 2025



### First Place

**Manugi Sadewna Nawarathna, Girl's High School, Mount Lavinia**



**Second Place**  
**Thejini Gamage**  
**Visakha Vidyalaya**  
**Colombo**



**Third Place**  
**H. H. Chenara Lakduli**  
**Southlands College**  
**Galle**



**Fourth Place**  
**K. A. Roosayuri S. Dinethmi**  
**Christ Church National School**  
**Matale**



**Fifth Place**  
**B. M. Kaushani N. Basnayake**  
**Ku / Maliyadeva Balika Vidyalaya**  
**Kurunegala**



## UNASL Speech Contest 2025



### Best Speaker

Minuri Bandara

Visakha Vidyalaya Colombo



### Second Place

T. G. Vinuja Nethmin  
Mahinda College, Galle



### Third Place

K L G Kishala Madhubhashini  
Rippon Girls College, Galle



### Fourth Place

W. R. A. Senali T. Wijesinghe  
Ku / Maliyadeva Balika Vidyalaya  
Kurunegala

**Fifth Place** - Reshana De Mel - Colombo International School, Colombo

## UNASL Essay Contest 2025



### First Place

L.H.M. Maneesha Sithmini Bandara,  
Ku/Maliyadeva Balika Vidyalaya, Kurunegala



### Second Place

N. V. Janith Chamara  
Mahinda College, Galle



### Third Place

B.L. Methuni C. Karunarathne  
Southlands College, Galle



### Fourth Place

Yumethma U. Satharasinghearachchi  
Kolonnawa Girls College, Colombo

**Fifth Place** - H. R. Chathubhani Pramudinee Senanayake, St. Josep Girl's College, Kegalle



## **UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF SRI LANKA**

National Observance of the 80th United Nations Day  
at the

**SLFI -Sri Lanka Foundation Institute Auditorium**

# 100, Sri Lanka Padanam Mawatha, Independence Square, Colombo 7.

### **PROGRAMME**

3.00 pm Welcoming Chief Guest by President & Exco followed by Sri Lanka Police Dance Group

3.05pm Hoisting National and UN Flags by the Chief Guest and UNASL  
President (National Anthem)

3.10 pm Opening Performance (Pooja Dance) -Sri Lanka Police

3.20 pm Welcome Address by the President of the UNASL -Mr. Mohamed Zawahir

3.25 pm Presentation of the UNASL Annual Report 2025 to the Chief Guest and Dignitaries

3.30 pm Performance by Visakha Vidyalaya Choir

3.45pm Address by -Student Mahinda College -Galle- 1st runner up of Speech Contest -Sinhalese  
Medium

3.50 pm Performance-OKI International School

4.00 pm Address Secretary General UNASL -Dr. M. M. M. Rushanudeen

4.05 pm Address by Key note speaker Ms. Minuri Bandara -Visakha Vidyalaya -Best speaker award  
winner of Speech Contest

4.10pm Address by Chief Guest - Deputy Speaker to Parliament Hon. Dr. Rizvie Salih

4.20 pm Presentation of awards

4.40pm Performance -Sri Lanka Police

4.45 pm Vote of Thanks by Vice Chairman Dr. Sarath Samarage

5.00pm Termination of the Session followed by Refreshment

**Best Wishers**

**From**

**Special Life Member Rev. Father M. Matheesan**

**United Nations Association in the Democratic Socialist  
Republic of Sri Lanka**

**Director**

**Manna Global Mission**

**Jaffna**

**Sri Lanka**

**Mobile: +94777 226 297**

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International Year  
of Cooperatives

Cooperatives Build  
a Better World



“Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)  
emphasize the urgency of achieving the 2030  
Agenda, calling for increased action and  
investment, especially in high-impact areas like  
poverty eradication, climate action, and financing  
for development”

- **António Guterres, Secretary-General**



**United Nations Association  
of Sri Lanka**

**National Secretariate  
#39/1, Cyril Jansz Mawatha  
Panadura  
Sri Lanka**

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unasl@slt.lk  
www.unasrilanka.org**