



Newsletter

UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF SRI LANKA

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Annual General Meeting 2026



The 76th Annual General Meeting of the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka was held on the 28th of March 2026 at the UNASL Secretariat of the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka in Panadura.

The event commenced with the hoisting of the National Flag by the Secretary General, Dr. M. M. M. Rushanudeen (JPWI) and the UN flag by the President Mr. Mohamed Zawahir. A total attendance of 50 members participated at the Annual General Meeting.

The National Anthem was sung followed by one minute of silence as a mark of respect for the members who have passed away and laid down their lives under the UN flag.

The welcome address was made by the president, Mr. Mohamed Zawahir followed by the secretary general, Dr. M. M. M. Rushanudeen who made a note of all the various activities carried out by the United Nations of Association of Sri Lanka during the year 2025/2026.

Mr. T. Sumanthi Fernando was elected as the Pro-team Chairman and 23 members were appointed as the Executive Committee Members who were elected/re-elected to the National Executive Committee for the year 2026/2027. The elected members of the National Executive Committee took their oath of office collectively.

The members were given the opportunity to express their views on activities of United Nations Association of Sri Lanka. Some impactful speeches were given by Major General Kithsiri Bandara Ekanayake (Retired), Mr. Kushan Fernando and Mr. Suranga Ranjan Liyanage.



Written by: Ms. Mihara Hettiarachchi
Life Member (2166)
UNA – Sri Lanka

United Nations Association of Sri Lanka
Board of Directors
2026 / 2027

President

Mr. M. Mohamed Zawahir

Chairperson of the Executive Committee

Mr. Dharmadasa Vitharanage

Secretary-General

Dr. M. M. M. Rushanudeen (JPWI)

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Mr. Sampath Priyankara

Assistant Treasurer

Mr. Kumudu Weerasinghe

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Mrs. Shyama Wijekulasuriya

Six Executive Committee Members

- 1. Prof. Rohan Fernando
- 2. Mr. S. Kumarendiram (JPWI)
- 3. Mr. M. J. Mohamed Irshad
- 4. Ms. Rohini Silva
- 5. Ms. Ajantha Priyani
- 6. Ms. Neranjala Tennakoon

Honorary Members

- 1. Mrs. Chandani Vitharanage
- 2. Mr. Indrajith Wijekulasuriya
- 3. Dr. G. P. P. Silva
- 4. Dr. Kamal Abeywardena
- 5. Dr. M. Z. M. Nizar
- 6. Mrs. Thamara Wijewardena
- 7. Mr. D. M. Siriwardena
- 8. Mr. Asoka Perera

Two Deputy Executive Chairpersons

- 1. Dr. Ravi Nagarajah
- 2. Dr. T. Anver Dole

Three Vice Chairperson

- 1. Mr. Lalith Peiris
- 2. Ms. Panchali Rathnayake
- 3. Dr. Madhavi Bandara

Six Assistant Secretaries-General

- 1. Mr. Athula Kanakarathna
- 2. Mr. Sarath Jayathilaka
- 3. Mr. U. Abdul Marzook (Attorney-at-Law)
- 4. Ms. Marleena Laxana
- 5. Dr. Chrisantha Dissanayaka
- 6. Dr. Jayaruwan Bandara



Former UNA Secretary General's 16th Death Anniversary



The 16th death anniversary of Mr. Kumaran Fernando, the founder and the first chairman of the Kumaran Fernando Foundation, religiously commemorate by following an alma given to Ten priests of Sri Saugatha Vidyalaya Maha Pirivana at the UNA Secretariat / Sagala Foundation.

The Vijithananda Thero the Chief priest made the Anusha Sana and remembered the all meritorious work made towards to the temple and to the community by the founder Mr. Kumaran Fernanado.

English Diploma for Preschool Teachers in the Kalutara District



A Preschool Teachers English Diploma seminar was held on the 26th May 2026 at the Kalutara Secretariat premises with the attendance of 185 Preschool teachers. This was a joint function with UNASL and IPSSDL with Dr. Madhavi Bandara, VC and President Zawahir speaking about the UN and the Diploma program.

Written By: Dr. Ravi Nagarajah
Deputy Executive Chairman
United Nations Association of Sri Lanka

Welcome Our New Members 2026 01 01 to 2026 06 30

Special Life Member Overseas

2171 Dr. Ahmed Sulaiman Jameel Jameel

Special Life Members

2170 Mr. Hambange Don Praveen Sadeesha Manohara

Life Members

2164 Ms. Hetti Kankanange Surani Iresha Lakmali
2165 Ms. Nagasinghe Arachchilage Anushani Kanchana
2166 Ms. Mihara Manomi Hettiarachchi
2167 Mr. Jesudasan Shakya
2168 Mr. Kospalawaththage Ishan Dewinda
2169 Mr. Daundasekara Mudiyanseelage Niranjan Karunarathne

Sri Lankan Candidate Dr. M.M.M. Rushanudeen for contesting Post of Vice President to the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) Represent Sri Lanka and Head of Delegates to World Congress and 44th Plenary Assembly at World Health Organization Headquarters, Geneva from 23rd to 30th August 2026.



of Delegates to World Congress and 44th Plenary Assembly at World Health Organization Headquarters, Geneva from 23rd to 30th August 2026.

Over 100 countries participate in WFUNA participating in the assembly and 7 countries contesting for the post of Vice President among them are Sri Lanka, Somalia, Iceland, Colombia, USA, Tanzania and Pakistan.

For the last 76 years of history of the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka, first Sri Lankan Candidate contesting the post of Vice President and proposed by UNA Sri Lanka and seconded by People's Republic of China.

UNA- Sri Lanka founded in 19th August 1950 under Patronage by Ceylon (Sri Lanka) First Prime Minister and First Foreign Affairs of Ceylon Right Honourable Mahamanya D. S. Senanayake MP and UNA - Sri Lanka affiliated with WFUNA in 1951.

The Secretary - General of the United Nations of Sri Lanka (UNA- Sri Lanka) Sri Lankan Candidate Dr. M.M.M. Rushanudeen for contesting Post of Vice President to the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA)

Represent Sri Lanka and Head

In 1946 after the founding of the United Nations, WFUNA, the People's Movement for the United Nations, was created, inspired by the UN Charter's opening words: "We the peoples." For 80 years, WFUNA, together with over 100 United Nations Associations have worked to strengthen public understanding of the UN, defend its values, and connect global institutions with the people they serve. Since 1946, this movement has helped ensure that peace, human rights, solidarity, and multilateral action are carried forward by citizens, educators, youth, civil society, and communities across the world.

Sri Lanka needs to win 2/3 Majority Votes from among Members Countries around the world by Election day at WFUNA 44th Plenary Assembly in Geneva.

UNA - Sri Lanka other members in delegation are Dharmadasa Vitharanage - Chairperson National Executive Committee, RM. D. Lalith Peris - Vice Chairman and M. J. M. Irshard - Member of National Executive Committee of UNASL.

Dr. Rushanudeen is live wire of UNA - Sri Lanka a very senior member of the UNA - SRI LANKA, having joined as a Volunteer since in 1985 and an Student Member and later obtained a Life Membership in 1990. He has been one of the most active members of the National Executive Committee of the UNA-SRI LANKA and in recognition of services, from time to time he has been conferred the honor of Honorary Member, Life Patron and also the Most Outstanding Volunteer of the Year. He has also served as Chairperson on many important and vibrant Sub-Committees of the UNA – SRI LANKA.

He has held the following position on the National Executive Committee of the UNA-SRI LANKA.

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From the 04th Page ...

1992 – 1994

Executive Committee Member

1994 – 2005

Assistant Secretary - General

2005 – 2008

Vice Chairperson

2008 – 2015

Senior Vice Chairperson

2015 – 2018

Deputy Executive Chairperson

2018 – 2025

Executive Chairperson National Executive Committee

2025 – to-date

Secretary – General

He was the founder and organizer of the UNA Study Circle at Zahira College, Colombo, Sri Lanka and became its first President in 1991, who fashioned it into a very high profile leadership movement which became the most outstanding Study Circle in the island – wide program, among all Secondary High Schools conducted by UNASL Education Project approved by Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka.(1991- 1993)

Having climbed up the ladder step, he possesses a Wealth of Knowledge and Experience on the United Nations. Further, he has attended the 42nd Plenary Assembly of WFUNA held in October, 2018 at Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

Dr. M. M. M. Rushanudeen is an All Island Justice of the Peace, Social Worker, Volunteer, Human Rights Activist, Journalist and a very successful businessman, holding the position of Managing Partner of Nizam Trading, MMR Marketing Services, MMR Prints, Chairman -Director - Editor in Chief of WPC Media Private Limited and Intellectual Property Trade Marks Rights holder in Sri

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Lanka for “ VENUS” , “ HERO” “ARISTON”,”WPC Media “ and “ VAUX”.

Old Boy of Hameed - Al - Hussainie College and Zahira College, Colombo.



Mr. Vitharanage Dharmadasa
Executive Chairperson



Mr. M. D. Lalith Peiris
Vice Chairman



Mr. M. J. Mohamed Irshad
Executive Committee Member

UN International Year 2026

The International Year of the Woman Farmer 2026



The International Year of the Woman Farmer 2026 aims to raise awareness of the role of women in agri-food systems and the challenges they face, including land tenure, financial and technical constraints, and limited access to services and education.

Women play essential roles across agri-food systems, producing, processing and trading food that sustains families, communities and economies. Yet their contributions often go unrecognized, and persistent inequalities limit their access to resources, opportunities and decision making.

The International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF 2026) highlights these realities, calls for collective action and increased investments to close gender gaps, strengthen women's livelihoods and promote their leadership across agri-food value chains. By advancing gender equality and creating conditions for women and girls engaged along agri-food value chains to thrive, the Year contributes to building fairer, more inclusive and sustainable agri-food systems for all.

Empowered women farmers are key agents of change in transforming agri-food systems. Closing gender gaps in access to and control over land, finance, technology, education and decision-making enhances

the well-being of women and their households, boosts productivity, strengthens resilience to climate change and drives progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Women farmers: who they are and what they do.

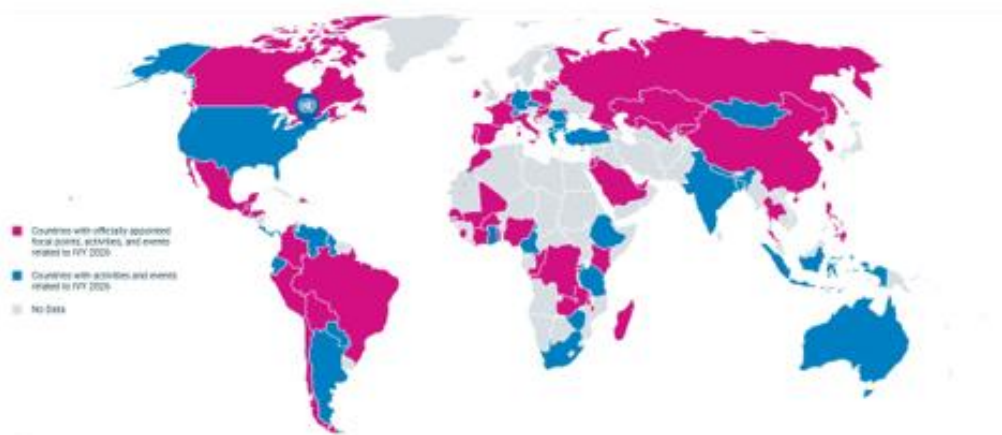
Women farmers are all women working in agri-foods systems in different capacities across all segments of value chains. This includes farmers, producers, peasants, family and smallholder farmers, seasonal laborers, fishers, fish workers, beekeepers, pastoralists, foresters, processors, traders, traditional knowledge holders, women in agricultural sciences, formal and informal workers, and rural entrepreneurs. They encompass women in all their diversity, including young and older women, Indigenous women and women in local communities, women with disabilities, refugee and displaced women, and others. The definition is inclusive of women in both formal and informal work, recognizing their contributions regardless of land ownership or employment status. It reflects the diverse and essential roles all women play in sustaining agri-food systems including through leadership, care and domestic work, while supporting food security, contributing to economic prosperity, and improving nutrition and livelihoods for their families and communities.



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UN International Year 2026

International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development



Through Resolution 78/127, the United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development (IVY), thereby promoting and recognizing volunteerism as a significant force for sustainable development. The General Assembly calls on Member States, United Nations system organizations, and other relevant stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and academia, to observe the International Year at national and regional levels.

Take Action

Every day, millions of people around the world take action – big and small – to make life better for others and for their communities. Whether it's mentoring youth, supporting local health efforts, or responding to emergencies, volunteers drive meaningful change in communities. Through their actions, volunteerism becomes a force for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals - connecting people, strengthening resilience, and creating lasting impact.

The International Volunteer Year 2026 invites you to celebrate and recognize the incredible contributions of volunteers everywhere. It's a moment to raise

awareness, spark conversations, and inspire even more people to get involved.

Promoting Volunteerism

How will you take part? Whether you are a volunteer, an organizer, or someone who believes in the power of community, Let's work together and elevate the voice of volunteers, expand opportunities to serve and inspire a new generation to act! Volunteerism goes beyond goodwill; it plays a meaningful role in building a better future. By promoting volunteerism, we open doors for people to contribute their time, skills and passion to causes that matter, helping to build stronger communities, foster solidarity, and ensure that everyone has a role in creating positive change. It also means making volunteering visible, valued, and accessible. Recognizing many ways people give back, whether formally or informally, locally or globally, and encouraging a culture where volunteering is not only appreciated but actively supported and sustained.

Toolkits and Materials

Celebrating the International Volunteer Year (IVY 2026). The Communications Guide for the International Volunteer Year (IVY 2026) has you covered!

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IVY 2026 is a global celebration of volunteerism, recognizing the invaluable contributions volunteers make to peace, development, and community resilience. The IVY 2026 Communications Guide supports Member States, United Nations entities, civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, and individuals in planning, promoting, and implementing IVY 2026 events and activities. Whether you're organizing an event, launching a campaign, or simply helping spread the word, the IVY 2026 Communications Guide offers the tools and guidance you need to make IVY 2026 a success indigenous knowledge, preserving ecosystems across the world.

A global Milestone for Volunteerism: Resolution A/RES/78/127 In December 2023, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Resolution A/RES/78/127, proclaiming 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development (IVY 2026). In recognition of its global mandate to promote volunteerism, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) program was invited to lead and coordinate the implementation of IVY 2026. The resolution was co-sponsored by 54 Member States, affirming the vital role that volunteers play in achieving sustainable development.

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UN International Year 2026

International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists



The United Nations declared 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP). Covering about half the world's land, rangelands are home to unique biodiversity and pastoral communities whose livelihoods depend on them. Pastoralists raise animals, contribute to food security, and hold diverse cultural heritage and local and indigenous knowledge, preserving ecosystems across the world.

The United Nations General Assembly at its 76th session declared 2026 as the **International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP)**. FAO is the lead agency for celebrating the Year in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders. The #IYRP2026 provides a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of rangelands and pastoralists, advocating for increased responsible investment and adapted policies for the pastoral sector. It calls for policies that secure pastoralists' access to land and natural resources, support mobility, and promote customary and inclusive governance, while encouraging adequate investments in rangeland management, ecosystem restoration, animal health services, and equitable value chains. The Year also aims to foster inclusive policy dialogue and collaborative engagement to improve pastoralist livelihoods and sustainable rangeland management. Rangelands and pastoralists have great potential to contribute and deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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