



# 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

ASSOCIATION OF  
FORMER INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS  
SRI LANKA





# CONTENTS

Subject	Page No
Message From The President of AFICS Sri Lanka - <i>Dr. Nimal Hettiaratchy</i>	03 - 04
Annual Report 2018 - AFICS Sri Lanka - <i>by: Mr. K.M.D.Gunaratne</i>	05 - 06
Editors Note- <i>by: Mr. George A Michael</i>	06 - 07
Association of former International Civil Servants (AFICS)	08 - 09
The Tremendous Impact Sri Lankans had in UN, Bretton Wood Initiative and the Commonwealth - <i>by: Dr. Nihal Abeysundere</i>	10 - 11
List of Advertisers, Donors and Wellwishes	11
Tribute to Koffi Annan	12 - 13
Remembering our Founder President - <i>by: Dr. Panduka Wijeyaratne</i>	13
Random Thoughts - <i>by: Dr. Panduka Wijeyaratne</i>	14 - 15
'Hope Building' children's resource centre - <i>by: Ms. Pramila Gunaratne</i>	16 - 17
Vermillion and Prussian blue <i>by: Ms. Shireen Senadhira</i>	17
AFICS Sri Lanka - <i>by: Dr.Neville Edirisinghe</i>	18 - 19
The global wars against malaria and Sri Lanka's triumph - <i>by: Prof. Emeritus (Mrs) Kamini Mendis</i>	20 - 24
Pain – An Observation - <i>by: Mr. Hema Dassanayake</i>	25
Obituary	25
Smart, Nature-based Strategies for vibrant health, disease prevention and longevity- <i>by: Mr. Ranjit Senevirathna</i>	26 - 28
Reporting on 47 <sup>th</sup> FAFICS Council held in Rome from 20 to 25 July 2018 - <i>by: Mr. George A Michael</i>	29 - 30
ASHI / ASHIL - Health Care Issues	31
UN Commemoration Day 2018 and AFICS Year End Get-Together	31-32
Speech by Ms Hanaa Singer, UN Resident Coordinator in Sri Lanka	34-35
Developmental Activities at UNIDO - <i>by: Deshabandu Emeritus Prof. Tuley de Silva</i>	36-37
Reflections on the Contribution of Microfinance to Financial Inclusion and Poverty Reduction - <i>by: Dr. Nimal A. Fernando</i>	38-44
Small and Mini States and the United Nations System - <i>by: Amb. Dayantha Laksiri Mendis</i>	45-47
Some possible Strategies for Sustainable Climate Smart Agriculture - <i>by: Mr. Ranjit Senevirathna</i>	48-52
How AFICS Sri Lanka was born and it's beginnings	53-54
Summary of Events / Seminars / Lectures conducted by AFISC Sri Lanka	55-59
AFICS Annual Trip (2018) to the UVA Province - <i>by: Prof. Emeritus (Mrs) Kamini Mendis</i>	60
Widow's and Widower's Benefits	61
Emergency E-mail & Phone nos. to UNJSPF and Health Insurance	62
Members list of AFICS Sri Lanka	63-64
Letter From FAFICS Regarding Health Insurance	65
Sponsors	66-68



ASSOCIATION OF FORMER INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS  
(AFICS-SRI LANKA)

# NEWSLETTER

Volume 08

NO.1

Special Silver Jubilee Edition (2019)

BIANNUAL PUBLICATION

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Dr. Gamani Corea (UNCTAD)

## Past Presidents

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Mr. Earle Samarasinghe (2001 - 2003) UNESCO  
Dr. Nihal Abeyesundere (2004 - 2006) WHO  
Dr. Adrian Senadhira (2007 - 2008) WHO  
Mr. Ranjit Seneviratne (2009 - 2011) FAO  
Dr. Panduka Wijeyaratne (2012 - 2017)  
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Mr. Asela Dassanayake (UN-ICTY)  
Mrs. Jeeva Pillai Essex (UNDP, ADB, WB)  
Mr. Hema Dassanayake (WHO)  
Mr. George A Michael (WFP, FAO)

## MESSAGE FROM The President of AFICS Sri Lanka, Colombo



**Dr. Nimal Hettiaratchy**  
(UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP)

**“It should extend beyond the holding of meetings and dinners to a role in social and economic development of the country”.**

*I*t is with great pleasure I send this message to all members of AFICS – Sri Lanka and all FAFICS Members at this very special occasion of the Silver Jubilee Commemoration of AFICS Sri Lanka. Nine thousand five hundred and ninety days ago AFICS Sri Lanka was born at the Eighty Club, 25 Independence Avenue, Colombo 7 under the parenthood of Dr. Gamani Corea a World Renowned Sri Lankan Economist, Civil Servant, Planner, Towering Intellectual and Diplomat, who has also served as Secretary-General of UNCTAD for a period of consecutive nine years demonstrating stellar performance. As the Founder of AFICS Sri Lanka, in his inaugural address Dr. Corea while outlining the objectives stated that **“it should extend beyond the holding of meetings and dinners to a role in social and economic development of the country”**. Mr. Earle Samarasinghe, Convener and the first Secretary-General of AFICS Sri Lanka speaking next, stated that the identification of a role for the association in national development seemed to be unique for AFICS Sri Lanka as the other associations seemed to give more emphasis to the promotion of their pensions and privileges. AFICS Sri Lanka to move on this direction, as a first step the creation of a database of the experts available among the membership of the Association would make it possible to identify the fields in which the Association could assist national and international agencies involved in development



projects in Sri Lanka through the provision of experts and advice from its membership.

It is in this context, now we have the unprecedented opportunity to help underprivileged humankind in our country as well as other needy countries using our rich experience we gained while working in various countries during our service with the United Nations. With the expansion of the UN Development Programmes during last three decades from World Summit for Children Goals 1990 to 2000, to Eight Millennium Development Goals from 2000 to 2010 and to Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals from 2015 to 2030 various developmental fields and areas have tremendously increased from child health activities to eradicate extreme poverty, to achieve universal primary education; to promote gender equality and empower women; to improve maternal health; to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; and to ensure environmental sustainability. On September 25th 2015, 193 world leaders committed to 17 goals to achieve 3 extraordinary things in the next 15 years. End extreme poverty. Fight inequality & injustice. Fix climate change. The Global Goals for sustainable development could get these things done. In all countries. For all people.

In order to reach all these increased number of goals of the United Nations Programmes, UN has launched major changes in the UN systems in the countries and one of the important changes made with effect from 1 January 2019 is to reform the Resident Coordinator System. Sri Lanka is now at this critical juncture with the newly appointed well experienced and dedicated UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Hanaa Singer, who is anxiously waiting to work hand in hand to implement the UN new programme of “Sustainable Development Goals”. For the first time AFICS Sri Lanka was lucky to have Ms. Hanaa Singer as our Chief Guest of the UN Commemorative Dinner and in her speech she expressed her expectations to work very closely with the AFICS Sri Lanka, consists of a group of high level Sri Lankan experts with rich experience. Thus, the challenge is now to strengthen our relationships with the UN and offer our services for human development as and when needed without a fail. May I take this opportunity to wish all of you very happy, healthy and prosperous future.

*Nimal Hettiarachy*

*was born on June 2, 1947 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. He attended Ananda College Colombo 10. He entered the University of Ceylon in 1966 and completed the requirements for a Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Geography in 1970. He obtained his Diploma in Development Studies from University of Bath, England and M.Sc. in Economics in University of Wales UK. He completed his Ph. D. in Policy Planning at the Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, USA. Having taught some time at Cornell joined the UNICEF as the Chief of the Nutrition Section in Lagos, Nigeria and promoted to UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional office in Jordan as the Regional Senior Policy Advisor and also worked as the Regional Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. He was borrowed by the UNFPA and appointed as the UNFPA Country Director for the Sudan. During the Darfur War time he was appointed as acting RC/HC for the Sudan. Next he moved to India as UNICEF State Representative in Uttar Pradesh. Prior to joining the United Nations, he has been teaching at University of Peradeniya and then joined the Sri Lanka Government Planning Service as the Deputy Director of Food and Nutrition Policy Planning Division of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs.*



In September 2015, 193 World leaders unanimously committed to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to achieve extraordinary things by 2030. The new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development call on all nations to mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind. The United Nations in Sri Lanka is working closely with the Government and people of this country to ensure that these goals can be achieved.

# Annual Report 2018 - AFICS Sri Lanka

By the Secretary General Mr. K.M.D.Gunaratne



**“The General Committee of AFICS-felt that in keeping with present day needs and requirements our Constitution should undergo change while maintaining its original objectives and decorum.”**

*A*t the last Annual General Meeting held on 28th February 2018 a General Committee consisting of 21 members were elected but at the first General Committee meeting held on 17th March 2018 the number of committee members were reduced to 12 and the other nine voluntarily opted to become observers in keeping with the provisions of the Articles of Association (Constitution) in view of the objection raised by one general committee member. At the first General Committee Meeting it was decided to amend the Articles of Association at the next Annual General Meeting. Hence, the resolution to amend the Articles of Association at the current AGM.

Six General Committee Meetings were held during the year and the average attendance was 13 out of 21. One General Committee Meeting was chaired by a Vice-President and other meetings chaired by the President.

Several important activities took place during 2018.

The first activity was the Annual Trip to Uva Province organized by Emeritus Professor Dr.Kamini Mendis. It was a very successful trip which was attended by 16 members. Members were able to visit several places including Diyaluma falls, Bambarakanda falls, ancient Dowa Temple, Haputale Gap, Bandarawela and Ella Towns, Hakgala Gardens and Nuwaraeliya Golf Club. We stayed two nights at the Bandarawela Hotel and the last night was spent with a fabulous musical evening organized by our colleague George Anthony Michael.

Our next event was the Seminar organized by Mr.Ranjith Seneviratne on a very special topic: “Smart, Nature-based Strategies for vibrant health, disease prevention and longevity” the subject within the scope of Food and Nutrition dealing with what we eat today and what would be the health implications of our modern food consumption patterns. After the presentation a Questions and Answers session followed which was highly appreciated by members and their spouses and friends who were present there. It was a well attended seminar.

Another significant event this year was the participation in the 47th FAFICS (Federation of Association of Former International Civil Servants) held in Rome at the FAO Headquarters. For this event we sent our representative and developed good connections and rapport this year. Attending FAFICS was also a memorable event because we participated in it for the first time. Now we are playing an active role in FAFICS and our members will benefit from the initiative taken.

We organized a grand Get together and Year End party in December last year which was attended by nearly 55 members with our UN Resident Coordinator as the Chief Guest. For the first time we invited several heads of various UN agencies such as the WHO, FAO, UNICEF to participate at the year end party. Ms Hanaa Singer the newly appointed UN Resident Coordinator explained the future plans for UN activities all over the world. Members enjoyed the sumptuous dinner and music provided by Mrs. Prashanthi Mendis as well as the dinner dance. It was the largest gathering we had in our history of AFICS.

As mentioned earlier, we are taking steps to amend our Constitution (Articles of Association) since there have been no amendments to it since the inception of AFICS – Sri Lanka. The General Committee of AFICS-felt that in keeping with present day needs and requirements our Constitution should undergo change while maintaining its original objectives and decorum. We are forwarding the newly drafted amendments for approval by the general membership at the

forthcoming Annual General Meeting which will be held on 30th March 2019.

I send my greeting for a happy Sinhala / Tamil New Year which takes place in a matter of two weeks and thank all the committee members and members who helped us in various ways to achieve what we have been able to do.

**K.M.D.Gunaratne**  
**Secretary General - AFICS – Sri Lanka**  
**Office – 581, Galle Road, Colombo 06.**  
**Tel: 011 2363186**  
**Home – 28, Pamankada Lane , Colombo 06.**  
**Tel: 001 2366161, Mobile : 0776358645**  
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**22nd March 2019**

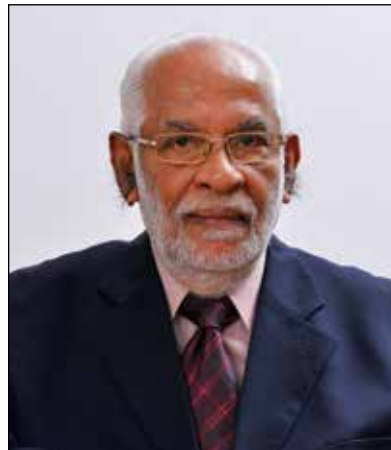
Mr KMD Gunaratne B.A( Cey), FCCA(UK), FCMA(UK), CGMA (UK), MBA(OXFORD) has worked as a Financial Adviser to the CFTC, Commonwealth Secretariat for over 10 years and has served many countries in Central, East and West Africa and Caribbean Countries. He has wide experience in Financial Management and Management Accounting here and abroad. He was also the President of the Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya Colombo Chapter.

**Disclaimer**

The Editor and the General Committee of the Association of Former International Civil Servants, Sri Lanka accept no responsibility for the opinions expressed in reports, articles, and advertisements published in the Newsletter or for the accuracy of the information given. Furthermore, mention of any product, service, organization or company in the Newsletter does not necessarily represent an endorsement by the Association.

I am entrusted with the writing of the Editors note and to begin I thought I should trace a little bit of history of the Association. In its inaugural meeting in December 1992, the members expressed to have a Newsletter to be able to communicate with members and to inform them of the progress it's making towards joining the Federation of Former International Civil Servants in Geneva.

During the early years of AFICS (Sri Lanka), the Association did not publish a Newsletter. However, when the occasion arose the President or the Secretary-General used to issue a News Release. On 23 March 1993 in a Special General Meeting called to discuss many matters to develop the Association, the Newsletter was also discussed and Ms. Vijitha de Silva was appointed Editor and also as Social Secretary.



*We congratulate Vincent for the tremendous effort he put to keep it alive for several years. We are very proud to note here that even today his enthusiasm has helped us to bring this issue with a lot of vigor.*

Vincent Kumarapeile (UNDP/UNV)

But in December 2001 a News Bulletin has been issued by AFICS Sri Lanka and our senior member late Ms. Vijitha B de Silva has compiled this and edited this. Editing this has been quite a feat on her part as she had little material to use.

Later on, we had the good fortune to have Vincent Kumarapelie who joined the AFICS (Sri Lanka) in 1999 and was selected to the Board of Directors in the year 2002 and continues to hold that position until now.

Vincent, as he is popularly known as, is a Journalist as well (which I discovered in his AFICS application form) worked in UNDP/UNV headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland and later on in Bonn, Germany. He joined the UN family in March 1977. He retired in May 1997 after reaching the compulsory age of retirement.

In 2004 he was appointed as the Treasurer of



AFICS and held that post for 5 consecutive years until the year 2008. In 2009 he was appointed as the Secretary General of the Association and held that post for three terms until 2011.

In the year 2003 with the association stepping into the second decade of its existence, the General Committee seriously thought of publishing a News Letter on a regular basis to keep the members informed of matters concerning the International Civil Service as well as our Association. As a result, Vincent was appointed as the First Editor and the first issue of the News Letter was released in October 2003. For compiling, editing and releasing of the newsletter. Designing of a Logo was also necessitated and this task was also entrusted to Vincent, who has the honor of designing the present logo.

The newsletter was issued on a biannual basis at the early stages and probably due to financing it was issued once a year. From 2003 up to 2008, the newsletter was published regularly and after a lapse of one year (2009), the last issue has been in 2010.

We thank all the Authors of manuscripts for the valuable contributions and all the sponsors for the generous funding, the Printers for a fantastic job done to be proud, of and You, all our AFICS, Sri Lanka Members for your support.

AFICS, Sri Lanka wish to thank Mr. Dihan Hettige, Assistant FAO Representative (Administration) of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization Office, in the UN Compound, 202, Baudhaloka Mawatha, Colombo, for his immense help and assistance whenever the Association needed. Through his good offices we are now able to have our General Committee Meetings in the UN premises. Further we want to thank his Staff and the Security personnel of the UN Compound for all the assistance to the Association.

The present Newsletter combined with the Souvenir Issue of the 25th Anniversary of the launching of AFICS Sri Lanka in 1992 is a proud product of President Dr. Nimal Hettiaratchy, Vincent Kumarapeli, K M D Guneratne, Tilak Abeysinghe, and George Michael.

We congratulate Vincent for the tremendous effort he put to keep it alive for several years. We are very proud to note here that even today his enthusiasm has helped us to bring this issue with a lot of vigor.

**George A. Michael**

for Editorial Team & 25th Anniversary Souvenir Magazine

The President of AFICS Sri Lanka along with some AFICS Members paid a courtesy call to the UN office in Colombo Sri Lanka to welcome Ms. Hanna Singer the New UN Resident Coordinator to our Motherland.



From left to right: Mrs. Jeeva Pillai Essex-Committee Member, Amb. Laksiri Mendis-Social Secretary, Ms. Hanaa Singer-United Nations Resident Coordinator in Sri Lanka, Dr. Nimal Hettiaratchy-President, Dr. Nihal Abeysundera-Past President & Mr. George A. Michael-Committee Member



**“Sustainable Development Goals are not merely a buzz word in these changing times, it is a reminder of what our priorities should be. They are a collective agenda for all of us, and achieving them is about our collective future, our planet’s future. There is no alternative or postponing it for a later day. We must act on it together, and act on it now”**

*Ms. Hanaa Singer, UN Resident Coordinator*





# Association of former International Civil Servants (AFICS)



Association of Former International Civil Servants (AFICS - Sri Lanka)



## GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2017 - 2018

President: Dr. Nimal Hettiaratchy (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP), Immediate Past-President: Dr. Panduka Wijeyaratne (IDRC Canada, WHO, USAID), Vice- Presidents: Mr. Lalith Godamunne (UNHCR) and Dr. Methsiri Gunaratne (WHO)\*, Secretary-General: Mr. K M D Gunaratne (Commonwealth Secretariat), Treasurer: Mr. Tilak Dias Abeysinghe (UNHCR), Social Secretary: Amb. Laksiri Mendis (UNDTCD), Editor: Mr. Vincent Kumarapelie (UNV Head Office)

Committee Members: Dr. Nihal Abeyesundere (WHO), Dr. Adrian Senadhira (WHO), Mr. Ranjith Seneviratne (FAO), Prof. Emeritus (Mrs.) Kamini Mendis(WHO), Ms. Grace Jayakody (IMO) Mr. Vitus Fernando (IUCN, ADB, WMO), Dr. Nimal A Fernando (ADB), Prof. Emeritus Tuley de Silva (UNIDO), Mr. Asela Dassanayake (UN-ICTY), Mrs. Jeeva Pillai Essex (UNDP, ADB, WB), Mr. Hema Dassanayake (WHO), Mr. Ranjith Withana (UNIDO), Mr. George A. Michael (WFP, FAO) and Mr. T S A De Silva (UNCTAD)

\* Absent

The Association of Former International Civil Servants (AFICS) Sri Lanka was launched in 1992, with the late Dr. Gamani Corea, former Secretary-General of UNCTAD, as the first President. The membership comprised a group of Sri Lankans - scientists, doctors, engineers, agriculturists, economists and administrators, who had served the United Nations family and other international organizations such as the Commonwealth Secretariat and Regional Banks.

The objectives of the Association were defined as promoting the purposes and activities of organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and other international organizations;

fostering friendly relations and intellectual contacts among its members, establishing and maintaining a data-base of former international civil servants from Sri Lanka for the purpose, among others, of identifying and providing appropriate expertise to governmental, non-governmental and international agencies if and when requested. This latter activity is expected to contribute to the social and economic development of the country.

During the tsunami period AFICS rose to great heights. AFICS built a house in Hikkaduwa; carried out mental health projects in eight Grama Seva Niladhari Divisions in Hikkaduwa to reduce mental health concerns and psycho-social disorders among post-tsunami victims; assisted in carrying

**AFICS responded to a popular request from the female members of Kirillapone Community for training facility in sewing, which they intended to use for self-employment.**

**A four months' course was inaugurated for eight members. AFICS submitted a proposal to find partial funding for this project to the Chairman of IDEAS, in addition to the support extended by the community to facilitate it by providing lunch and transport. Thus, this project was collaborated by Singer Company, AFICS and IDEAS. The project is being implemented successfully.**

out a health survey of the community and a rapid assessment of drinking water practices among the target population. AFICS also initiated a scholarship fund to award scholarships to deserving students and assisted two schools in the Hikkaduwa area.

Ably assisted by the Lions Club of Havelock Town,

AFICS conducted Medical camps at the Nagaswatte Community Centre in 2016 and 2017 where checking of blood pressure, testing of vision, and examining women for cervical and breast cancer took place and patients were referred to the National Hospital, Kalubowila Teaching Hospital and appropriate Municipal clinics.

AFICS responded to a popular request from the female members of Kirillapone Community for training facility in sewing, which they intended to use for self-employment.

A four months' course was inaugurated for eight members. AFICS submitted a proposal to find partial funding for this project to the Chairman of IDEAS, in addition to the support extended by the

community to facilitate it by providing lunch and transport. Thus, this project was collaborated by Singer Company, AFICS and IDEAS. The project is being implemented successfully.

Two members who had served with WHO played a role in the WHO Declaration of Malaria and served on the Dengue Oversight Committee which advises the Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka.

The Association also gives due consideration to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals for Sustainable Development, i.e. Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger, Achieve Universal Primary Education, Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women, Reduce Child Mortality, Improve Maternal Health, Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases, ensure environmental sustainability, Develop a global partnership for development.

A man was pulled over for driving too fast, even though he thought he was driving just fine.

Officer: You were speeding.

Man: No, I wasn't.

Officer: Yes, you were. I'm giving you a ticket.

Man: But I wasn't speeding.

Officer: Tell that to the judge! (The officer gives man the ticket.)

Man: Would I get another ticket if I called you a jerk?

Officer: Yes, you would.

Man: What if I just thought that you were?

Officer: I can't give you a ticket for what you think.

Man: Fine, I think you're a jerk!

## The Tremendous Impact Sri Lankans had in UN, Bretton Wood Initiative and the Commonwealth

By

Dr. Nihal Abeysundere (MBBS, FCCP, MD, DPH)



Let us not forget the dynamism and the tremendous work done by Earle Samarasinghe in establishing our branch and steering it through its formative years.

The Association of Former International Civil Servants (A.F.I.C.S) The Sri Lanka branch, brings together an unique coterie of Sri Lankans, who have served in the UN, UN Specialized Agencies, the Bretton Wood Institutions, Commonwealth Group of Nations and Other multilateral Intergovernmental Organizations. It was established in 1992 by a small group of retired, enlightened UN Professionals.

The first President was Dr. Gamini Corea and the Secretary General was Mr. Earle Samarasinghe. It was Earle's dynamism, which kept the Association developing during its formative years. Outstanding contributions have been made to these institutions by eminent Sri Lankans.

1. **Dr. Gamani Corea** was the Secretary General of **UNCTAD**. He was re-appointed 3 times. He was successful in pushing for a new Economic Order, focusing on developing countries that had just got independence. He was a proponent of North-South dialogue and greater liberalization of trade barriers placed on developing countries.

2. **Justice Christopher Weeramantry** rose to be a Supreme Court Justice in Sri Lanka. He was elected to the International Court of Justice. As Vice-President and Acting President of **the I.C.J.** In 2 landmark Judgements made by him in the Danube Dams case and the Legality of the Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons Advisory, he brought in Sri Lanka's ancient irrigation and tank systems as one of the World's best examples of Sustainable Development. His dissenting opinion in the second

judgment was considered as an illustration of Grotian jurisprudence at his finest.

3. **Shirley Amerasinghe** - His most noteworthy contribution was to the peaceful uses of the Sea-bed and the Ocean-flow beyond the limits of National Jurisdiction. **The Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Fellowship Fund** on the Law of the Sea was instituted by the **UN General Assembly** in recognition of his role in developing the Law of the Sea.

Suffice to mention "**Raju**" Coomaraswamy, Andrew James Joseph, Dr. Lal Jayawardene, Dr. V.T. Heart Guneratne of W.H.O., Victor Santiapillai, Ivan Silva of F.A.O., Professor C. Suryakumaran of E.S.C.A.P and the Un Environment Programme for the Asia Pacific Region.

**Jayantha Dhanapala's** contribution as **President of the 1995 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review** was a landmark event in disarmament history. Mr. Dhanapala is also a senior member of AFICS Sri Lanka. **Lakshman Kadirigamar** who was an expert on Intellectual Property Law, became the Director for the Asia-Pacific Region at the World Intellectual Property Organization.

In this short narrative, one cannot do justice to the other Sri Lankans who contributed immensely to these Agencies. They served as Country Representatives, Heads of Missions, Programme Directors, Technical Advisors and Administrators in these institutions.

May I also briefly touch on the projects and activities carried out by AFICS Sri Lanka. This I know, will be elaborated in this publication.

Our Branch contributed immensely to Post-Tsunami activities which included follow-up of orphaned children, with the College of Pediatrics. We built two houses in the Seenigama area. In certain malarial affected areas, we re-enforced the Anti-Malaria Campaign's efforts. Water Supply and Sanitation efforts were also enhanced. In two schools down South, Libraries were re-constructed

and books supplied. We carried out intensive activities for drug and alcohol affected “ persons in the Hikkaduwa area. Presently, in the Kirullapone project, several Health Camps have been held and patients followed up and referred for any specialist attention. Advice on Family Planning has been given to those who sought it. Vision has also been tested and spectacles supplied to a number of patients. We must thank the Lions Club of Thimbirigasyaya, the Chief Medical Officer of Health of the Colombo Municipality, who furnished the venue and free essential Assistents, without whose service these activities could not have been carried out.

Throughout the years, two scholarships have been awarded to capable students chosen by the Universities of Colombo and Kandy.

I am delighted that in the past 3 years, we have infused new blood into our Association. Closer links with the UN and its Agencies were established in the past few months.

Let us not forget the dynamism and the tremendous work done by Earle Samarasinghe in establishing our branch and steering it through its formative years.

**May I wish “AFICS SRI LANKA”  
– Ad Multos Annos.**

**Dr. Nihal Abeysundere**

*a prominent UN Staff Member, who has served as the WHO Representative in Bangladesh, Consultant to the World Bank, USAID and UNDP, Past President of the College of Community Physicians. He has served as the President of AFICS-Sri Lanka from 2004 to 2006. He has been also a Former Director of the Anti-Malaria Campaign in the Department of Health in Sri Lanka.*



## LIST OF ADVERTISERS, DONORS, AND WELLWISHERS

The President and the Editorial Team thank you wholeheartedly for your generous support with your contributions towards the funding of the printing of the 25th Anniversary Magazine and the web site management.

Mr. Tilak Dias Abeysinghe

Mr. Asela Dassanayaka

Mr. Hema Dassanayake

Dr. Neville Edirisinghe

Dr. Nimal Fernando

Mr. K. M. D. Gunaratne

Dr. Methsiri Gunaratne

Dr. Nimal Hetiaratchy

Mr. Vincent Kumarapeli

Mr. Wejisena Liyana-Gunawardene

Amb. Laksiri Mendis

Mr. George A. Michael

Mr. Eastman Narangoda

Mr. A P B Senagama

Mr. Ranjit Seneviratne

Dr. Panduka Wijeyaratne

Orient Finance PLC

Bank of Ceylon

**THANK YOU.**



## TRIBUTE TO KOFFI ANNAN

### UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY GENERAL (1996 to 2006)

**KOFFI A. ANNAN** of Ghana, the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations, served from 1997 to 2006 and was the first to emerge from the ranks of United Nations staff.

One of Mr. Annan's main priorities as Secretary-General was a comprehensive programme of reform aimed at revitalizing the United Nations and making the international system more effective. He was a constant advocate for human rights, the rule of law, the Millennium Development Goals and Africa, and sought to bring the Organization closer to the global public by forging ties with civil society, the private sector and other partners.

At Mr. Annan's initiative, UN peacekeeping was strengthened in ways that enabled the United Nations to cope with a rapid rise in the number of operations and personnel. It was also at Mr. Annan's urging that, in 2005, Member States established two new intergovernmental bodies: the Peacebuilding

with resolutions involving weapons inspections and other matters an effort that helped to avoid an outbreak of hostilities, which was imminent at that time. In 1999, he was deeply involved in the process by which Timor-Leste gained independence from Indonesia. He was responsible for certifying Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, and in 2006, his efforts contributed to securing a cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hizbollah. Also in 2006, he mediated a settlement of the dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi peninsula through implementation of the judgement of the International Court of Justice.

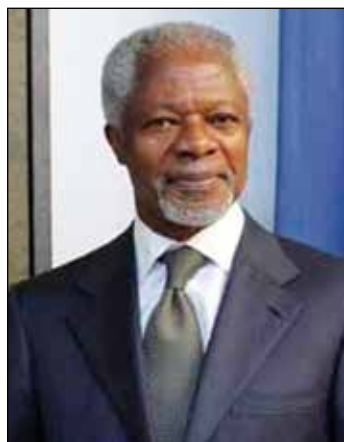
His efforts to strengthen the Organization's management, coherence and accountability involved major investments in training and technology, the introduction of a new whistleblower policy and financial disclosure requirements, and steps aimed at improving coordination at the country level.

#### Career highlights

Mr. Annan joined the UN system in 1962 as an administrative and budget officer with the World Health Organization in Geneva. He later served with the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, the UN Emergency Force (UNEF II) in Ismailia, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva, and in various senior posts in New York dealing with human resources, budget, finance and staff security. Immediately before becoming Secretary-General, he was Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping. Mr. Annan also served as Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the former Yugoslavia (1995-1996), and facilitated the repatriation from Iraq of more than 900 international staff and other non-Iraqi nationals (1990).

#### Education

Mr. Annan studied at the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana, and completed his undergraduate work in economics at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1961. In 1961-1962, he undertook graduate studies at the Institute of International Affairs in Geneva, and in 1972 earned a Master of Science degree at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Sloan



**UNITED NATIONS  
SECRETARY GENERAL  
(1996 to 2006)**

**Mr. Annan was born in Kumasi, Ghana, on 8 April 1938, and was fluent in English, French and several African languages.**

Commission and the Human Rights Council. Mr. Annan likewise played a central role in the creation of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the adoption of the UN's first-ever counter-terrorism strategy, and the acceptance by Member States of the "responsibility to protect" people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. His "Global Compact" initiative, launched in 1999, has become the world's largest effort to promote corporate social responsibility.

Mr. Annan undertook wide-ranging diplomatic initiatives. In 1998, he helped to ease the transition to civilian rule in Nigeria. Also that year, he visited Iraq in an effort to resolve an impasse between that country and the Security Council over compliance

School of Management.

### Prizes and awards

Mr. Annan was awarded the 2001 Nobel Prize for Peace, jointly with the Organization. He has also received numerous honorary degrees and many other national and international prizes, medals and honours.

### Personal

Mr. Annan was born in Kumasi, Ghana, on 8 April 1938, and was fluent in English, French and several African languages.

Kofi Annan died on 18 August 2018 in Bern, Switzerland, at the age of 80.

(by courtesy of United Nations, New York)

### Jokes Apart ....

#### ***Two children are talking.***

Annie: Meet my new born brother.

Benet: Oh, he is so handsome! What's his name?

Annie: I don't know. I can't understand a word he says.

#### ***A teacher is talking to a student.***

Teacher: Did your father help you with your homework?

Student: No, he did it all by himself.

The teacher says: Today, we're going to talk about the tenses. Now, if I say "I am beautiful," which tense is it?

The student says: Obviously it's the past tense.

## Remembering our Founder President, Dr. Gamani Corea –

### The Association of Former International Civil Servants (AFICS) Sri Lanka



Dr. Gamani Corea  
Founder  
President



#### **Dr. Gamani Corea (UNCTAD)**

Dr. Gamani Corea, the internationally recognized Sri Lankan diplomat, economist and civil servant, was elected the founder president of the Association of Former International Civil Servants (AFICS) Sri Lanka at its inaugural meeting held on 17 Dec 1992.

Under his much honoured patronage AFICS Sri Lanka became an ardent promoter of local community development and social service. Today, the good work of AFICS continues with the provision of experts and advice from its membership, in various community level activities such as promotion of education, environment and public health, and health camps. AFICS also continues to address issues of practical relevance to the membership as well as current topical areas through guest-speaker sessions.

AFICS encourages newly retiring and returning individuals from the broad-based UN network, or Inter-governmental multinational organizations, to join AFICS, to contribute towards enhancing its effectiveness and drawing from its vast and diverse experiences of membership.

By, Dr. Panduka Wijeyaratne

## Random Thoughts

By Dr. Panduka Wijeyaratne AFICS , Sri Lanka President 2012- 2017



**Multiple committee meetings were periodically held with clear cut agendas and outputs to monitor and enhance AFICS activities.**

*A*rm twisting by senior AFICS members initiated my introduction to and participation in some early AFICS meetings. Further instigation followed and led me to be elected as AFICS President - I believe in 2012/ 2013 while I was still running Post Tsunami Community Health activities and the TEDHA Malaria Elimination Program in Sri Lanka.

I was most fortunate to have Asela Dassanayake the Secretary General at that time a fine dynamic force to support me and we jump started our tenure; Asela came from the Police and International monitoring in Yugoslavia conflicts. I came from a Health background from IDRC (Canada) and USAID with numerous associations with WHO. Dr Nimal Hettiarachy the current President with extensive UN experiences took over from Asela as Secretary General to work closely with me. With strategic planning, numerous committee level discussions and indeed lively debates we embarked on programs of activities. A website facilitated our communication links. Spouses played a key role. Tilak Abeysinghe our grand loyal Treasurer over the long haul, managed the finances. My home served me well for meetings over the years.

Indeed serving AFICS as President to an enthusiastic group of accomplished members was a singular honor and pleasure. I look back from here in Los Angeles with happiness, lasting memories and with gracious thanks for the opportunity given to me and for the support received at all times.

I had the vision of an AFICS, Sri Lanka, with enhanced visibility and outreach beyond its traditional boundaries such as member retirement

benefits, to also address national and global usefulness and service to the community at large. These, through the conduct of varied Intellectual discussions and debates amongst ourselves thereby expanding the traditional scope of FAFICS – International. I believe Sri Lanka may be unique in this respect and can serve as a model.

AFICS membership offers an enormous breadth, depth and diversity of worldly experience that I thought should be explored and exploited to benefit the country, if and when called upon. Likewise, in the spirit of Giving - Service to the community can be applied via a project mode with the participation of the members providing a focus for our intellect and a substantive contribution of effort on overall community enhancement; be it in areas of Health, Food Nutrition and Agriculture, Education, Occupational improvement, Gender, Human rights, Law, Engineering, etc; This also enabled AFICS to expand its own diversity in the committee by drawing on a somewhat larger array of members with greater inclusiveness and strengthening our enthusiasm to be active.

Seminars that were held included topics such as, Insurance, Banking and Retirement Financial management, Food and Healthy nutritional discourse, Retirement benefits and the like ;

AFICS outreach and community service inputs also extended into activities such as post Tsunami community wellbeing addressing alcoholism and drug addiction prevention in the badly affected Hikkaduwa area via the Thotagamuwa (Thoten) program which I ran locally with international support and integrated the AFICS inputs and monitored its progress for AFICS during its tenure. This activity saw members visiting the field on many occasions to facilitate guidance and support.





A highlight of AFICS community outreach was also to enhance quality of life and wellbeing in an urban lower socio economic level community in Nagaswatte, Kirilapone under the Colombo Municipal Council's Health and Childrens Resource Center referred to elsewhere in this publication. This project under my direct coordination of Environmental Health along with the local director, and endorsement of the Municipality's Chief Medical Officer of Health had strong enthusiasm from the AFICS membership. It was carried out in several components over a period of four years; English language teaching to children, Sewing classes to a group of women, Library improvement, Health education and Hygiene improvement, Dengue prevention, and annual Health Camps; These activities by the AFICS membership brought about enhanced health awareness in disease prevention and risk reduction in the community, minimizing the risk of Dengue as well as a high degree of community togetherness in this multiethnic population and positive impact on livelihood among the participating women. Our activities complemented those by the municipal council in a significant and collaborative manner enhancing potential for improved community wellbeing. The Health Camps in particular generated very high community participation and were done in collaboration with the Lions Club and the Municipality, for four cosecutive years.



Multiple committee meetings were periodically held with clear cut agendas and outputs to monitor and enhance AFICS activities. Our tasks also included having Fun amongst us and sustained high sprits through our post meeting fellowship as well as year end Parties and annual picnic.

Indeed, my tenure had necessarily to be phased out with my decision to relocate to the US and join family. I was certainly delighted with the availability of Dr Nimal Hettiarachy as the new President as I stepped down. His vast experience,enthusiasm and direction of AFICS with his own vision and with a great committee augurs well for continued success of AFICS into the future.

**My Best Wishes will always be there for AFICS - Sri Lanka - from the background**

*Dr. Panduka Wijeyaratne holds a PhD, from the University of Texas, School of Public Health, Houston Texas, U.S.A., an MSc from University of Florida, U.S.A., a BSc. (Honors) from the University of Ceylon, Colombo, Sri Lanka. His technical expertise and experience is in the sphere of program and project development and management in tropical diseases, community and environmental health and humanitarian assistance. Dr. Wijeyaratne has served on committees and panels as co-Chairman and member of the World Health Organization (WHO) and organizations affiliated to the United Nations in varying capacities, contributing his expertise here in Sri Lanka, as well as across numerous South East Asian and African countries. He has authored and co-authored many research and scientific articles that are published in scientific journals and publications worldwide. He is the Founding Chairman and currently a Program Director of Tropical & Environmental Disease and Health Associates (TEDHA), a health consulting company in Sri Lanka and President for the fourth term of the Association of Former International Civil Servants (AFICS Sri Lanka).*



## 'HOPE BUILDING' CHILDREN'S RESOURCE CENTRE, NAGASWATTA, KIRULAPONE - By Pramila Gunaratne



**President of the Association of Former International Civil Servants (AFICS) made a site visit with some members to the Child Resource Centre in 2012**

The 'Hope Building' Children's Resource Centre is a gift from the City of Leeds, UK, to the Colombo Municipal Council and the people of the City of Colombo. The Centre was declared open by His Right Worshipful Councilor Reverend Taylor, Lord Mayor of Leeds and His Worship A J M Muzammil JPUM, Mayor of Colombo, on 27th February 2012. The Centre provides free resources for those who are unable to afford paying facilities. Classes in Art, Computing, English, Mathematics, Tamil, Patchwork, Cookery, Basketball, Beauty Culture and Dancing practices are conducted at this Centre. A nursery class for children of under privileged parents is also conducted. The Library is open every day to improve the children's reading ability.

The community consists of multi-ethnic and multi-religious groups. The people residing within the Administrative Limits of the Colombo Municipal Council facing life with meager facilities is very high. These children, apart from fulfilling their educational requirements, do not have even minimum requirements; they do not even have food to satiate their hunger, but yet their abilities are very high. As we know, in a healthy parent-child relationship, the parent takes the role of the caregiver, and provides physical and emotional support and financial security for youngsters who are still developing. In homes with drug addicted parents these roles are reversed and children assume the role of care givers. Due to the lack of support from parents, children are most likely to experience poor performance in school, low self-esteem, behavioral problems, higher risk of physical, verbal, and sexual abuse etc. In this community most of the parents have not completed grade 10 in school. They have no proper awareness of the value of education. It is really sad that we are losing brilliant minds due to this situation.

Under this project it is envisaged that proper

guidance will be given to the parents and children in this community through community based activities such as free resources for subject based education for children, preventive health education activities, health awareness programmes, life skill programmes, and self-employment programmes for parents. Apart from these objectives it is the fervent hope that when children mix, study and play together it will be possible to keep children away from addiction to drugs and abuse and create harmony among the different races in Colombo.

### OBJECTIVES

- To spread awareness among the parents about the importance of their children's education and motivate them to encourage children to utilize the facilities offered at the Centre.
- To facilitate and develop a model of a child-friendly education system and create an interest in formal education among children.
- To facilitate the process of joyful learning.
- To create harmony among races and make children the agents of change.
- Improve the status of primary and secondary education.
- Aim to reduce the number of school drop-outs among the children.
- To introduce health education initiatives.

A team from The Association of Former International Civil Servants (AFICS) made a site visit to the Child Resource Centre in 2012, the purpose of which was to identify the requirements of the community of Nagaswatta, Kirullapone area. As the first step they started a spoken English class for elders. Mrs. Grace Jayakody conducted the classes for elders. At the same time a health preventive programme was held on Health and Hygiene, Nutrition, Dengue prevention and proper hand washing techniques. Dr. Panduka Wijeyaratne formed a Dengue Prevention Committee from among the people of the community and urged them to continue Dengue Awareness Programmes in Nagaswatta area. The progress of the programme has been supervised by the AFICS team periodically.

In the year 2013 the AFICS team donated various kinds of books to the library. By donating books to the library their aim was to bring under-privileged children closer to education.

Members of AFICS have given continuous

support in organizing medical health camps from 2013 to 2017. The medical camps have helped to identify neglected cases and assisted in improving the health condition of the community. Every year we have found more than fifteen patients with high blood pressure, and nearly ten patients with high blood sugar levels. In the Well-woman clinics the physician identified women with abnormalities on breast examinations and Pap smear examinations. Each time they have provided facilities for vision testing and distributed spectacles for adults and needy children. The AFICS team was deeply involved in their commitment and provided a wonderful service and care to the needy people of the community.

AFICS also provided assistance to initiate and conduct Sewing Classes for Tamil and Sinhala women residing in Nagaswatta area. In the year 2014 Ms. Mala completed a basic sewing class for women. In the year 2016 Ms. Madavi from Singer Fashion Academy conducted a sewing course. Sinhala and Tamil women participated in the classes and they learnt how to sew a Basic Blouse, an A-Line dress, a Princess Line Dress, School Uniforms (for Girls and Boys), a Chinese collar blouse, a Tight-skirt etc. The AFICS team has had several discussions with the students of the sewing class and encouraged participants to build themselves towards generating income through the improved sewing capacity. They now have the ability to make clothes for their families and potentially earn a living by making clothes for the people in the community. In the year 2017, as requested by the Children's Resource Centre team, they helped us to begin a Sari-jacket course for the women who had completed the basic sari-jacket course.

AFICS members, along with Singer kindly donated a sewing machine for the Nagaswatta Center. The intention is to provide sewing classes to a designated group of women towards income generation and related activities.

We wish you all the best for your work at AFICS and hope to have the opportunity to work with you in the future too.

**Pramila Gunaratne**  
Co-ordinator  
Nagaswatta Children's Resource Centre.

*Bachelor of Arts (University of Kelaniya), Diploma in Advanced English (University of Colombo), Past Employment Public Health Midwife, Masters Student at University of Kelaniya*

## **Vermillion and Prussian blue**

*Vermillion and Prussian blue  
on a rooster's back,  
glisten tremulously  
as he leaps.*

*The weaver entwines  
vermillion and Prussian blue  
reeds*

*She looks at the rooster  
strutting in the sun.*

*As she weaves  
She remembers other times  
where rubies and blue sapphires  
shimmered between her breasts,  
festive days,  
swish of silks  
under Prussian blue lights.*

*The rooster leaps again  
displaying, his splendour  
The weaver weaves  
her vivid mat  
binding together  
her simple truth and dreams.*

~~~~~

Shireen Senadhira  
95 Barnes Place  
Colombo 7  
Sri Lanka

## AFICS Sri Lanka



**The need for AFICS participation in projects that help the needy was well received by the general membership.**

**A**FICS (Association of Former International Civil Servants), Sri Lanka, originated with the adoption of the resolution to establish it at a meeting of former international civil servants held in Colombo on December 17, 1992. Dr. Gamini Corea, former Secretary General, UNCTAD, in his speech as Chair of the meeting, mentioned that the objectives of the association extended beyond the holding of meetings and dinners to the role of participation in social and economic development of Sri Lanka. This responsibility calls for the identification of a data base of expertise among the membership to assist national and international agencies involved in the development of Sri Lanka.

This focus of AFICS attention to support national development was seen as a drastic positive change from the traditional role of AFICS of almost all countries to deal primarily with the protection of pension rights and member privileges. Sri Lanka, like almost all other countries having AFICS bodies, is a developing country. AFICS, with its members having knowledge and international expertise in various developmental fields could play a very productive role in supporting the governmental and various other voluntary activities geared towards the development of the country. The expertise in different fields of economic, technical, social and human development is already available; the real challenge is to get an organizational framework to enlist the willingness of the experts to participate in national development actions. AFICS has been in existence for over two decades; it has brought about a coterie of Sri Lankans who have served in the UN, UN Special Agencies, Bretton Woods, Asian Development Bank, Royal Commonwealth Secretariat, USAID and other international agencies. That it is a highly doable task to bring together the possible contributions of the experts

for engagement in national development has been well recognized.

In the July 2008 News Letter, the need for the membership to concentrate on launching service projects for the benefit of the needy people and the society as a whole was strongly mentioned. It pointed that the past focus has been more for the welfare of the members by way of organizing meetings, dinners, Christmas get togethers and pleasure trips. However, the AFICS membership participation in humanitarian interventions was seen in their involvement in the Four Seasons Project that was conducted for the benefit of about 60 children, living in an under-privileged environment; the membership provided voluntary contributions to carry out the project. The post-tsunami period provided a series of opportunities for AFICS to support and be engaged in humanitarian causes. The devastation in the coastal areas of Sri Lanka by the Tsunami of December 26, 2004 by causing a vast number of deaths and displaced thousands from their homes and livelihoods called for the national and international assistance to handle the impact of Tsunami on humans. One such participation of AFICS was with the Rainbow Sponsorship Scheme led by the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) that engaged the Sri Lankan College of Pediatricians to implement its foster parenting program for the affected unaccompanied children. The program enlisted the contributions of private individuals. These children are to be supported until the age of 18 years. AFICS has sponsored two children by providing them with financial support that enabled them to continue their education and be clothed and fed.

AFICS also participated in the project to provide homes for the tsunami victims. Under this "Project Phoenix", AFICS provided funds for the construction of one house for a family affected by tsunami.

In the area of Environmental Health, AFICS was able to support the THOTEN Program, which focused heavily on the chlorination of water at household level and large-scale promotion of use of soap. AFICS funds were used for a health survey in an identified community and a rapid assessment of the quality of the drinking water and water practices by the target community.

AFICS Sri Lanka with its co-partners, Richmond Fellowship Sri Lanka (RFL) and the Tropical and Environmental Diseases and Health Associates (TEDHA) conducted a program, emphasizing



mental health concerns and post-traumatic psychological disorders in vulnerable groups, in five selected villages, with a population of 3.0,000, in the Hikkaduwa District

The need for AFICS participation in projects that help the needy was well received by the general membership.

The decision of AFICS to engage in supporting the on-going Nagaswatta Community Project, in Colombo, Kirilapone area, a gift from Leeds, United Kingdom and managed by the Colombo Municipal Council, could be seen as a major step towards continuation of the support to help the under-privileged. The Nagaswatta community receiving AFICS intervention, begun around 2012, consist about 500 families belonging mainly to the three major communities in the country. AFICS contributed to the work of the center by adding some people-friendly activities to the ongoing program. These include: AFICS-Lion Health Camps focus on hypertension screening; Blood Sugar Screening; vision examination and provision of spectacles in collaboration with a private firm, Vision Care; Dengu Prevention Awareness Program and the Dress Making Project to provide dress-making skills done in collaboration with the Singer Company.

The need for providing continuous support to the Nagaswatta Community Center at the same level as before was reviewed recently taking into consideration positive changes in the poverty level of the community in recent times and the productive and positive leadership provided by the Colombo Municipality. However, given that AFICS has worked over the years with the Nagaswatta community and the Community Centre quite successfully, stand-alone activities such as the AFICS - LIONS Health Camps may be continued to be held at Nagaswatta from time to time if they are found to be useful.

The AFICS Sri Lanka has served its members for over 25 years with a dedication to meet the goals and objectives of the association. It has worked strongly to perform its primary task of protecting the UN-related basic rights, while also focusing on developmental activities to increase the welfare of the segments of the population that need external assistance. Its

activities in relation to the membership consist of members' meetings, seminars on various current topics of interest and value to the members, dinners accompanied with musical performances and excursions to different parts of the country. At the AFICS 2018 year-end get together and the UN commemorative celebration dinner, the newly appointed UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Hanaa Singer declared that the United Nations Administration will work very closely with AFICS Sri Lanka in future. It should be noted that this was the first time the Resident Coordinator of the UN participated in an AFICS Sri Lanka meeting.

As for the future commitments and activities, the AFICS leadership will continue to explore the needs and possibilities of engaging in new developmental activities to assist the needy segments of the population, in addition to its traditional activities.

#### Dr. Neville Edirisinghe

*Ph.D. from Cornell University, Ithaca, New York  
Master of Science from Cornell University, Bachelor of Arts from University of Ceylon, Executive Officer, United Nations World Food Programme (Italy; Egypt), Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington DC Consultant to the World Bank; International Monetary Fund; USDA; Sri Lanka Government*





## The global wars against malaria and Sri Lanka's triumph

By Prof. Emeritus (Mrs) Kamini Mendis



**Expert on malaria and was a senior member of the team that launched the Global Roll Back Malaria Initiative in the World Health Organisation, Geneva.**

### The nature of malaria

*M*alaria, a mosquito borne disease caused by a protozoan parasite is endemic in the tropical and sub-tropical parts of the world and has, over centuries, devastated mankind and hindered human development in tropical countries. Today the disease is prevalent in most countries in tropical Asia, Africa and Latin America. Malaria caused 219 million cases and 435,000 deaths globally in the year 2017 according to estimates of the World Health Organisation (see world map of malaria Figure 1). Tropical Africa bears a major brunt of this disease where it kills nearly mainly children under the age of 5 years. In Asia and Latin America the disease affects mainly but not only adults, and pregnant mothers whose resistance to malaria is lowered by the pregnancy.

When bitten by a malaria infected mosquito the person begins to develop symptoms of the disease 9 – 20 days later, and in some it may take even longer for the illness to appear. Fever with chills and shivering is the commonest symptom of malaria, often accompanied by headaches, severe muscle and body aches. If diagnosed early malaria is entirely treatable, and modern medicines can provide complete cure of the disease. However, if treatment is delayed, in most individuals the disease will progress to a severe form where internal organs are affected, leading to drowsiness, coma, and other organ failure which could be life-threatening even if treatment is given at that stage. Hence malaria is a potentially fatal disease.

Four related malaria parasites cause disease in humans. Although they are broadly similar in appearance and their biology, each has specific life cycle features which manifest differently as illnesses when they infect humans, and present

different challenges to public health programmes which attempt to control these diseases. Not all mosquitoes, but a particular genus – Anopheles, which is prevalent across the world, and within this genus, several species each of which inhabit different regions of the world are capable of transmitting the malaria disease to humans. How prevalent these mosquitoes are, how long they live and how frequently they bite humans largely determine how prevalent and how severe the disease is in a particular country. These features of the mosquito vector also determines to some extent the relative ease or difficulty with which public health programmes are able to control the disease.

So, very broadly, it is the prevalence and habits of mosquitoes and the living standards of people (see below) that determine the prevalence and intensity of malaria in countries.

International travellers are also often victims of malaria when they travel to malaria endemic countries. Travellers can protect themselves from malaria by taking antimalarial medicines in protective doses while they are in the area, and also by preventing mosquito bites. It is therefore advisable to seek medical advice prior to travelling to a malaria endemic country.

### A historical perspective

Historically, malaria was prevalent throughout the world, extending in the early 19th century to as far north as the arctic circle. But over time, with improved sanitation and removal of swamps where mosquito breeding took place, the disease was wiped out from the temperate countries, including northern America and Europe. By the early 20th century, with greater economic development in western Europe and north America which led to people living in cleaner environments and in better built houses, their risk of exposure to mosquito bites diminished and the United States and many countries in western Europe were rid of malaria.

In 1955 The World Health Organization (WHO), a specialized agency of the United Nations that is concerned with international public health, launched a drive to eradicate malaria, termed the 'Global Malaria Eradication Programme' and invited several tropical countries mainly in Asia Europe and the Americas to join the effort. This campaign was prompted by two potential weapons which became available as products of world

war II. One was dichloro diphenyl trichloroethane (DDT) - a chemical insecticide which when sprayed on walls killed mosquitoes which alighted on the sprayed walls, and the other was a synthetic medicine chloroquine, which was highly effective in treating malarial illness in humans. Using these two weapons, and with enhanced international funding for malaria control many countries in the world that were endemic for malaria embarked on an effort to eliminate malaria. By 1970, the end of the programme, 37 of the 143 countries that had malaria were freed from the disease, 27 of these being in Europe and Americas. However In many, although the disease burden was greatly reduced, a failure to sustain those efforts led to a resurgence of malaria.

### The impact and cost of malaria

Today, the disease is prevalent in most tropical and sub tropical countries where the malaria-transmitting mosquito is found (Figure 1). Although malaria can infection almost anyone, it is mainly poor people who get and suffer from the disease. This is because their lifestyles place them at higher risk of being bitten by infected mosquitoes – their houses are poorly built and thus easily invaded by mosquitoes, and their livelihoods bring them closer to outdoors, particularly forested areas where these mosquitoes breed. Malaria endemic countries bear a heavy economic burden on account of the disease. In malaria-affected areas a household could experience multiple episodes of malaria a year and the effects of malaria may last many weeks after cure, which severely compromise peoples' health, if not the risk of death if treatment is not sought in time. Multiple episodes of illness entail out-of-pocket expenses for poor people and keep adults away from work, children away from school, and take the family's time to care for the sick. To the country, the health care costs of diagnosing, treating and preventing malaria through public health programmes are colossal. The debilitating effects malaria impose on the country's workforce lead to loss of productivity. Besides, malaria costs country dearly in terms of losses in tourism, commerce and trade, to the extent that it is estimated that the cost of malaria to Africa alone exceeds 12 billion dollars a year.

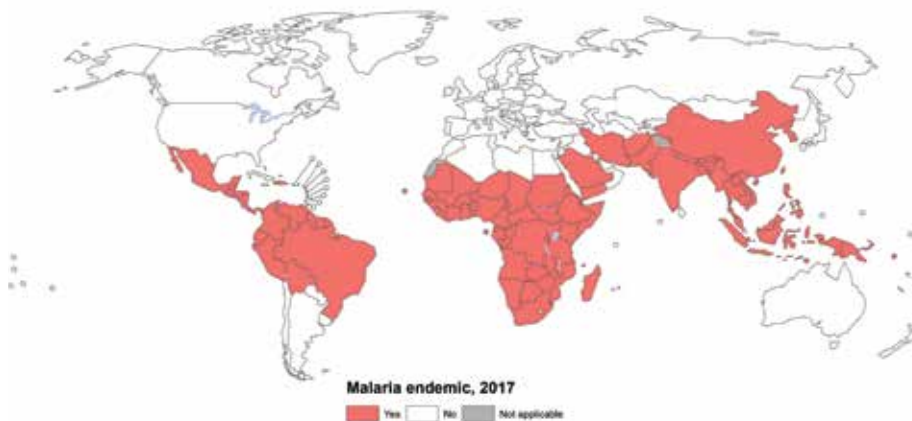
### The World Health Organisation's second global effort to fight malaria – the global Roll Back Malaria Initiative

After the Global Malaria Eradication Programme of the 1950's ended with not all the participating countries being successful at eliminating the disease, a sense of defeat set in. The next few decades saw a change of attitude to malaria in global

public health circles. accepting at best, to control the disease rather than eliminate it. Enthusiasm among international donors to invest in malaria also decreased, although still a considerable proportion of international aid continued to be spent on purchasing chemical insecticides to reduce deaths from malaria. This period was further challenged by biological catastrophes – the malaria mosquitoes in many parts of the world developed resistance to DDT, and a few years later the parasite developed resistance to chloroquine, these tools being the highly effective and inexpensive weapons that sustained malaria control. By the early 1980's malaria had returned with force causing much devastation to affected countries in the tropics. The newer insecticides and medicines that replaced DDT and chloroquine were much more expensive than the latter, and countries could hardly bear the enormous expenditure just to keep malaria at a low – albeit not very successfully.

In 1998, when the newly elected Director-General of the World Health Organisation, Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland took office, she was moved by the enormity of the malaria problem, particularly in tropical Africa, and so launched a global campaign termed the Roll Back Malaria Initiative to do just what the name suggested – to roll malaria back. She took the stand that malaria should be fought as an impediment to human development as much as it was a health problem. The initiative had a large focus on Africa but was global in scope, and it was founded in the fact that there were technological advances by then, such as new medicines – artemisinin based combination medicines, simpler and easier tests to diagnose malaria at the point of care called rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs), and newer more potent insecticides, but also an ingenious carrier for insecticides – bednets. Scientists had shown that when people slept under bednets which were treated with pyrethroids – a group of chemical insecticides, the effect was much the same as when walls were sprayed, and even more effective because the bednet provided, in addition, a mechanical barrier to mosquitoes making contact with the sleeping individual. In response to WHO's call to Roll Back Malaria, endemic countries, other UN agencies, development agencies, international partners, philanthropists and NGO's rallied round, and a new vibrant movement was born to fight malaria again. Increased global funds to fight malaria spurred greater innovations to develop new tools against malaria, and the private sector invested in the development of new and improved products to diagnose, treat and protect people from malaria.

The Roll Back Malaria initiative was different to the previous Global Malaria Eradication



Map showing countries affected by malaria shaded in red

Programme in that it was primarily one based on strong partnerships - between endemic countries, UN agencies, Development Agencies, NGOs, the scientific community, the private sector and bilateral donors. It inspired all to join in the global effort. One of the most important developments as a result of this partnership movement was the establishment of a special fund – the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria (GFATM) in 2002 to finance public health programmes in countries to control these three diseases. Although the GFATM was initially meant to serve the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its associated disease tuberculosis, with increasing persuasion from many global influential figures addressing world poverty, malaria was included in its portfolio as a disease most associated with poverty, both causing poverty and resulting in poverty – the so called “poverty trap”. The GFATM disbursed large grants to countries that applied with sound plans and importantly, linked its funding rigorously to indicators of progress. Malaria commodities such as medicines, Long Lasting Insecticide treated nets (LLINs), RDTs which were beyond the affordability of many endemic countries began to be deployed by them with GFATM funding. Countries began to have access to equipment and extra person power that was much needed to work on the ground to fight malaria. The World Health Organisation, as the leading UN technical organization on health established global targets for malaria control, with an initial objective of halving the global malaria burden in 5 years. The scientific community re-engaged in malaria encouraged by increased funding for research and development for malaria. Both local and international NGOs joined the partnership and began working at the ground level assisting countries to defeat malaria. The Ministries of Health of endemic countries made a renewed commitment to roll back malaria. It was a period of great inspiration, and renewed hope,

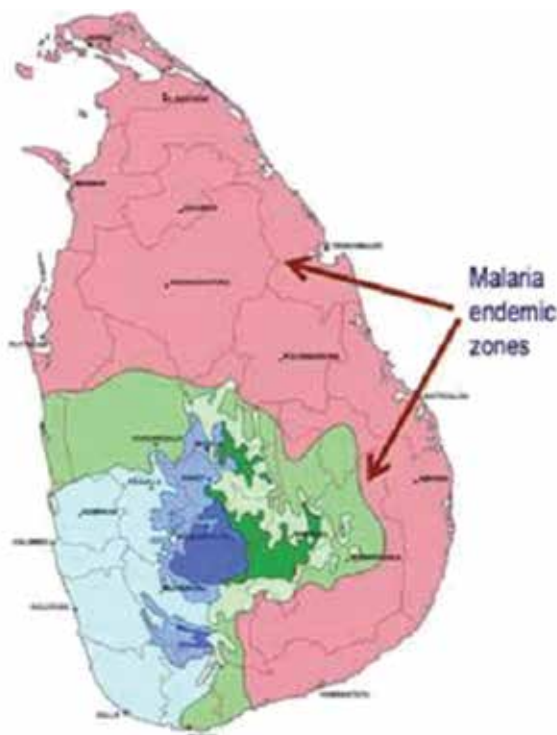
Within a few years the number of malaria cases in the world decreased significantly, as did the child deaths in Africa. As estimated by WHO the number

of malaria cases globally fell by an average 21% from 2010 to 2015, and in some regions of the world by more than 50%. Malaria deaths fell by about 30% globally. In some countries the malaria incidence fell to such an extent that WHO raised the goals from malaria control to elimination – which is the cessation of malaria transmission in a country such that one could not get infected by a mosquito bite in that country anymore. One such country

which went from reducing malaria to the ultimate achievement of eliminating the disease was Sri Lanka, which will serve here to illustrate the success of this initiative,

Sri Lanka’s success at malaria elimination – a case in point

The island nation of Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) with a current population of 21.4 million, has been plagued by endemic malaria, and suffered the ravages of the disease for many centuries. In 1934/35 a massive malaria epidemic killed a reported 80,000 people. Thereafter it nearly eliminated the disease in 1963 during the Global Malaria Eradication Programme when the number of malaria cases in the country dropped from hundreds of thousands to a mere 17. Yet, for due to the inability to sustain an intensive programme, this achievement could not be sustained and



Map of Sri Lanka showing the climatic zones of Sri Lanka – the dry zone in pink; the intermediate zone in shades of green; and the wet zone in shades of blue. Malaria was endemic in the dry and intermediate zones (approximately 2/3 rds of the country).



*The world is at war with malaria, a mosquito-borne disease which has killed many and impeded human development for centuries past. Armed with new tools and major financial investments countries have begun to reduce the burden of disease; some have even interrupted its transmission. Sri Lanka, an island nation which has been devastated by malaria in the past, has eliminated the disease in the recent past, serves here as a case in point.*

malaria returned to endemic levels for the next fifty years.

With the launch of the Global Roll Back Malaria Initiative Sri Lanka like many other malaria endemic countries engaged in a renewed attempt to fight malaria, even though at the time a civil war was raging in the northern and eastern parts of the country. Phasing out its plan to reduce malaria, focusing first on the central southern and western regions of the country which was not at war, Sri Lanka's Anti Malaria Campaign (AMC), a special programme within the Ministry of Health, seized the opportunity and made plans to drive malaria down. The AMC applied and received grants from the GFATM for this purpose, and expanded its already well established anti malaria programme to reach out to areas that were affected by malaria, including strengthening its efforts in the areas affected by war.

Although a lower middle income country, Sri Lanka has had a robust health infrastructure and boasts a high literacy rate. The country ranks high on the basis of socio-economic and human development indicators. Its social indicators rank among the highest in South Asia and compare favorably with those in middle-income countries. Against this backdrop, and inspired by the Roll Back Malaria Initiative, early this century the Anti Malaria Campaign of Sri Lanka began expanding the health care delivery services for malaria even further through the existing health system. It reinforced its staff capacity both at the central AMC level as well as in the districts where malaria was

endemic. It began searching for malaria patients in remote and rural areas which were far from health institutions by using mobile malaria clinics. Having a high level of expertise in the science of insects, the AMC's entomologists began to assess the prevalence of the malaria mosquito by using established techniques. Where mosquito numbers were high, they implemented a range of interventions to control malaria mosquitoes. These included spraying houses with insecticides and providing LLINs to those houses that were located in high risk areas. – in a very focused and targeted manner rather than using a blanket approach of using these tools in large areas of the country. By diagnosing and treating people early, the probability of them transmitting the disease to others was greatly reduced.

The number of reported malaria cases in the country fell from about 400,000 in the early 1990's to about 40,000 in 2002 – a ten fold reduction, and further to about 700 by 2010. The last case of malaria transmitted in the country was recorded in October of 2012. Three years later, by which time Sri Lanka had proved to the world that it was capable, not only of eliminating malaria, but, of sustaining it, WHO, after a careful assessment certified the country as being malaria free. Sri Lanka thereby joined an elite list of countries in the world which were free of malaria. The success of Sri Lanka's elimination effort owes undoubtedly to the Ministry of Health's Anti Malaria Campaign – notably its leadership during this period, and to Regional Malaria Officers RMOs. Twenty two RMOs in the country, each implemented the programme in endemic districts where they were posted. RMOs were experts in malaria control, and with their teams of staff they worked with dedication and discipline, often under difficult field conditions to make this achievement possible.

In the country's fight against malaria the AMC was partnered by two NGOs which also received funds from GFATM for the malaria elimination effort and



A mobile malaria clinic being conducted in the Puttlam area in 2007 where people are being tested for malaria (Photo by courtesy of Dr R Premaratne).

worked under the guidance of the AMC. One was a well established community level NGO of high repute – Sarvodaya, and the other, a private sector organization Tropical and Environmental Diseases and Health Associates (TEDHA) which was led by an expert in tropical health of international repute and had a team of experts in malaria. One of the major strengths of Sri Lanka's malaria elimination effort was the collaboration that AMC established with the military and the police force. Towards the end of the elimination effort as the malaria case numbers dropped to very low, most of the malaria cases were soldiers in the Sri Lanka Army who fought the war in forested areas at night time which is where and when the malaria mosquito bites. The Army, as did the Air Force and Navy worked very closely with the AMC, following the AMC's advice and guidance in controlling malaria in their troops by ensuring that patients were diagnosed early and treated effectively. As Sri Lanka's malaria cases went down further, a renewed threat emerged from malaria patients imported from other countries. Some among them were members of the Armed Forces and the Police who were deployed in

**In the country's fight against malaria the AMC was partnered by two NGOs which also received funds from GFATM for the malaria elimination effort and worked under the guidance of the AMC. One was a well established community level NGO of high repute – Sarvodaya, and the other, a private sector organization Tropical and Environmental Diseases and Health Associates (TEDHA) which was led by an expert in tropical health of international repute and had a team of experts in malaria.**

UN peace keeping missions who served for months in malaria endemic countries such as in Africa and returned home with malaria. Here too, the cooperation between the AMC and these departments by which those leaving on missions were provided with preventive medicines against malaria made progress possible.

The story of Sri Lanka's epic achievement in eliminating malaria is a tribute to many – those global leaders and visionaries who renewed interest in the fight against malaria, those who worked tirelessly to secure global financial investments for malaria control and elimination, and those who generously gave funds for this

purpose. To the country's political and technical leadership which over many years that sustained a well funded sound health infrastructure which made the achievement possible. And most of all to the leaders and staff of the AMC and their partners whose effort this was.

Sri Lankans who live in previously malarious areas of the country are no longer besieged by a recurring illness which ruined their health and economy. They have now, 6 years later almost forgotten what malaria was like. The author of this article who worked extensively in the deep south of the country when malaria was rampant there, visited those areas recently and asked young men and women what they know of malaria – at first they looked quizzically as much as to say "what is malaria?" and then when prompted, some went back down memory lane and said that they vaguely remember their parents saying what a scourge malaria was. A generation of Sri Lankans are emerging who will enjoy the benefits of there being no malaria – a boosted economy owing to tourism, trade and commerce no longer impeded by malaria, and a healthier more prosperous nation. This will justify every effort and every investment that the country must and will make to prevent the re-introduction of the disease to the country.

**Kamini Mendis**

*M.B.B.S. MD. PhD, DSc.*

*Formerly of the World Health*

*Organisation, Geneva, and Emeritus*

*Professor, University of Colombo*



## Pain—An Observation By Hema Dassanayake



Lot of literature on this subject is available on the internet and I give below one instance in case you wish to delve further on this subject.

For months and years I have experienced chronic pain on my right shoulder, my knees and my feet [Usual Story]. Sometimes these pain episodes were unbearable and sometimes it is not so acute. I tried many techniques to get over these. The first thing I did was to seek medical advice. Most doctors prescribe pain killers when pain arises. Some others prescribe surgery. I have also tried physiotherapy, walking and Ayurveda techniques.

One of the things I found, as a by-product of another practice I am attempting to develop recently, has good results on eliminating pain at least temporarily. I wish to share this with our members and whoever else who may be able to use this. For several months I have attempted “meditation” not with the purpose of eliminating pain. However, after few sessions what I noticed was that at least for the duration of its practice and for a while thereafter the pains I had at the commencement of meditation exercises disappeared. I found this to be very useful as I now use it in a combination with several practices as mentioned in paragraph one.

I have practiced meditation which for me is still at a very early stage. This was simply an observation of my breath. You notice in-breadth by the feel on your nostril. Similarly you notice out-breadth by the feel on your nostril. Keep on doing this as long as possible without letting your mind run away on many other subjects like your next meal, missed payment of electricity bill on due date, or about your loved ones or myriad other objects. It is extremely difficult. However, this does not matter. Each time your mind runs away, be conscious of that and bring it back to continue observing the in-breadth and out-breadth. It does not matter how many times your mind runs away, bring it back every time when it runs away. Keep continuing this process as long as you can. The longer you do this

without getting discouraged you can be without pain. It can also last for some reasonable time after meditation.

One need not use breathing for meditation. Perhaps any other type of meditation will help towards this end – eliminating pain albeit even temporarily. Notwithstanding where pain occurs a person’s mind can control it. Meditation is all about focusing your mind on something else other than the pain one observes.

I request observations from our colleagues of their experiences of reduced/eliminated pain either as a result of meditation or for that matter any other type of exercise.

Lot of literature on this subject is available on the internet and I give below one instance in case you wish to delve further on this subject.

Mr. Hema Dassanayake  
Formerly WHO & WMO,  
Senior Human Resources Specialist  
dassanayake@gmail.com

<https://mindworks.org/blog/meditation-techniques-to-reduce-pain/>

## Obituary

*Reporting the loss of our dear AFICS members.*

Mr. Milton Aponso  
Ms. Malani Balasingham  
Dr. Gamini Corea  
Ms. Vijitha B de Silva  
Mr. Percy Dadegama  
Dr. Douglas Nethsinghe  
Mr. Earle Fernando  
Dr. L. G. Goonewardena  
Mr. D. L. Kannangara  
Mr. Vernon Mendis  
Mr. Shadwel Weerakoon  
Mr. L. N. Perera  
Mr. Earle Samarasinghe  
Mr. Elmo Seneviratne  
Ms. Ira Unambuwa  
Mr. Sirimegha Wijeratne

*MAY THEY REST IN PEACE*



## Smart, Nature-based Strategies for vibrant health, disease prevention and longevity

(Applicable in any country with edible weeds and where *Moringa Oleifera*, *Jak*, *Breadfruit* can be grown) By Ranjit Senevirathna



One of the easiest and best is the attitude “Help Others at All Times” – the Second Promise of the Boy Scout salute.

**F**ood - “Let food be thy medicine and medicine thy food”- Hippocrates, Father of Western medicine. Also all animals after adult-hood, remain the same size. But Humans change shape because “You are what you eat”.

**Research shows** – Humans have long intestines, like the Gorilla and Orang Utan and no canine teeth or claws to tear meat. Therefore humans were leaf and fruit eaters before the discovery of fire and may have also eaten roots and tubers, fish and insects. No Milk as cows not tamed..

Hence the rising popularity all over the world, of new ways with food –

**Vegan** (grains and vegetables, no meats, eggs, dairy),

**Vegetarian** (grains and veggies, no meats, some dairy, fish, eggs),

**Paleo** (no grains, meats, dairy, cooked food, only raw unaltered/wild fruits & veggies, may include fish).

**Keto** (no grains - carbs replaced by fats (through “Ketosis”), only grass-fed meats, free-range chickens & eggs, wild-caught fish (no farmed fish).

(Source: [www.mercola.com](http://www.mercola.com))

**Foods to avoid** - There is a growing avoidance of foods shown to be harmful by new research such as foods grown with agro-chemicals, especially Glyphosate which kills soil bacteria, Genetically Modified (GM) foods, preservatives in processed foods (which kill gut bacteria), certain plant food “Lectins” (plant defense bio-chemicals), which affects people differently due to genetic variation (different races inter-marrying). These include

“gluten” in Wheat, Rye, Oats, Lectins in vegetables e.g. nightshade family (Tomato, Egg plant, Peppers, Potato) and Peanuts, Cashew, etc., (introduced about 500 years ago from the “New World” and hence many “Old World” people have not had enough time to develop resistance). Also lectins in some milk types - (Jersey and Holstein cattle only). There are also warnings against CAFO meats (**C**onfined **A**nimal **F**eeding **O**peration) cattle, pigs, chickens in cages and farmed fish, as these are fed food not natural to them, which alters the quality of the meat and also given anti-biotics, chemical growth accelerators etc.

(Source:[www.mercola.com](http://www.mercola.com))

**Fasting** – Research has found that fasting increases Longevity and produces HGH (Human Growth Hormones) which has anti-ageing effects. It also allows the microbes to clean out the gut of food accumulations. Hence the rising popularity of various forms of fasting.

**Intermittent Fasting** – Not eating 12 to 16 hours (involves skipping Dinner or Breakfast).

24-Hour Water Fast and even longer Fasts of 2-days, 4-days, etc. as part of a detox strategy.

**Climate-Smart Food Alternatives** – Instead of Seasonal foods that require seasonal planting and harvesting (rice, conventional vegetables), eat **Perennials** (continuous harvesting once planted) such as *Jak* (40% presently wasted), *Bread Fruit*, *Yams* (more than 20 varieties, and *Engili Ala* even produces potato-like *ala* from the vine), and as vegetables leaves of *Moringa*, *Cheena batu* (*Solunopus Androgenus*), *Ambarella*, *Sour Sop* (*Graviola*) etc. and weed-type leaves *Gotu kola*, *Mukunuwenna*, *Gendha*, *Aguna* etc. that grow continuously and more importantly, have their micro-biome unaffected by chemicals.

**Micro-Biome** – the trillions of bacteria, fungi, viruses, that live in our skin, gut etc. and help digest food; provide immunity, disease resistance, etc. But extensive use of anti-biotic products has diminished our Micro-biome (even the micro-biome in and around all living things, soil, etc.) and increased antibiotic resistant microbes, so that scientists are warning of a future of pandemics of serious diseases. This going away from Nature has literally made us Aliens of Planet Earth – we cannot eat off the floor like animals do, because our Micro-biome is out of balance. We do not have a balance of so called “pathogenic” bacteria and good bacteria,

so that when infected with a pathogenic bacteria, there is a population explosion and we get sick. Probiotics replenish gut bacteria – good sources, Fermented milk (Raw curd, Kefir), Fermented coconut water, Coconut Yoghurt, Fermented tea (Kombucha), Fermented vegetables (Korean Kim Chee, German Sauerkraut), Fermented soy - Japanese Miso, Natto (good source Vitamin K2), Sri Lankan fermented rice Heel Buth, fermented fish, *Bombili* and from gardening (bacteria in plant Micro-biome that brush onto skin and soil bacteria in your finger-nails).

([www.zachbushmd.com](http://www.zachbushmd.com))

**Healing Foods** – Turmeric famous since ancient times taken daily as a hot Coconut Soup “*Kiri Hoddha*” made with Coconut milk, Turmeric, pinch of Black Pepper, other herbs and spices (for disease prevention and all round health). Multi-coloured Raw Vegetables Fruits, Berries, (colours due to various Vitamins, bio-chemicals and anti-oxidants) “Adaptogens”. Holy *Basil/Tholasi* or *Maduruthala*, (strengthens body against viruses) *Ashwagandha* and *Ginseng*. (strengthens body processes) Red vegetables, Pomegranate, “*Kwass*” fermented Beetroot drink (heart disease), *Gotu kola*, dark green leaves, (memory loss), Manioc, Bitter Gourd and Apricot seeds (have Vitamin B17 that kill Cancer cells), wild passion fruit *Kovakka, Thebu, Masbedda* (Diabetes). Fermented foods and drinks (Gastritis). Excess Cholesterol (caused by inflammation from eating processed foods, chemicals in food etc.) can be reduced by eating healing foods and exercise.

**Foods that heal the whole body** – Japanese Ashitaba, Hemp seeds, oil from the USA.

Just as NCDs (**Non-Communicable Diseases**) Diabetes, Hypertension, Alzheimer’s, etc. develop slowly, so healing foods take time to heal too. It is also essential to make sure that harmful foods (listed above) are avoided as they could slow and even de-rail the healing process.

**Water and Hydration** – New research - water exists also as H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> – a form found inside animal and plant cells. Desert people were also found to eat a lot of fruits, especially cactus fruits which made them well hydrated. Hence the new advice - **We should eat our water**, by eating fruits and vegetables (Juices should include the pulp). Doing so causes urination about every 3 hours during daytime, but not at night as the body has a “**switch**” that reduces build up. It is also essential to drink sufficient normal water (chemical free if possible) for toxin removal through sweating and the Lymph

System urination and for cooling through sweating

**Autophagy during sleep** – the system of the body that cleans up damaged cells and makes new cells out of them. It is controlled by the “**Circadian Cycle**” (day-night cycle) so that this does not happen during daytime sleep. It should be noted that shortened night time sleep could allow some damaged cells left unrepaired to become cancerous.

**Sunshine and Bare-foot walking** – Humans

**“Let food be thy medicine and medicine thy food”**

were designed to live out doors. Thus sunshine on the skin (via cholesterol) produces Vitamin D3 – an important “**signaling**”

vitamin involved in over 200 body processes. Many people avoid sunshine and lack of Vitamin D3 is linked to Diabetes, Dementia, Brittle bones, etc. (in the USA increased Cancer risk found in dark-skinned women). It is important to take Vitamin D3 supplements in the morning, as it is a signaling molecule that works according to the Day-Night Cycle. When taking supplemental Vitamin D3, it is necessary to take Vitamin K2 or fermented soy called Natto which has Vitamin K2, (available Japanese Supermarket) as these vitamins work together.

Our bodies accumulate electric charge due to natural processes. Hold a stethoscope to your body and you will hear a lot of electrical chatter. Your nervous system communicates using electricity (i.e., movement of electrons), receiving and transmitting electrical signals throughout the body. Most of our biological processes are electrical and any accumulated static electricity is naturally discharge when we walk barefoot on the ground, especially when wet with morning dew. That is also why it feels so good to walk barefoot on a wet, sandy beach. But there is now an exponential increase due to the heavy use of electric and electronic devices. Apparently people living in high-rise buildings are at greater risk and therefore there are now earthing mats (wired and connected to a separate earth) for use on beds and smaller mats for placing bare feet when using a computer. A new risk is cell-phone and EMF radiation from WiFi Routers, Cellphones, etc. which have been found to speed up the onset of NCDs as these EMF and cellphone radiations interfere with our biological circuits. Red, blue and purple fruits, Rosemary and mold-free coffee are among foods found to offer protection.

([www.mercola.com](http://www.mercola.com) / [www.zachbushmd.com](http://www.zachbushmd.com))

**Exercise** – essential for body and brain to work



properly. Brisk walking and jogging (to be effective should be for at least 60 minutes), but will not remove excess body fat as the body will adjust to the routine. **“Peaking”** – doing any exercise until you “peak” (panting, cannot do any more) causes the body to use up body fat (especially difficult to remove abdominal fat) and this body fat burn continues for several hours and even while sleeping. “Peaking” also causes small muscle tears and the body produces HGH (Human Growth Hormones) to repair them. HGH builds new tissue and therefore has anti-ageing effects. Exercise also improves blood circulation (especially to the brain and therefore prevents Alzheimer’s) reduces the possibility of heart attacks and strokes and removes toxins (by working the Lymph system) and through sweating.

In work-places, it is best to keep printers and phones away from computers so that one has to stand and move to use them. In the USA they recommend standing every 15 minutes and even have desks that can be raised for use while standing. They even have cubicles and washrooms for staff who cycle/jog to work (as part of their work-out) so that they can change into office wear.

Other simple movements easily done any time, any place to exercise muscles rarely used (as floors, roads are flat and even, unlike jungle paths) but useful for body balancing to prevent tripping/falling:

(1) Walking backwards (2) Standing on one leg, eyes closed (not easy, needs practice).

*Note; Dr. Zach Bush has developed a set of exercises to improve blood circulation. It consists of a series of 4 simple body and hand movements, each repeated 15 to 30 times and the set repeated four times per exercise set. Each set should ideally be done 3 or 4 times per day at say 6 hour intervals.*

(Source: [www.mercola.com](http://www.mercola.com))

**Meditation** – is a way of getting the mind to stop wandering and getting it to focus on just one thing by closing the eyes and listening for example, to deep breathing or a word that ends with a hum like “one-nnnnnnn”. This action is repeated over and over again each time the mind wanders so that gradually the mind really begins to quiet down in a very deep way hearing only the “one” sound.. Research shows that calming the mind seems to help re-set other body systems to function correctly, causing healing at a cellular level which slows and even reverses ageing.

(Source: [www.mercola.com](http://www.mercola.com), [www.Ornish.com](http://www.Ornish.com))

**Stress** – normal stresses (exercise, working on problems, walking in the hot sun, climbing stairs, fasting, eating wild plant foods etc.) keeps body and brain functioning well. But persistent or chronic stress (deadlines at work, financial worries, unresolved grief over loss of a loved one etc.) damages health and could cause disease - gastritis, etc. even cancer. Coping strategies include Yoga Breathing(4-7-8), Meditation, EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique), Pranic Healing, Counselling.

**Stress Buster** – one of the easiest and best is the attitude **“Help Others at All Times”** – the Second Promise of the Boy Scout salute. When you are in this “Help Others” mode – there is no need to show who’s “Boss”, no worries about being smart and fashionable, no need for fancy cars, beautiful home etc.

Life becomes simple and therefore stress free.

Sources - [www.mercola.com](http://www.mercola.com), [www.greenmedinfo.com](http://www.greenmedinfo.com), [www.zachbushmd.com](http://www.zachbushmd.com) et al)

**Bottom Line** – Eat healthy Perennials with Intermittent Fasting and “eat” water for good hydration, “Peak” while doing Exercise, walk barefoot in the sun whenever possible, protect yourself from Cell phone radiation and EMFs and keep stress free by always being in “Help Others” Mode.

*(Writer was Project Operations Officer, FAO, Rome – one of his projects (dubbed “Blue Revolution”) resulted in Government of Bangladesh winning the first Souma Award, Project in Eritrea shortlisted for the Second Souma Award and two of his Project Managers won B.R.Sen Awards for excellence).*

Ranjit Senani Seneviratne

Diploma in Mechanical Engineering, University of Moratuwa., Marine Engineer, First Class Combined Steam & Motor Cert. of Comp. DTI, UK (Nov..1970)

Professional Associations: Chartered Engineer (CE), F.I.MarEST, MRINA, Date Joined UN: FAO Consultant 05.08,1974 -,1978 (Malaysia, Singapore, Kuwait, Rome HQ, Nigeria, Malta), FAO HQ. 01/1979 Assist. Fleet Manager 01/1991-1998 Project Operations Officer, Current Responsibilities: Member, Board of Management Gami Seva Sevana, Galaha., Co-Director, Amuthu Amuthu Association, Colombo



## REPORTING ON 47<sup>TH</sup> FAFICS COUNCIL HELD IN ROME FROM 20 TO 25 JULY 2018

By George A Michael



**Mr. George A.  
Michael  
AFICS  
(Sri Lanka)  
Representative at  
the 47<sup>th</sup> FAFICS  
Council Session  
in Rome**

The 47th Council session of the FAFICS, was held in Rome at the Headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) from 20-25 July 2018. Mr. George A. Michael represented AFICS (Sri Lanka) for the first time.

FAFICS has now reached a membership of 63 Member Associations, including the new entries from Madagascar and Mauritania, with over 20,000 members, located in all regions in the world.

There were 62 delegates (8 from Rome, 7 from Geneva, 5 from India, 4 from Bangladesh, and 3 each from New York & Paris) including the officers of the FAFICS present at the 47th Council, representing 52 Member Associations and 11 Member Associations absent and they were represented by proxy voting, including the 2 new Member Associations.

The first day, Friday 20 July, was allocated for the standing committee meetings of the ASHIL Health Care Issues in the morning and Pension Fund in the afternoon. This was followed by a cocktail party in the evening, where we were met by the FAO branch office of the United Nations Credit Union Staff.

The Saturday and Sunday were so arranged for the convenience of the visiting delegates to use it for site seeing in this beautiful Roman surroundings of ancient history. Those of you who have visited FAO Head office should know that the office is located in the heart of archaeological sites of the ruins. In front of FAO is the famous "Circo Massimo" or "Circus Maximus", the place where the Romans did the famous horse chariot racing (just like in the

Ben Hur movie) and the Palatine Hill by the side and next is the "Coliseum" or "Colosseum" where the gladiators fought the lions and tigers. On FAO's right is the Roman baths "Terme di Caracalla" - here during the summer season they conduct open air concerts, Operas like Aida, Swan Lake and bring in real props, live animals like the Lions, Tigers, Elephants and Camels on stage.

On Monday 23 July, the President of FAFICS

Ms. Linda Saputelli formerly declared the plenary meeting open, with the delegates introducing themselves. Mr. Alan Prien, President of FFOA was unanimously elected as the Presiding Officer and Mr. Jerry Burton, President of ARICSA was unanimously elected as the Rapporteur.

Mr. Daniel Gustafson, Deputy Director General of FAO for Programming, welcomed the delegates to FAO the hosting organization. He stressed that he was aware of the issues in front of the Council are, not only for the current but also for the future beneficiaries. He said that FAO will continue to host FFOA and on behalf of FAO he congratulated the delegates for the excellent voluntary work.

On Pension Fund, the Deputy CEO Mr. Paul Dooley enhanced his remarks with a power point presentation of the Fund and confirmed that the Fund was in a very good financial position with 64.1 Bn. He noted that many new initiatives had been implemented: a call centre, new member self-service and dashboard, a liaison office in Nairobi, expanded outreach activities, increased processing rates, special death-related contact means, with people trained in sensitivity, and toll-free numbers in 28 countries (Sri Lanka - 0112029059) from 7 am to 7 pm. With the growth in the number of retirees (now near 80,000 in 130 countries), the processing of the annual Certificate of Entitlement bears examination.

The increased processing performance, special death-related communication, and generally the support for elderly or feeble beneficiaries were lauded by the delegates.

The delegates generally stated that their associations are ready and willing to work in

partnership with the Fund, particularly to help the Certificate of Entitlement (CE) process but also in other areas, but with confidentiality.

Mr. Sudhir Rajkumar, the Representative of the UN Secretary General (RSG) for Investments also made a presentation and in his remarks stressed that he is focused on long-term interests, intending to manage the investment prudently and optimally and in active, considered, and thoughtful manner, working actively with the stakeholders and oversight bodies. He too confirmed that the fund is very stable and is also in good rankings and benchmark standards in managing and investments.

The UNJSPF CEO and the RSG and their Staff spend half day in the Annual FAFICS Council meetings. It should be noted that the FAFICS Council meets one week prior to the UNJSPF Board Meeting in the same venue.

The Federation has no representative role in the various organisational health insurances. However, FAFICS participates as an observer in inter-agency meetings of Human Resource Officers on After-Services Long-term Care benefits is also a member of the Working Group on After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI) of the High-level Committee on Management (HCLM) Finance and Budget(FB) Network, and has been involved in studies and reporting to the UN General Assembly.

On questions of Ageing and long-term health care, the Federation will closely monitor the latests developments and keep these items in the agenda for further discussions.

The Federation represents the UNJSPF and ASHIL standing committees and participates as observers.

Regarding the situation of the former UNJSPF participants in the Soviet Union, the Byelorussian SSR and Ukrainian SSR, the FAFICS continues to support the just claim for payment of their UNJSPF pensions by retired UN system staffs from the former Soviet Union, the Byelorussian SSR and the Ukrainian SSR, who have been deprived by those Governments, and so far, by their successor states. About 700 people affected, although exact number cannot be determined. FAFICS wants to continue keeping this item in the agenda until it is resolved.

The following members were elected to the

Bureau of the Federation;

**President :** Marco Breschi,

**Vice-Presidents:** Abu Khaled Masood Ahmed, Jerry Barton , Katia Chestopalov, Mario La Fuente, Ari Toubou Ibrahim, Junko Sato, Carlos Santos Tejada

**Secretary:** Pierre Sayour,

**Treasurer:** Wolfgang Milzow

The outgoing President Linda Saputelli was unanimously elected as President Emeritus and was also appointed as a Special Advisor to the Bureau and the outgoing Secretary Jeyaraman Sundaresan as Secretary Emeritus.

*(For a full report of the FAFICS 47th Council proceedings, please send your requests to the Secretary-General, AFICS, Sri Lanka)*



*George A. Michael*

*MBA (John Cabot, Rome); Member AMA (American Management Association), Dip. in Animal Husbandry (Peradeniya University with National Milk Board);*

*Former Staff FAO & WFP (worked in the Headquarters and in the field - Uganda, Kenya, Iraq, Sudan)*

*Singer Song Writer, Member Italian Copyrights (SIAE)*

## ASHI / ASHIL - HEALTH CARE ISSUES (FAFICS discussions at 47th Council in Rome 2018)

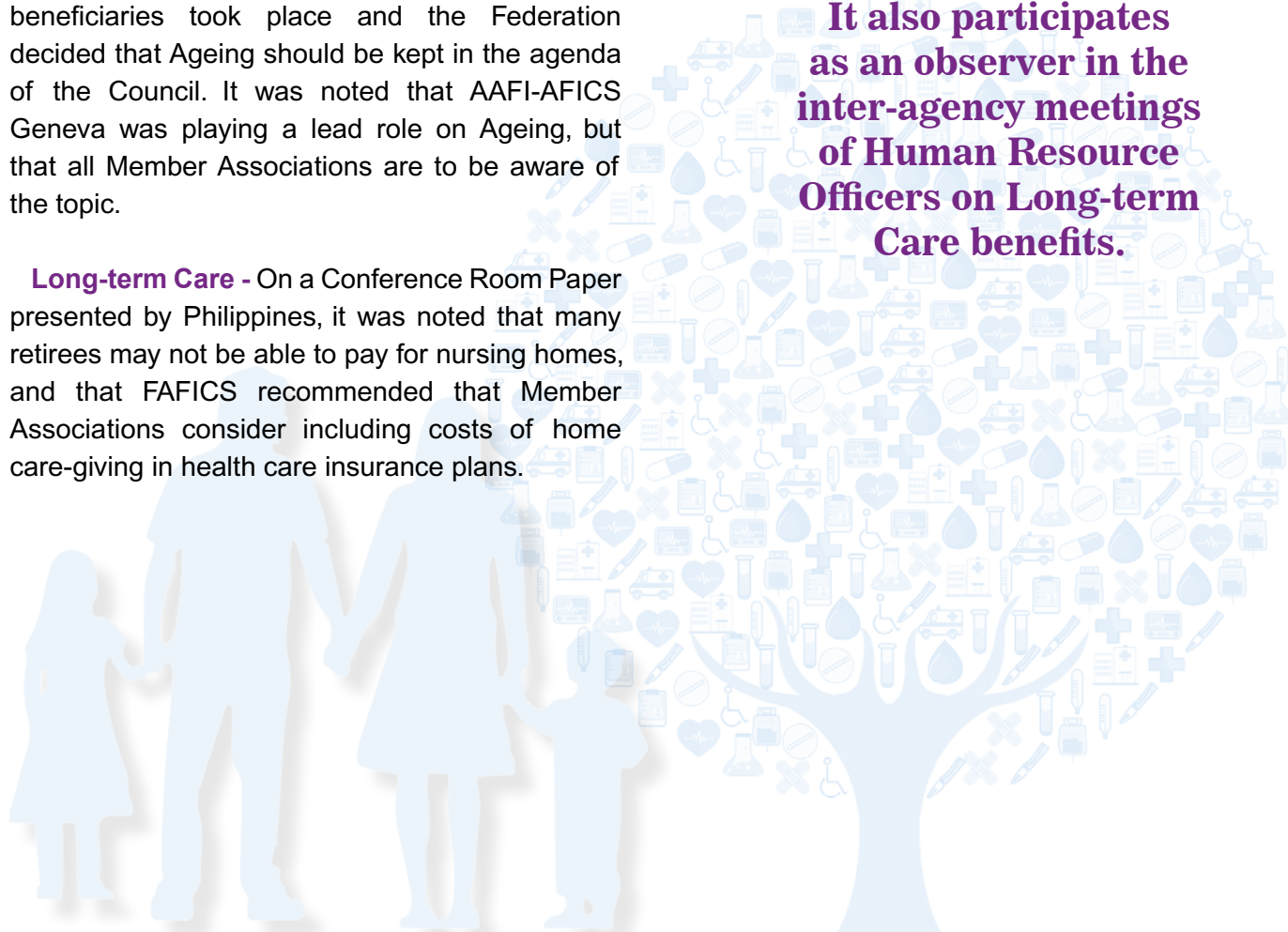
### After-Service Health Insurance

While the Federation has no representative role in the different organizational health insurances, which are available to retirees under the After-Service Health Insurance scheme, FAFICS provides for exchanges of information and develops the Federation's objectives in the FAFICS Council's Standing Committee on After-Service Health Insurance and Long-Term Care (ASHIL). It also participates as an observer in the inter-agency meetings of Human Resource Officers on Long-term Care benefits. The Federation's aim is to have these benefits incorporated in all organizational health insurance plans. FAFICS is also a member of the Working Group on After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI) of the HCLM Finance and Budget(FB) Network, and has been involved in studies and reporting to the UN General Assembly.

**Ageing** - Discussion regarding ageing of beneficiaries took place and the Federation decided that Ageing should be kept in the agenda of the Council. It was noted that AAFI-AFICS Geneva was playing a lead role on Ageing, but that all Member Associations are to be aware of the topic.

**Long-term Care** - On a Conference Room Paper presented by Philippines, it was noted that many retirees may not be able to pay for nursing homes, and that FAFICS recommended that Member Associations consider including costs of home care-giving in health care insurance plans.

**While the Federation has no representative role in the different organizational health insurances, which are available to retirees under the After-Service Health Insurance scheme, FAFICS provides for exchanges of information and develops the Federation's objectives in the FAFICS Council's Standing Committee on After-Service Health Insurance and Long-Term Care (ASHIL). It also participates as an observer in the inter-agency meetings of Human Resource Officers on Long-term Care benefits.**





# UN COMMEMORATION DAY 2018

UN to work closely with AFICS Sri Lanka.

“The United Nations Administration will work very closely with AFICS Sri Lanka in future”, the newly appointed UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Hanaa Singer said at the Un Commemorative Celebration Dinner and the AFICS 2018 Year End Get-together organized by the Association of Former International Civil Servants (AFICS) Sri Lanka on the 9th December 2018 held at Empire Residencies, Braybrooke Place, Colombo 02.



AFICS – Sri Lanka held its Annual Un Commemorative Day and the Year End Get-together 2018 this time with a large gathering of former international Civil Servants and their spouses, where the Chief Guest was Ms. Hanna Singer, UN Resident Coordinator. She mentioned that there will be a lot of changes in the UN



administrative structure starting from January 2019 and in implementing its projects, the UN would assist and fund only those programmes that are approved by the government and included in the National Plan.

Dr. Nimal Hettiaratchy the President of AFICS Sri Lanka welcoming the Chief Guest stated that this is the first time that the UN Resident Coordinator was invited to inaugurate the UN Commemorative celebration and to participate in this very special annual event and looking forward to closer friendship with the UN Coordinator’s Office.







The event was organized by the AFICS Sri Lanka and Dr. Laksiri Mendis the Social Secretary facilitated the event to hold in the Garden Facility of the Empire Residencies and Mr. Anthony George Michael, the UN Retiree from the FAO Office in Rome compered the event. Dr. Mrs. Prashanthi Mendis provided music. Mr. K.M.D. Gunaratne the Secretary-General proposed the Vote of Thanks.

01. Welcoming the Chief Guest New UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Hanaa Singer
02. Meeting the Ambassador of Sultanate of Oman
03. Introducing the AFICS Members to the Chief Guest by the AFICS President
04. Oil Lamp is being lit by the Chief Guest
05. Joining the lighting of the lamp by AFICS President along with senior Members
06. Welcome speech by the AFICS President Dr. Nimal Hettiaratchy
07. The Chief Guest Ms. Hanaa Singer UN Resident Coordinator delivering her speech
08. Traditional music is being played while lighting the Oil Lamp
09. Musicians and Singers performing
10. Members enjoying the fellowship singing and dancing
11. Invitees, colleagues, friends and guests joined
12. AFICS Members and Spouses seated
13. Getting ready for the Inauguration
14. Members & Guest are enjoying the company
15. Prizes are waiting for the Raffle Winners
16. Dinner being served

## SPEECH BY MS HANAA SINGER, UN HEAD IN SRI LANKA

Chief Guest Ms. Hanaa Singer, UN Resident Coordinator  
at the UN Commemorative Dinner and  
AFICS, Sri Lanka Year-end Get-together on 9/12/2018.



I want to wish  
you all a fantastic  
festive season!  
And wishing and  
praying for a  
peaceful period  
for our beloved Sri  
Lanka as well.

*T*hank you, Ladies and Gentlemen! And what a delight to start this festive season with those who paved the road for all of us working in the UN, building the present and the future of the UN. What I am going to talk about is not going to be something new, it is what you all discussed and contributed to and made it happen and hopefully we will follow your tracks and try to contribute as much as each and every one of you have done. I feel personally honored to be here today.

As you know, together- UN and Member States- we have embarked on the most significant change process in the history of the UN. These wide-ranging reforms are critical to making the UN more effective and efficient, more accountable, more transparent and more responsive. The change will affect every department, every office, every operation. They will touch every single staff member and all Member states.

In just 22 days from now! - on 1 January – we will launch changes in three areas: Development, Management and Peace and Security

Under the Peace and Security pillar the overarching goals of the reform are to prioritize prevention and sustaining peace; enhance the effectiveness and coherence of peacekeeping operations and special political missions; move towards a single, integrated peace and security pillar; and align it more closely with the development and human rights pillars to create greater coherence and cross-pillar coordination.

Secretary-General António Guterres has also proposed a new management paradigm for the Secretariat, reorganizing the existing Department of Field Support and the Department of Management into two new departments — the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the Department of Operational Support—to ensure that United Nations management structures better support all senior managers to achieve effective programme and mandate delivery.

Under the development stream of reform, a new, reinvigorated RC system comes into effect on January 1, “delinking” the functions of UN Resident Coordinators from UNDP Resident Representatives to enable more effective and integrated analysis and planning at the country level. This change will enable us to deliver better results, and ensure accountability on the ground, with the new generation of UN Country Teams. Collectively, we will deliver results through a redesigned UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAFs) which becomes the main strategic instrument to respond to national needs and priorities.

With this change, RCs will be the highest-ranking

**In just 22 days from now! -  
on 1 January – we will launch  
changes in three areas:  
Development, Management  
and Peace and Security**

representative of the UN development system at the country level and will be designated representative of – and reporting to – the UN Secretary-General.

These are the biggest and most visible changes, but the reform goes beyond structural changes, these are just first major milestones laying the foundation for our way forward. This reform is about changing our management paradigm and becoming less bureaucratic. It is about decentralization and delivering better results on the ground ensuring that no one is left behind. It is about breaking down the silos and working more collaboratively across all pillars.



We have less than four weeks to make all these changes happen. And next year you can expect stronger leadership in all that we do, at all levels, to advance the Sustainable Development Goals.

I am looking forward to engaging with the well-experienced members of AFICS Sri Lanka, as an advisory group, counting on your wisdom, knowledge and expertise.

So, with this, I want to wish you all a fantastic festive season! And wishing and praying for a peaceful period for our beloved Sri Lanka as well.

Thank you, and I look forward to continuous collaboration and coordination.



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## Developmental Activities at UNIDO

By Deshabandu Emeritus Professor Tuley De Silva



**“Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”.**

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is the United Nations specialized agency that is responsible for the promotion of industrial development for poverty reduction, while preserving environmental sustainability. Presently 168 countries are members of UNIDO. The mission of UNIDO, as described in the *Lima Declaration* in 2013, is to promote and accelerate Inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID) in Member States.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), of the United Nations includes UNIDO’s mandate in SDG-9, which calls to “Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”.

During my tenure as a Special Technical Advisor at UNIDO headquarters in Vienna, I was responsible for the UNIDO development programmes on the industrial utilization of medicinal and aromatic plants and non-wood forest products.

Plant based traditional medicines play a vital role in the health care of the majority of the people in developing countries. These medicines are still prepared using the age old traditional methods despite the advances in science and technology. There has not been any significant research and development work on these medicines as traditional practitioners have resisted any such attempts as being detrimental to their practices.

As a result of difficulties associated with continuing the tradition of the practitioner preparing the drugs himself, industrial production has been encouraged, paving the way for the introduction of modern technology. The demand for standardized quality herbal preparations has also increased as a result of the resurgence of interest in natural medicines among people in the industrialized countries. Due

to lack of access to modern therapy, there is also a need to provide less expensive standardised quality preparations based on medicinal plants to maintain the primary health care of majority of the populations in developing countries.

These demands induced UNIDO to launch a programme of development assistance in this important environment friendly area of activity. An integrated approach was adopted exploiting fully this natural resource of medicinal plants to develop small-scale agro-based industries. Along with the development of good quality traditional medicines, the possibilities of extracting known drugs, intermediates and the production of standard galenicals were explored.

The development of the essential oils industry was considered important, as many developing countries have rich resources of aromatic plant materials or the climatic conditions for the initiation of crop wise cultivation programmes. The production of essential oils could still be a good source of foreign exchange revenue for developing countries. Sustainable exploitation of Non-Wood Forest products was also included.

UNIDO provided technical assistance to cover a wide spectrum of activities, ranging from selection of plants, systematic cultivation, processing, quality assessment, formulation, packaging to marketing. The degree of assistance varied according to the needs and the state of development of this area of activity in the developing country. The intervention of UNIDO contributed to initiating and catalysing activities in this area of agro-based industrial development.

The areas of assistance included:

**Agro-technology** – Development of Agro-technological packages were initiated as a means of conserving and ensuring continuous availability of raw materials required for processing. Organic farming was introduced to reduce environment pollution and contribute to biodiversity conservation. Good Agricultural Practices to include proper selection and identification, propagation methods, cultivation techniques, harvesting, step-wise quality control of raw material up to processing stage, post-harvest treatment, and storage were introduced.

**Process Technology - Traditional medicines - Modern technology** Traditional herbal medicines were produced using age old methods by the practitioner him/herself. Research and development



to select proper and appropriate technologies for the industrial production of traditional medicines were introduced to make them more effective, stable, reproducible, controlled and in dosage forms that could easily be carried. Process technology introduced included the production of standardised traditional medicines, galenicals and extracts, the formulation and development of dosage forms, the development of new preparations based on the traditional pharmacopoeia. Processing using clean and pollution free technologies have been introduced. Machinery for pilot processing, equipment for modern testing and consumables were also provided.

#### Quality Assurance -

The control of the quality of the raw materials, finished products and of processes is an absolute necessity, if one is to produce goods for world markets and human consumption. Procedures for the standardising of preparations and specifications for quality control and test methods for validation were introduced so that they could comply to international standards.

The requirements for ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 certifications and Good Manufacturing Practices(GMP) were introduced and the personnel trained so that enterprises could introduce the proper systems needed for certification.

**Human Resource Development** – The human resources needed for these activities were not fully available in the developing countries. UNIDO therefore developed the required human resources for this specific area of industrial development by conducting training in industrial practice including quality assurance, management and marketing.

**Marketing** - Marketing is an unsurmountable problem besetting the development of the plant-based industry in developing countries and marketability was a crucial factor in determining the failure or success of these industries. Further processing to yield value added products will be limited by the local demand situation unless they could be produced at prices to be competitive in the world market. Even if the cost of production is low and quality of the products is good, substantial market promotion has to be undertaken in order to penetrate the world market.

Market tie-ups, Joint ventures or trade agreements with progressive entrepreneurs from the developed world were encouraged as a possible and a realistic option for securing markets for the finished products.

**Research and Development** - The concept of applied research in the industrial use of plants

has not received much attention. Research in support of industrial development ranging from the development of superior propagation materials, agrotechnology, low cost and efficient processing technologies to improve quality and yield, new formulations to new products and quality control testing methods and stability studies were introduced.

**Registration and Property Rights** - Many developing countries do not have procedures to register medicinal plant preparations although they are widely used for the health care needs of the majority of people. The regulations if any, are very stringent requiring the same standards expected of modern medicines. UNIDO assisted in the development of procedures for registration in line with the WHO guidelines for the assessment of herbal medicines taking into account the long and extensive usage of them. Procedures for the protection of intellectual property rights were also introduced.

As a Special Technical Adviser, my work involved managing all projects in developing countries in Asia, Africa and Central and South America, providing the required expert know how by me and other consultants, organizing and conducting training programmes, workshops and seminars and providing in house training positions in Industrialised countries, setting up of R&D and quality control laboratories, pilot plants, supply of equipment, machinery and consumables and the publication of books, reports etc.

*Deshabandu Emeritus Professor Tuley De Silva*

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## Reflections on the Contribution of Microfinance to Financial Inclusion and Poverty Reduction - By Dr. Nimal A. Fernando



**Dr. Nimal A. Fernando,**  
Global  
Consultant  
in Financial  
Inclusion

### Introduction

Since its birth in the 1970s, the modern microfinance industry has become global and evolved dramatically. The industry landscape has undergone a profound transformation over the years. Today, the industry is remarkably diverse in terms of institutional modalities, ownership structures, delivery approaches and to a lesser extent in the type of products and services supplied. Previously credit only industry now embraces deposits, and micro-insurance, for example, although the primary focus on microcredit provision continues for a range of reasons. Despite many changes during the last four decades, the overarching twin objectives of the industry irrespective of the modalities adopted by it and the context in which it operates has been financial inclusion and poverty reduction although the objective of financial inclusion has not been clearly and unambiguously articulated in terms of the currently popular financial inclusion terminology.

The purposes of this short article are to briefly reflect on the contribution that the microfinance industry has made to advance financial inclusion and poverty reduction in the developing and emerging economies in general. This task has been made relatively easier now because of the availability of a comprehensive set of global demand-side data on financial inclusion from the World Bank's Global Findex database<sup>1</sup>. While Findex data do not focus on microfinance and provide disaggregated data on the outreach of the microfinance industry or any other type of service provider, it does show the state of global financial inclusion and provide broadly comparable regional

and cross-country data. The state of financial inclusion revealed by the Findex data for 2011, 2014 and 2017 together with the microfinance industry focused data from a multitude of sources can be used as a basis to reflect on the extent to which the microfinance industry seem to have contributed to advance financial inclusion.

For the purpose of the discussion, the term "financial inclusion" is defined as "provision of a wide range of financial products and services such as savings, payments, credit and insurance to the unserved and underserved people and enterprises".

The unserved are those people and enterprises that do not have access to financial products and services offered by formal or semi-formal financial service providers (FSPs). Underserved people and enterprises are those that are served, but whose demand is not adequately met in quantitative and/or qualitative terms by the FSPs.

### Microfinance Industry Objective

Whether it was clearly articulated or not, the broad immediate objective of the microfinance industry has been similar in many respects to that of the modern financial inclusion movement led by a range of global, regional and national level organizations, advocates, promoters and policymakers<sup>2</sup>. Microfinance industry aimed to serve the poor who remained excluded from the formal financial system. In practice, the industry focused largely on provision of microcredit, for understandable reasons and that too primarily for women. The higher level objective of the microfinance industry from its early period has been poverty reduction. Over time as the industry evolved with the institutional transformations and diversity, this higher level objective has been articulated in a more forceful manner than at the early period. However, over the past decade, a paradigm shift has taken place from microfinance to financial inclusion which has risen as a global priority. HRH Queen Maxima, UN Secretary General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development, recently noted that "(E)xtending affordable, effective, and client-centric financial services, especially to low-income populations and small businesses, creates countless opportunities – allowing individuals to put food on the table, afford better health care, start a business, or save for retirement. For governments, financial inclusion

<sup>1</sup> For details on this database, see, Demircuc-Kunt et.al. 2018. The Global Findex Database 2017: Measuring Financial Inclusion and the Fintech Revolution. (World Bank Policy Research Working Paper).

<sup>2</sup> This group includes the United Nations, the Alliance for Financial Inclusion (AFI), established in 2008, G20 and its Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPF) and a range of multilateral and bilateral development organizations such as the World Bank and African Development Bank. However, AFI is the only global organization focused exclusively on financial inclusion. AFI is a global network of financial policymakers and regulators from developing and emerging countries working together to increase financial inclusion, particularly for the poor. Operated initially as a project funded mainly by the Bill and Melinda Gates.

lays the foundation for stability and inclusive economic growth. For the global community, financial inclusion helps accelerate economic progress, reduce extreme poverty, and build shared prosperity.” These claims appear much similar to the claims made by the global microfinance community three to four decades ago.

In the new context where financial inclusion has taken a center stage, it may be appropriate to reflect on the microfinance industry and place it within the new context. One way to accomplish this task is to ask a number of simple questions in relation to the immediate as well as the end objectives of the microfinance industry. One such question is to what extent, the industry has been able to achieve its immediate objective of financial inclusion? Second related question is undoubtedly the most difficult: to what extent the industry has been able to achieve its higher level objective of poverty reduction?

### Financial Inclusion Objective of Microfinance

As stated earlier, it is possible to use a range of sources to discuss the extent to which the microfinance industry has achieved its immediate objective of financial inclusion. Perhaps, the industry’s once most widely used source of data may be suitable for the purpose. The data presented in Table 1 are taken from the Microcredit Summit State of the Campaign Report 2015 . The data indicate that even with a history of operations for over forty years, the industry’s achievements have been modest, relative to the potential target market as well as the expectations created by its leading advocates at various points in time.

**Table 1: Microcredit Outreach<sup>6</sup>**

| Year | otal Number of Borrowers (Million) | Total Number of Poorest Borrowers (Million) |
|------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 2010 | 205                                | 138                                         |
| 2011 | 195                                | 124                                         |
| 2012 | 204                                | 116                                         |
| 2013 | 211                                | 114                                         |

*Source: Global Microcredit Summit Report 2015.*

This is admitted clearly in the 2015 Campaign Report. According to the Report, “We still do not see widespread adoption of financial services

among the largest group of those still need to be reached : those living in extreme poverty”. The same Report also points out that although the number of microfinance borrowers continue to grow globally, the number of poorest clients reached has continued to shrink. This in other words mean that a majority of people in this category – which has been a major target group of the industry -- remain financially excluded and some of the gains made by the industry has begun to diminish. For example, the poorest women with loans outstanding has declined from 96.4 million in 2012 to 94.4 million in 2013. In addition, the evidence available from a number of other sources suggest that some of the previously niche market MFIs with a near exclusive focus on serving the poor have become more like conventional financial institutions serving more the non-poor after transforming themselves into commercial banks or similar financial entities subject to formal regulation<sup>7</sup>. A large number of leading NGO-MFIs such as Aceda in Cambodia and Compartamos in Mexico that were transformed into formal banks have significantly drifted away from their original objective of serving the poor. Even the Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI), one of the largest MFIs in the world, has grown to serve over 58 million retail clients by 2017, a significant proportion of them do not belong to the category of previously financially excluded. It was also the recognition of the failures of the microfinance industry to address the financial exclusion problem that led the global community leading the financial inclusion campaign to focus on financial inclusion of women in particular within the broader objective of expanding financial services to the unbanked.

The country-level supply-side data also suggest that microfinance industry’s contribution to financial inclusion has been limited in most countries. For example, Pakistan’s active borrowers was no more than 3.5 million in 2014 and it reached the highest level of 4.0 million in March 2016. The Pakistan Microfinance Network (PMN) recently admitted that “despite the sustained efforts towards improving the regulatory environment and institutional capacity building, the level of financial

inclusion remains very low.” In this context, the PMN has committed to reaching 50 million new depositors through the Universal Access to Finance 2020 (UFA2020) initiative of the World Bank.

Foundation since its inception, AFI was transformed into an independent member-based, member-owned entity in January 2016. As of January 2019, the AFI had 105 member institutions from 91 countries.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the two goals set by the 2006 Global Microcredit Summit reflected these two objectives: (1) reach 175 million of the poorest families with microfinance; and (2) help 100 million families lift themselves out of extreme poverty.

<sup>4</sup> World Bank. 2015. The Little Data Book on Financial Inclusion. Foreword, p.vi. “Shared prosperity” is one of the twin goals that the World Bank Group set for itself in 2013. The World Bank defines the term as “sustainable increase in the well-being of the poorer segments (bottom 40% of the population, to be more specific), of society.” See, The World Bank. 2013. The World Bank Group Goals: End Extreme Poverty and Promote Shared Prosperity.

<sup>5</sup> For specific issues related to the coverage and quality of this data, readers are encouraged to refer the original source. Comparable data for more recent years are not readily available.

<sup>6</sup> The outreach data reported in other sources differ significantly from what is presented in this Table. For example, Microcredit Authority of Bangladesh report global MFI outreach as 91.4 million low income clients for 2014 while the Mix Market report number of active borrowers as 100 million for the same year. It is well-known that all MFIs do not report to the Mix Market and therefore its data can show a lower level of outreach.

<sup>7</sup> However, many analysts argued that the transformation would not lead to a significant “mission drift” of MFIs. See, for example, Fernando, Nimal A.(2004). Micro Success Story? Transformation of Nongovernment Organizations into Regulated Financial Institutions, (ADB:Manila).

The microfinance industry in India has expanded its outreach significantly in the last decade. However, despite this growth, the industry's independent MFIs – NGOs and Non-bank finance companies (NBFCs) -- reached no more than 20 million unique clients in March 2010 and the number was no more than 30 million in March 2015. According to a recent PwC India report, India's unbanked population has more than halved from 557 million in 2011 to 233 million in 2015. When these numbers are considered in the context of microfinance industry outreach, it is clear that the microfinance industry's contribution has been no more than 4% to the increase in financial inclusion during this period. Put differently, the microfinance industry has been able to reach only a very small fraction of the potential market.

Findex database can also help us analyse this issue of relatively limited outreach of the microfinance industry. What does the Findex data reveal about financial inclusion? Findex data show that globally the level of financial inclusion, as measured by account ownership<sup>8</sup>, has increased from 2.5 billion to 3.2 billion between 2011 and 2014 and to 3.8 billion in 2017. The unbanked has declined from 2.5 billion in 2011 to 2.0 billion adults in 2014 and to about 1.7 billion in 2017. To put differently, the data reveal that despite the claimed great progress of the microfinance industry in reaching the unbanked, an estimated 1.7 billion adults still lack access to a basic transaction account and remain excluded from the formal financial system. In addition, the data also appear to strongly suggest that the microfinance industry has not been able to contribute much to the decline in the number of unbanked in the last decade. Of the 700 million increase in the number of new accounts opened between 2011 and 2014<sup>9</sup>, only a small proportion, perhaps no more than 5%, may have come from MFIs. The microfinance industry's contribution to the 515 million increase in the adult account ownership between 2014 and 2017 has also been similarly minimal. Moreover, it is also widely recognized that the microfinance industry's outreach to the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) has been minimal. MFIs have not been able to reach a majority of the microenterprises in particular. As a result, such

enterprises continue to rely on multiple sources of finance in the informal markets.

Another important aspect of the microfinance outreach in relation to the issue of financial inclusion is the quality of services provided by the MFIs. The products and services provided are often not in line with the target clients' needs. Many analysts argue that those that have access to financial services from MFIs often have to pay high fees for a relatively limited range of generally poor quality financial services.

**Table 2: Financial Inclusion by Income Groups, 2017**

| Income Group                  | Adults: age 15+ (Million) | Financial Institution Account (All Adults %) | Account Ownership: Adults belonging to the poorest 40% (%) | Borrowed from a Financial Institution in the past year (%) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Low income countries          | 378.0                     | 24.5                                         | 25.5                                                       | 7.9                                                        |
| Lower middle income countries | 2084.0                    | 56.1                                         | 50.7                                                       | 9.8                                                        |
| Upper middle income countries | 2048.5                    | 72.8                                         | 62.4                                                       | 22.4                                                       |
| Low & Middle Income countries | 4510.5                    | 61.3                                         | 54.2                                                       | 15.4                                                       |

*Source: Global Financial Inclusion Database, 2017*

Relatively limited outreach of the microfinance industry led to the persistence of the unbanked problem across the developing world. According to the Findex data (see Table 2), in low income countries only 24.5 percent of adults (age 15+) had an account in a financial institution in 2017; only 25.5 percent of the adults belonging to the poorest 40 percent had an account while only 7.9% of adults borrowed from a financial institution. For the lower middle income countries the proportions for the same variables were respectively, 56.1%, 50.7% and 9.8%. Thus it may be fair to conclude that the microfinance industry has not been successful in reaching a majority of its potential target market, even if we unrealistically assume that Findex data on account ownership of the adults belonging to the poorest 40% is attributed entirely to MFIs.

<sup>8</sup> It is important to note that the "2014 Global Findex database defines account ownership as having an account either at a financial institution or through a mobile money provider. The first category includes accounts at a bank or another type of financial institution, such as credit union, cooperative, or microfinance institution. The second consists of mobile phone-based services used to pay bills or to send or receive money. The definition of a mobile money account is limited to services that can be used without an account at a financial institution. Adults using a mobile money account linked to their financial institutions considered to have an account at a financial institution." (See, Demircuc-Kunt et al. 2015, p.4).

<sup>9</sup> The adult population increased from 5.0 billion in 2011 to 5.2 billion in 2014. This is why the unbanked population decreased only by 500 million although the number of new accounts increased by 700 million during the same period.



Although the level of financial inclusion has improved between 2011 and 2017, the Findex data for 2017 suggest that the overall picture continues to be unsatisfactory: more than half of adults in the poorest 40% of households in developing countries did not have access to even basic financial services. The proportion of adults saving at a financial institution was as low as 11.1% in low income countries and 15.9% in lower middle income countries. In the upper middle income countries, 26.9% of adults saved at a financial institution. The data indicate that in developing economies most people who save money do not use an account at a financial institution to do so. Although it is true that microfinance industry alone cannot be held responsible for this dismal state of affairs, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the overall picture regarding at least the poorest would have been more positive and encouraging had there been significant progress in outreach of the microfinance industry to this category of the target market.

The data on financial inclusion of women too suggest that the microfinance industry has not been able to meet its promise and the expectations it created. As noted earlier, the industry promoters and practitioners in most countries were vocal about reaching poor women with credit and other financial services. However, the Findex data presented in Table 3 show that in low income countries only 29.9% of adult women had an account while in lower-middle income countries the ratio was 53.0%. When low and middle income countries are taken together 41.4 % remained financially excluded in 2017 despite some progress between 2014 and 2017. It has been estimated that in absolute terms, globally over 900 million women remain financially excluded.

**Table 3: Account Ownership of Adult Women by Income**

| Income Group                  | Account Ownership of Adult Women (%) |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Low income countries          | 378.0                                |
| Lower middle income countries | 2084.0                               |
| Upper middle Income Countries | 69.3                                 |
| Low & Middle income countries | 58.6                                 |

Source: Global Findex Database, 2017

The country level Findex data also tend to support our general observation on the microfinance industry outreach. Table 4 presents

Findex data for selected countries considered as major players in the microfinance industry. Take, for example, Bangladesh which is universally recognized as the epicenter of the microfinance industry. Bangladesh has an adult population (age 15+) of some 116 million. Despite having a number of flagship MFIs and the well-known Grameen Bank, which became the model for microfinance banks in most other countries including those in Sub-Saharan Africa, (and the co-winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006), only 50% of the adults had an account in 2017. Surprisingly, despite the focus of the MFIs and the Grameen Bank on serving poor women, the proportion of adult women with an account was only 35.8% and among the adults belonging to the poorest 40%, only 40.1% had an account. According to Findex data, only 9.2% adults borrowed from a financial institution in 2016, much lower proportion than the 23.3% reported for 2010. Undoubtedly, these data do not reveal an impressive picture.

**Table 4 : Financial Inclusion: Findex Data (2017) for Selected Countries**

| Country     | Adult Population (15+) (million) | Account ownership of all adults (%) | Account Ownership - Women (%) | Account ownership | Borrowed from a Financial Institution in the past year (%) |
|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bangladesh  | 115.9                            | 50.0                                | 35.8                          | 40.1              | 9.2                                                        |
| Bolivia     | 7.4                              | 54.4                                | 53.9                          | 42.8              | 9.8                                                        |
| Cambodia    | 10.8                             | 21.7                                | 21.5                          | 14.3              | 26.7                                                       |
| China       | 1,134.6                          | 80.2                                | 76.4                          | 68.4              | 22.7                                                       |
| India       | 950.8                            | 79.9                                | 76.6                          | 77.1              | 8.1                                                        |
| Indonesia   | 188.9                            | 48.9                                | 51.4                          | 36.6              | 18.4                                                       |
| Pakistan    | 125.8                            | 21.3                                | 7.0                           | 14.2              | 2.6                                                        |
| Peru        | 23.0                             | 42.6                                | 34.4                          | 27.0              | 19.1                                                       |
| Philippines | 70.3                             | 34.5                                | 38.9                          | 18.0              | 10.7                                                       |
| Sri Lanka   | 16.1                             | 73.6                                | 73.4                          | 70.6              | 17.4                                                       |
| Vietnam     | 71.3                             | 30.8                                | 30.4                          | 20.3              | 21.7                                                       |

Source: Global Findex Database, 2017.

The Findex data for China, India and Sri Lanka indicate a substantially high level of account ownership. The account ownership among the adult population belonging to the poorest 40% is also impressive in these countries. However, it is clear that most people do not still use formal sources for their borrowing needs suggesting a severe problem of access to credit from financial institutions. In China, only 22.7% of adults have borrowed from

a financial institution while in Sri Lanka only 17.4% of adults have borrowed from a financial institution. The data on Pakistan indicate an appalling situation. Not only the account ownership of all adults but also the account ownership of women and among the poorest 40% remains extremely low. And only 2.6% of adults have borrowed from a financial institution. This also suggests that the financial industry, including the microfinance industry, has failed to establish a significant link between formal finance and the real sector, a factor which is responsible for unsatisfactory results on the poverty reduction front.

The proportion of adults saving at a financial institution also remain at alarmingly low level in many developing economies. According to the Findex data(2017), in Bangladesh only 9.9% of adults saved at a financial institution while in Pakistan only 6.1% of adults did so. The rate for the Philippines was 11.9%. The comparable figures for India, Indonesia and Vietnam were 19.6%, 21.5% and 14.5%, respectively. The proportion for the low income country group on average was 11.1% while for the lower middle income country group was 15.9% for the same year. These data suggest that not only microfinance institutions but also the formal financial industry as a whole has failed to serve a majority of the population. When taken separately, the failure of the microfinance institutions appears significant in multiple dimensions of financial inclusion because they came into the landscape to serve the unbanked.

Perhaps it may be appropriate to sum up this subsection with a regional state of financial inclusion in 2017 to further reinforce the point that microfinance industry has not been able to adequately meet the challenge of reaching the unbanked. According to Findex data for 2017, presented in Table 5 below, a substantial proportion of adults in East Asia and Pacific, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa remain financially excluded, although there is unevenness of the distribution across regions in this respect. A vast majority of the unbanked are women and poor people living

mainly in rural areas.

**Table 5. Regional Distribution of the Unbanked (2017)**

| Region                       | Adult Population (Million) | Unbanked Adults (Million) | Unbanked as a% of Adults in the region | Regional Distribution of the Unbanked (%) |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| East Asia and Pacific        | 1628.8                     | 479                       | 29.4                                   | 28.8                                      |
| Europe and Central Asia      | 331.6                      | 115                       | 34.7                                   | 6.9                                       |
| Latin America and Caribbean  | 454.7                      | 207                       | 45.6                                   | 12.4                                      |
| Middle East and North Africa | 256.7                      | 14                        | 56.5                                   | 8.7                                       |
| South Asia                   | 1248.7                     | 380                       | 30.4                                   | 22.8                                      |
| Sub-Saharan Africa           | 590.0                      | 339                       | 57.4                                   | 20.4                                      |
| All Regions                  | 4510.5                     | 1165                      | 36.9                                   | 100.0                                     |

Source: Global Findex Database, 2017

### Contribution to Poverty Reduction

This is undoubtedly the most difficult and controversial issue. There seems to be different schools of thought on this. The industry proponents, including practitioners, have repeatedly cited microfinance as a powerful tool for poverty reduction. They continue this position. Another school of thought is of the opinion that microfinance has inherently limited capacity to make any significant dent in the poverty problem in general. A World Bank Group publication<sup>10</sup> argued that the most effective and proven path out of poverty is through access to more and better jobs. "(J)obs not only increase the earnings of the poor but are also transformative because efficiency increases as workers get better at what they do and as more productive jobs replace less productive ones."<sup>11</sup> However, microfinance has not created productive employment on any large scale.

Many researchers have provided supporting evidence on the central role of employment in poverty reduction. For example, Azevedo et al (2013)<sup>12</sup> pointed out that labor market factors contributed the most to poverty reduction in many countries including Peru, Nepal, Ghana, Brazil, Bangladesh and Thailand. "In the decade of 2000s most of the reduction in poverty in successful

<sup>10</sup> World Bank. 2013. World Bank Group Goals: End Extreme Poverty and Promote Shared Prosperity.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p.25.

<sup>12</sup> J. Azevedo et al. 2013. "Is labour income responsible for poverty reduction? A decomposition approach. (World Bank Policy Research Working Paper).

<sup>13</sup> These studies have been published in January 2015 edition of American Economic Journal: Applied Economics.

<sup>14</sup> See, World Bank Forum on Implications of Latest Research on Microcredit (27 February 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Banerjee et al. 2010. "The Miracle of Microfinance? Evidence from a Randomized Evaluation", Bureau for Research and Economic Analysis of Development (BREAD) Working Paper.278.

<sup>16</sup> Pomeranz, Dina D.2014. "The Promise of Microfinance and Women's Empowerment: What Does the Evidence Say?" Discussion Paper, Harvard Business School.

<sup>17</sup> Anand Rahul et al.2014. India: Defining and Explaining Inclusive Growth and Poverty Reduction. (IMF WP 14/63).

<sup>18</sup> World Bank. 2007. Global Monitoring Report 2007: Millennium Development Goals. p.42.

<sup>19</sup> ADB. 2004. Key Indicators 2004. p.33.

<sup>20</sup> Although global poverty has declined substantially over the last three decades, it is important to note that there were some 900 million people in extreme poverty in 2012, according to the World Bank's new poverty estimates based on \$1.90/a day yardstick. A more recent estimates indicated that the number may have come down to 702 million people in 2015.

countries across the globe was related to better labor market engagement in the form of more and better-paying jobs.” Based on studies<sup>13</sup> carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia, India, Mexico, Mongolia and Morocco, another group of researchers have pointed out that although microcredit can help people to expand business activities, it has not led to substantial improvements in household living standards or reduction in poverty. According to these studies, microcredit has produced only modestly positive effects but no transformative effects<sup>14</sup>. A large randomized study among about 6,850 households in Hyderabad, India showed that increased access to microcredit did not result in any significant impact on women’s empowerment or human development outcomes.<sup>15</sup> Dina Pomeranz, a faculty member at the Harvard Business School, also points out that “little evidence exists to support the claim that microfinance services offer additional benefits to female over male clients”<sup>16</sup>.

Drawing evidence from a range of countries as diverse as China, India, Vietnam, Malaysia and a number of others, many researchers have pointed out that in most countries economic growth has been the major driver of poverty reduction. A team of researchers from the International Monetary Fund<sup>17</sup> recently argued that “robust economic growth has been a major driver of poverty reduction and inclusiveness in India.” According to them, “more recent data suggests that between 2004/05 – 2011/12, poverty declined by 2.2 percentage points per year, which is about three times the pace of poverty reduction in the preceding decade.” This is the period with relatively high economic growth rates in India. Microfinance had little to do with these high growth rates. Similarly, high economic growth rates achieved by China for over two decades led to significant reduction in poverty. A World Bank study on China suggested that on average, 1% increase in GDP growth rate was associated with 1.45% fall in poverty for 1994-2004<sup>18</sup>. According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), in developing Asia each 1% of growth in the 1990s was associated with an almost 2% decline in poverty incidence on average.<sup>19</sup> Thus, high and consistent economic growth has been the major driver in poverty reduction across most countries<sup>20</sup>. Microfinance has contributed little to such economic growth.

A number of factors appear to have led to the limited impact of microcredit on poverty reduction. Most microcredit financed relatively less productive

activities and consumption. Credit for productive microenterprises has been limited. For example, according to the Microcredit Regulatory Authority of Bangladesh, the number of microenterprise loans were only 1.14 million in 2014. It is not known how many of these flowed into productive enterprises. This appears to have been the case in most other countries. In India, only about 5% of the MSMEs have access to commercial capital. In most countries, including India, MFIs did not make efforts to provide financial services to SMEs for a range of reasons, although SMEs are the backbone of most developing economies. As a result, microfinance

*The Findex data for China, India and Sri Lanka indicate a substantially high level of account ownership. The account ownership among the adult population belonging to the poorest 40% is also impressive in these countries.*

industry made little contribution to productive and better paying employment. MFIs also most often failed to provide demand-driven products and services to have a significant impact. This mismatch in the products and services provided by the industry has been a major contributory factor to limited impact. And, in most countries the industry outreach has been limited as argued earlier.

Poverty is often a result of many inter-locking disadvantages such as location, poor health, inadequate education and demographic factors. These different forms of disadvantages tend to reinforce each other making the path out of poverty through just microcredit extremely difficult for many. Poverty reduction requires more than just financial services and the poor demand more than microcredit to lift themselves out of poverty.

While microfinance have had no significant impact on poverty reduction (reducing the proportion of the poor), it appears that there has been a positive impact on the severity of poverty. Microfinance has the capability to have this effect and empirical evidence from most countries tend to support that it has reduced the severity of poverty (made poverty less painful).

## Conclusion

This brief article suggests that the microfinance industry has not been able to meet its goals; its achievements have fallen far short of the stated goals, particularly the twin and interrelated goals

<sup>18</sup> World Bank. 2007. Global Monitoring Report 2007: Millennium Development Goals. p.42.

<sup>19</sup> ADB. 2004. Key Indicators 2004, p.33.

<sup>20</sup> Although global poverty has declined substantially over the last three decades, it is important to note that there were some 900 million people in extreme poverty in 2012, according to the World Bank’s new poverty estimates based on \$1.90/a day yardstick. A more recent estimates indicated that the number may have come down to 702 million people in 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Adams Dale W. and R. Vogel. 2014. “Microfinance Approaching Middle-age”, Enterprise Development and Microfinance. Vol.25 No.2.



of substantial financial inclusion and poverty reduction. It was this state of affairs that led to the new paradigm of financial inclusion to gain globally a great deal of traction during the last decade within a very short period.

However, it is not possible to argue that microfinance industry growth has not had any positive impact on financial inclusion; the scale of its positive impact has been very small. The industry has also undoubtedly contributed to reduce the severity of poverty in many countries. Unfortunately this aspect of the industry's contribution has not been adequately and systematically documented and articulated. The positive impact on the severity of poverty has received scant attention because it has been overshadowed by the preoccupation of both practitioners and analysts on the impact on the reduction of the headcount of poverty.

The reflections outlined in this paper tend to suggest that the microfinance industry promoters and practitioners have to redefine its objectives and way forward particularly in the context of the dominant position that financial inclusion has gained among development policy priorities. As has been suggested by some authoritative scholars such as Dale Adams and Robert Vogel, the industry should adjust its objective to something more modest than poverty reduction, reducing the severity of poverty, for example, by providing sustained financial services to poor people<sup>21</sup> and small businesses. Such redefinition will enable the industry to carve out a credible and meaningful space for it self within the new paradigm of financial inclusion. It will also help the industry promoters and practitioners to think of how to link the industry with the rapidly evolving financial inclusion market in which new technology and a wide range of non-traditional players such as non-bank mobile financial service providers and fintechs shape the nature and speed of growth of financial products and services for the millions of financially excluded people and enterprises in the developing and emerging countries.

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### Udarawanna's Jokes Sugar Level

One day Udarawanna's wife noticed that he kept going to the kitchen and always touching the sugar bowl.

He was doing this every few minutes and writing them down.

The wife was curious and asked Udarawanna why he was doing that ?

Udarawanna replied " Darling the doctor told me to keep an eye on the sugar levels regularly".

So I am checking the sugar levels and noting them down !!

## Small and Mini States and the United Nations System

By Amb. Dayantha Laksiri Mendis, LLB, MPhil (Cantab)



**The states in the UN system can be classified into super powers, great powers, middle powers, small states and mini-states.**

*I*n a rapidly changing world, it is relevant to reflect on the position of small and mini states in the UN system, as the demise of the bipolar world and the liberalization of trade and integration of capital markets are likely to pose serious implications for small and mini states. It is therefore timely to formulate what policies and strategies are needed to improve the position of small states in the UN system.

In this article, I have taken an interdisciplinary approach. It takes into account issues relating to international law, relations, economics and diplomacy. At the very outset, it is pertinent to ask the question whether small and mini states can play an effective role in the UN system. The answer is an affirmative “yes”, but small and mini states need to be encouraged to act in their interest in regard to emerging global issues in the UN system.

### A definition of small and mini states

The states in the UN system can be classified into super powers, great powers, middle powers, small states and mini-states. Small states are defined as states with a population less than twenty million unless such a state is classified otherwise as a great power or middle power.

Small states must be distinguished from mini states which have a population less than two million. The mini states are also referred to as “very small”, “quasi” or “micro” states-. In this article, the terms “small states” and “mini states” are used not in a “pejorative” or “diminishing” sense but to illustrate their position in the UN system.

However, the definition of small and mini states is not comprehensive as it does not take into account important considerations such as the GNP, size, location, per capita income and the levels of development. Nonetheless, the above definition of small and mini-states by reference to population has been adopted by the international

organizations and text writers on international law and relations.

Despite the differences in size, natural resources, per capita income, human development index and gross national product (GNP), it is possible to treat small and mini states as a distinct community in the UN system although such states are not homogenous. In the last 30 years, the number of small and mini states has increased as a result of the decolonization after World War II and due to recent fragmentation of states as in former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

The vulnerability of small and mini states has been a hot topic at high level UN conferences and Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings. The vulnerability of small and mini states has been addressed with specific recommendations.

Small and mini states are weak states in terms of military strength. These states are unable to defend themselves from an external aggressor. They have to rely on the UN system or regional or international powers in such situations. Sometimes, the position can be very serious if the regional power takes a position somewhat detrimental to their interests. (See: Indian Interventions in Sri Lanka in 1986, US Intervention in Grenada in 1983 and in Panama in 1991).

In this context, small and mini states will have to rely heavily on international law and the UN system to protect their position in the international community. Hence, the UN system will remain their “best friend” in the international community.

### UN system and small states

At the time the Charter of the United Nations was signed in San Francisco on 23rd June 1945, only a few small states participated in the drafting process of the UN Charter. Since then, the number of small and mini states in the international community has exploded exponentially.

The UN system is multifaceted. It consists of the General Assembly, Security Council, International Court of Justice, UN Secretariat and numerous specialized agencies, subsidiary organs and regimes. This UN system initiates treaties, resolutions, policies, studies, projects and programmes which can be beneficial to small and mini states.

The UN system has become the most important organization capable of providing peace, security and stability for small and mini states in the international community. Some of the projects and programs have eradicated diseases such as

small pox, leprosy, etc. and established various programs and projects to protect them sea-level rise and natural disasters. One can therefore argue that if the UN system did not exist, the world would have plunged into anarchy at the end of the Cold War and the plight of small and mini states would have been precarious.

However, the future of small and mini states in the UN system is bleak for the following reasons. Globalization and liberalization of trade pose serious problems. Under President Trump, it is likely that United States may drift out of the UN system through isolationist policies and thereby further exacerbate the UN financial crisis to the detriment of small and mini states. The ability of the Bretton Woods institutions to deal with natural disasters or financial crises in small and mini states will be limited unless funds are provided by developed countries.

The major problems and issues facing small and mini states in the UN system relate to security, participation, implementation of treaties and non-treaty instruments and enhancing the development process. Hence, it is useful to deal with them in a brief manner.

#### (a) Security

In relation to national security of small and mini states, the term “security” cannot be confined only to problems and challenges pertaining to territorial integrity, sovereignty or aggression from predator states. This broad meaning should also encompass counter-terrorism measures, ethnic conflicts, human rights violations, abject poverty, unemployment, political and financial stability and conservation and environment protection measures.

In relation to international security, small and mini states need to carefully “bandwagon” or “balance” their alliances and formulate a foreign policy what Bjorn Moller calls a Non-Offensive Defence (NOD) Strategy. It means maintenance of friendly relations primarily with the neighboring states and also with other powerful states in the international community. This means that it is necessary to strike a delicate diplomatic balance with all countries in the international community. It is of paramount importance to Sri Lanka at this moment as she is emerging as a financial and maritime hub in the Indian Ocean.

#### (b) Participation of Small and Mini States in the UN System

The effective participation of small and mini states in the UN system is important to articulate their position on major issues affecting them. It is an expensive but necessary requirement for small and mini states.

The ratification of UN treaties relevant to small and mini states and payment of UN contributions on time to the UN and its Specialized Agencies must be given high priority. Once a treaty is ratified by Sri Lanka, it must be given effect by way of implementing legislation which can adopt different legislative techniques. (See: *The Legislative Transformation of Treaties*, D. L. Mendis, Oxford University Press). Ideally, implementing legislation must be prepared before ratification. In fact, the controversy relating to the Singarasa Case (2006) pertains to non-implementation of the ICCPR 1976 and the Optional Protocol I. Likewise, Sri Lanka has not given full legislative effect to some important UN treaties.

The submission of reports on the implementation of treaties and non-treaty instruments is an important international obligation to which small and mini states have become state parties. It is a necessary requirement to enhance their effective participation. In regard to non-treaty instruments such as Resolutions of international organizations which are of a binding nature, it is important for small and mini states to submit constitutional considerations and the relevant provisions of the VCLT 1969 if they are unable to implement them. (See: Geneva Resolution 30/1).

#### (c) UN Development Assistance

The small and mini states need UN assistance for various developmental projects and programs in the form of loans, grants or technical expertise due to lack of resources, expertise, capital and technology. In the use of such assistance, the small and mini states must not be afflicted by “macro state emulation syndrome”. It can be expensive and unproductive. Unfortunately, Sri Lanka appears to be afflicted by this syndrome.

Bretton Woods Institutions provide loans for development and balance of payment difficulties. These loans and grants subject to various conditions which must be complied in order obtain future assistance. Some of these conditions have to be studied very carefully before seeking such financial assistance.

UNDP is a friendly partner in the development process. Small and mini states need to formulate an effective Country Cooperation Framework (CCF) with local participation to achieve sustainable development goals. This new trend augurs well for small and mini states.

#### Conclusions and Recommendations

Small and mini states have gone a long way since the UN Charter was signed at the San Francisco Conference (1945). The democratization of inter-state relations in the UN system has made it possible for small and mini states to participate and voice their concerns in all UN conferences and meetings. This indeed is a great achievement of the UN in the second half of the 20th century.



This does not mean that power politics in the UN system has taken a back seat and the theory of realism propounded by Hans Morgantheau has faded away. Small and mini states have to be mindful of the power structures in the UN system and use their voting strength in a responsible manner, so that small and mini states are treated fairly in the UN system.

A few recommendations are set out below to enhance the policies and strategies of small and mini states in the UN system –

(1) Small and mini states must establish a distinct community in the UN system similar to that of the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS).

(2) Small and mini states should strive to appoint talented persons who have a sound knowledge of the UN system to multilateral diplomatic postings.

(3) Small and mini states should determine the UN treaties to which they should become a state party after considering the costs/benefit analysis in consultation with expert advice.

(4) Small and mini states must be treated fairly and in a non-discriminatory manner in regard to implementation of UN treaty standards and non-treaty instruments such as Resolutions of the UN Human Rights Council, IMO Resolutions, Security Council Resolutions, etc.

It must be noted that small and mini states have provided consensus-builders, secretaries-general, directors-general, diplomats, international civil servants of high calibre and repute to the UN system. In Sri Lanka, both career and non-career diplomats have contributed immensely to the UN system.

It must also be noted that some small and mini states have met the challenge of globalization and liberalization of trade by initiating and implementing effective and efficient legislation and by establishing national institutions to deal with challenges and problems relating to globalization and global governance in the 21st century.

In this context, John Nesbitt, in his book titled **The Global Paradox**, has argued very convincingly that “the bigger the world economy, more powerful will be its smallest players” to dispel some of the fears relating to the vulnerability of small and mini states in the 21st century.

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## Some possible Strategies for Sustainable Climate Smart Agriculture

By Ranjit Senevirathna

- (1) External Environment by Healing our Soil for Water Absorption, Food Security and Improved Air Quality through Agro-forestry
- (2) Internal Environment – our bodies and its Biome
- (3) Attitudinal change in favour of Self-reliance, sharing and caring and minimising Waste.

Climate Change is here to stay - according to the Meteorological Dept. spokes-person at a recent Seminar on Climate Change. It would also have been noticed that there are much less insects – very little if any Christmas Flies (Meru) in December, Murunga trees not covered by caterpillars during the season etc. In some countries there is an 80% drop in insect populations and some scientists are calling this “The first wave of extinction”. Who is next?

King Parakramabahu the Great of Sri Lanka, famous for what he said “Let not one drop of water flow to the sea without serving the people”. is also famous for constructing the largest man-made lake in the world – the Parakrama Samudraya, part of a system of Wewas “tanks” (man-made lakes) that filled up during the rainy season and provided water during the dry season in the ancient rice-growing areas of the country, the plains below the central mountains, extending from the north to the south. That is why Sri Lanka came to be known as “The Hydraulic Civilization”. This system of lakes also took advantage of both the South West and North East Monsoons to have two harvests and two fruiting seasons.

There were no major waterways or canals that brought water to these tanks – most of the water just seeped through springs (ulpath). To make this possible, the rain that fell must have been completely absorbed into the soil, because the mulch and top soil acts like a sponge, so that the earth itself (the aquifers) were the main reservoir of rain water. The water, while percolating through the soil, absorbed minerals and other nutrients from clays, “kabuks” (hard clays), rocks, etc. and then seeped into the “tanks” and lakes too, filling them with mineral-rich water. – no erosive water flows, especially down the hills that could loosen rocks and therefore there were little or no landslides. The excess water in the hills would have also bubbled out of the soil to form streams that flowed into rivers, so that the rivers too, must have been clear and mineral rich, not what they are today, a brown silt-laden chemical “soup” made up of erosive surface water that removes precious top soil and worse still, collects nasty agro-chemicals

in soil and chemicals in household waste and rubbish dumps from processed food, toiletries, medicines and micro-plastic dust lying on today’s hard, concrete-like soil surfaces.

This water absorption must have happened because the countryside was covered by the mulch of leaves and twigs that naturally forms to cover the soil when they fall from trees. This mulch was then converted to top soil (compost) by worms and other soil creatures – something now seen only in our forests. This is because wherever people live today, the ground is swept “neat and clean” - the soil made hard and smooth – to look perhaps like the concrete courtyards of the rich. Our farmlands too are usually tilled and dug up to put in fertilizers, both chemical and organic.

Further, during the day, the mulch acts as an insulating blanket minimizing water evaporation so that only the top layer dries out. At night the mulch absorbs moisture from the night air, leaving the soil beneath soft and moist, except during prolonged droughts when the soil beneath could dry out.

Thus it can be assumed that the whole land was protected by this “skin” of top soil and mulch, so that all the rain that fell would have collected in the soil and then gradually seeped into the tanks - **the very Foundational Principle of the Hydraulic Civilization.**

According to a recent news item, Sri Lanka was the first country in the world to develop such a smart rain-water harvesting technology, in these ancient rice-growing areas, now called the “Dry Zones” of the country. Could we copy this system as a smart way of overcoming climate change problems we now face – floods and prolonged droughts?

*Note: The writer has made his garden in Colombo (Kollupitiya) a “Heal the soil” Forest Garden as above and achieved similar soil benefits, as well as harvests of forest-type fruits and vegetables.*

People who did chena or forest cultivation in those days must have cleared a few trees to have more sunlight and any unwanted plants and weeds would have been easily pulled out, because they are not deep-rooted when they grow in mulch.

In addition, the present day concern over Dengue mosquito breeding sites would be much less of a problem, as water cannot collect in pools, if it is absorbed by mulch and top soil.

Unfortunately when the British Colonials came they had no clue about tropical agriculture. They

just cleared the land for coffee and then tea. and all the top soil was washed away down the rivers and to the sea.. (King Parakramabahu must have been in tears). Even today soil is being washed away and so rivers are brown with soil and silt. (30% rain-water lost to the sea, recent estimate).

With no top soil they were forced to use chemical agriculture inputs - fertilizers and measures to prevent weeds competing for the added fertilizer. To prevent weeds, VP (vegetatively propagated) teas planted close together to block out sunlight was introduced and later herbicides & Glyphosate.

We also justify chemicals for rice and other foods as it increases productivity. But if this food is making people sick (35% diabetic – Health Ministry) and thousands dying of CKDu, then obviously chemical agriculture has failed, because it is now shortening life span and killing us – the people.

The only way out is to go back to what our ancient kings did, and to do this we need to build up the top soil by spreading mulch on every inch of exposed soil through-out Sri Lanka. **Burning of leaves, branches and trees should be declared a crime against life and civilization - which it obviously is, because soil is the BASIS of all LIFE.**

They have already started doing this in the USA – calling it “Regenerative Agriculture” - watch the attached video “Back to Eden” Organic Gardening Film

This strategy is obviously not a quick fix. But the sooner it is implemented the better, given the high temperatures and severe floods that are now occurring world wide.. In order to speed up the process, it would be necessary to import truck-mounted Chipping machines (used in the USA and Australia), and deploy them in every Municipality and Pradeshiya Sabha. We could even import second hand machines, which could be repaired and then turned out locally (similar to “Thanthri Trailers” turning out trailers locally). Then any person with leaves, cut branches or trees to get rid of, needs only to call the local body and these Truck-mounted machines would reduce them to chips, load them into “Tipper trucks” and deliver them to farms and gardens that need them.

Those of us who have started “Regenerative or Heal the Soil Gardening” in Colombo, have found that this top soil “skin” can be developed in less than a year. To speed up the process it is necessary to cut up the leaves and stems, especially, large leaves which are unsightly and could collect water. “Chipping machines to cut up leaves are available from “Jinasena & Co.” and “Udaya Machinery” in Kandy, but these are rather expensive.

Perhaps a simpler and cheaper leaf and small stem cutting machine could be made using a bucket or plastic bin (smaller diameter base with a wider mouth). A cover could be made with a central hole having a bearing so that a rod with kitchen-blender type cutting blades, could be inserted through the hole in the cover and be powered using a small portable hand drilling machine. The leaves etc. in the bin could then be cut up by moving the drill up and down.

Once the soil is re-built, it is amazing to see the birds and butterflies and all sorts of insect life that appear as if by magic. Many people who now visit these gardens are surprised at the “mattress-like” feel of the mulch on the soil when they walk on it. The soil below the mulch is soft and black. It is also moist because the mulch is like a blanket which dries out in the noon day sun, but absorbs water during the night. No digging tools are needed, just a rake to spread the mulch.

It has also been found by researchers that steel and iron tools should never be used in microbe and worm-laden top soil because it has a negative impact (like a fire). In fact the ancient Egyptians used copper and wood as farming tools – did they know something we don’t?

Further, growing plants in this mulch covered soil is amazing. Trees give more fruit. Custard apple (veli Aattha) has more than doubled its production, the local yam “Engili Ala” grown in this soft soil was about 3 times the size of the yams grown in normal soil, as sold by farmers at the “Saturday Good Market” Fair at the Race Course. This is because the soft soil allows root vegetables like yams to grow to their full extent, unhampered by hard soil that is normally found today.

**The Second strategy for “Climate Smart” agriculture is to change the food we eat.**

One of the causes of forest degradation is due to poverty, forcing people to use forest resources for food. According to the Meteorological Department, prolonged droughts and excessive rains and floods would not reduce, but could probably increase.

If so, then it makes sense to change the food we eat from water-dependant rice and vegetables that are “**Seasonals**” (plants that need re-planting after harvesting) to “**Perennials**” (plants that are harvested continuously) such as tree-based foods (Jak, Bread Fruit), root tubers (what is required is harvested and the rest continues to grow) Manioc, Sweet Potato, Engili ala, Rathu Ala Kiri Ala, Innala etc. and vegetables from trees (Murunga, Cheena batu, Kathuru Murunga, even tender leaves of Ambarella, Sour Sop/Anodha Aattha, etc.) and weed-type vegetables (Gotu Kola, Nivithi,



Mukunuwenna, Sarana, Thampala, etc. These are so abundant and so easy to grow that forest degradation could perhaps be minimised.

To prevent **Food Waste**, we need to serve food by **“Portion Size”** (minimizes waste) and not the customary **“Buffet Style”** (at least one portion wasted to prevent food from running out)

**The third strategy to ensure sustainability for “Climate Smart” agriculture is Agro-forestry.** To ensure sustainability, trees are needed to supply the required mulch as our forests have been drastically reduced by population pressures. Thus population increases limit the possibility of increasing forest cover, but Agro-forestry and changing our food consumption to **perennial foods** would be a Climate-smart option. Agro-forest tree cover would also help decrease air pollution through carbon dioxide absorption, increase oxygenation of the air for better health and make the atmosphere cooler by providing shade and reducing ground or surface heating.

**Selective agro-forestry** means growing trees according to needs - for shade, food production (fruits, leaves, nuts) and trees that have light leaf cover such as Murunga, that would enable growing conventional vegetables, and “wild” plants, edible weeds and herbals (not modified by man and therefore still full of nutrients). Consuming such more natural foods ensures better nutrition and health as per the latest recommendation by Doctors and Researchers. Working with and consuming such “wild” varieties also increase the bio-diversity of our micro-biome (Microbes, Fungi and Viruses) that live on and in our bodies, protecting us and keeping us healthy – according to latest research.

Another productive use of agro-forestry is encouraging small holder farmers to grow trees for timber and in underutilized land too. Unproductive tea estates could also benefit with growing trees for timber, flowers for export etc. However this would require a revision of the present permit system for transport of timber to allow easier access to saw-mills by small holders. There would also be a need for more saw-mills, timber treatment plants and on-site factories for wood products.

Therefore it would be a wise move to establish these climate-smart strategies in every village, around towns and cities and in gardens, as well as in unproductive land and tea estates. Even high-rise buildings could be designed to have large balconies where trees and plants for food could be grown and if provided with exit windows, the balconies would allow oxygenated air to flow through the rooms while helping remove stale air, rather than using air conditioners which only cool re-circulated air polluted by vapours from paint, furnishings, carpet finishes, mold from food

particles, damp surfaces, pet and human dandruff, etc.

Even our roads could be harnessed to reduce air pollution and increase oxygen production. Both sides of every road and all central divides should be planted with deep-rooted trees (that would not damage road surfaces) and with wide spreading branches, but not too tall, to provide shade and lessen road surface heat. This would also need “Tree Surgeons” and teams trained to care for the trees, collect leaves and trimmed branches for conversion into chips for mulching at locations equipped with Chipping Machines and perhaps truck-mounted machines able to go to where trees have fallen, to reduce them to chips and mulch on location.

Other open public areas in towns such as Colombo City could be rented to people/farmers by fencing off designated areas with trees that provide food and mulch (Murunga, Glyceridia, Ipil Ipil) so that they could be planted with perennials (for leaves - Murunga, Katuru Murunga, Cheena batu, etc. fruits - Guava, Soursop Custard Apple etc.) and edible weeds and tubers).

**Thus “Healing the Soil” Agriculture (or Rain-forest Agriculture) would not only help the “Greening” of Sri Lanka – it would make our country a “Forested Sri Lanka” with food self sufficiency and food security and as a bonus, a healthy population.**

**To summarize:** a “Climate Smart” way to overcome Climate Change, – would be to heal our soil with a covering of water-absorbing mulch and growing “ancient or heirloom” and “wild” varieties that are robust and thrive in forest conditions, rather than varieties “improved” for bigger size and increased productivity, but are often less nutritious and need more care, chemical fertilizers etc. But better still, to change the food we eat, to perhaps a smarter choice – food from Perennials – food from trees Jak, Bread Fruit and raw green leaf vegetables and fruits that Doctors now recommend for good health, by following these smart strategies:

- 1) For Agro-forestry or “Greening” the land with trees, it is essential to “Heal the soil” first, to build top soil and water retention so as to maximize harvests and healthy, luxurious growth,
- 2) Minimize evaporation by pruning (also increases fruit production and prunings make mulch)
- 3) Maintaining a mulch covering of a minimum 4-inches to build up top soil and soil biota.
- 4) To make this mulch by small scale farmers

and households we will need a mini-chipping machine using a Portable Power (battery powered) drill with “Blender-type” cutting blades, with the drive shaft fitted through a hole in the cover of a conical bucket (bottom smaller than the mouth) as those made by Jinasena & Co and Udaya Machinery Co., Kandy are for large farms. We may also be able to import second hand truck-mounted Chipping Machines (used in the USA and Australia) and later make them in Sri Lanka (like “Thanthri Trailers” are now made in Sri Lanka). These truck-mounted chipping machines could be deployed in every city and Pradeshiya Sabha to make sure leaves that are collected and trees and branches are converted into mulch and taken by “Dump Trucks” to farms.

5) Rain water harvesting and making sure all rain-water goes into the ground, following the advice of King Parakrama Bahu, the Great, by maintaining a mulch cover all over our land.

6) Making a wet-land in the lowest area of the garden or farm, by having a pond with a marsh around it or a flood plain area around the pond that automatically increases the ponds surface area to accommodate excess water.

7) Making use of unwanted weeds and grasses by using them to make “Compost Tea” by putting them into a large bucket or plastic waste-bin and letting them ferment. This in fact is a sort of “Artificial Cow” because grass fermented by bacteria becomes cow dung. Likewise in a few days, the weeds/water mix produces a rich brown “Compost Tea” and later becomes like dung with the characteristic smell and dark green texture of dung..

A “water tap”. fitted to the lower end of the waste bin would make it easy to draw out the “Compost Tea” which would need to be diluted before applying it to the plants.

*(Note: Thorns in plants and cacti can be harmlessly dissolved).*

8) Weeds could also be fed to chickens who are also living pest controllers (Tip: have movable enclosures, perhaps with wheels, to move the chickens where needed to do their job)

9) **Climate-Smart Food Alternatives** – Instead of Seasonal foods that require seasonal planting and harvesting (rice, conventional vegetables), eat **Perennials** (continuous harvesting once planted) such as Jak (40% presently wasted), Bread Fruit, Yams (more than 20 varieties, and Engili Ala even produces potato-like ala from the vine), and as vegetables leaves of Moringa, Cheena batu, Ambarella, Sour Sop etc. and weed-type leaves Gotu kola, Mukunuwenna,

Gendha, Aguna etc. (that grow continuously and without the need for any care) and fruits like Jak, Coconut, Bananas, Papaya and especially small berries that are more nutrient-dense and therefore good for health – Nelli, Lovi, Uguressa..

*Note – raw leaves need to be chopped fine (mallums, salads) or blended into “smoothies” for better absorption of nutrients. Therefore locally made blenders should be encouraged.*

10) Making “worm smoothies” with our food and kitchen waste by adding a little water and blending the mix with a Kitchen Blender or the portable hand drill powered leaf chipping machine mentioned above. Dig a small hole about 10-inches deep, pour the blended mix in and cover with soil because “worm smoothies” become compost in about 3 days, unlike using composting dust-bins.

Instead of digging a hole daily, make permanent “holes” in different locations for use in rotation, by putting in 500 gram Powdered Milk metal tins (rats may chew through plastic) into the holes, after making half inch access holes for the worms around the sides and bottom of the tins. Use if necessary, an iron rod to make deeper holes in the soil through the bottom holes to allow the “Worm Smoothie” sink deeper to attract earth worms to the feast. Use smaller tins in the pots of food plants in balconies of high rise buildings.

(11) Pest Control – In a forest garden, there is no mono cropping as different plants are grown next to each other with insect repelling plants like Margosa Holy Basil and other strong scented plants in between. This is very effective against invasive species like the Sena Caterpillar, Piti Makuna etc. as they are prevented from forming large concentrations. In addition, just as leopards prey on leaf eating deer, there are insects that prey on pest insects, and this naturally happens in a Forest Garden, because there is a balance of insect fauna. But now there are invasive species that have no natural predators and therefore there is a need for natural pest control methods. *Margosa/Neem (Khomba)* seeds soaked in water in a container or concrete structure for about two weeks forms a very strong organic or bio-insecticide. It needs to be diluted before use. Margosa Oil mixed with soft soap or non-scented bar soap (to make the oil dissolve or mix in water) is another option. Fresh cow-dung dissolved in water and “dusted” on plants and fruit is another natural method as insects do not like leaves contaminated with dung and monkeys too dislike to eat fruit contaminated with dung. Forest conditions are also favourable to insect-eating birds like the Drongo, now sadly lacking in numbers due perhaps to the use of insecticides which not only reduced their food source, but the toxins on the insects may have killed them.

(12) Post-Harvest loss – by processing excess production into Pickles (with natural vinegar) and by Fermentation (similar to Korean Kim Chee/German Sauerkraut with vegetables) and through setting up ‘Cold-Rooms’ (with different temperatures for different products) – similar to “Thrive Market” in the USA. This could also be done by having a “PPP” (Public Private Partnership) of the Government and the SuperMarkets.

Note - Composting dust-bins do not work in town areas because it is difficult to remember to intersperse kitchen and food waste with dry leaves. Bio-gas from Kitchen Waste Units (ARPICO) work well, producing both gas and compost, but they are expensive.

**Note: Tea estates could benefit by crop diversification, imitating a forest, by interspersing Tea with Moringa (Murunga) and Holy Basil (Tholasi) – which could use the same factory facilities for processing into Moringa Powder and Tulsi Tea. In addition, the workers and villagers could be made stakeholders of the estates by encouraging them to plant edible weeds and plants around the Tea, (as well as Murunga and Tulsi) as food for themselves and for sale.**

Recent examples of such novel teas – Murunga Tea “Moriceylon” by eTosh Global (Pvt) Ltd.

Holy Basil Tea by Possible Greens (Pte) Ltd., Killinochchi.

Another Option: making the Plantation workers part-owners of the property, by providing them with “Worker Shares” (that are not saleable for a period of say 10 years) as part of a special incentive bonus that grows with the prosperity of the company/property.

**Note. Cattle farms require large areas for grass – which may be difficult with climate change.**

A better option perhaps would be goat farming for goat milk, goat cheese etc. This also coincides with new research that dairy products could cause health issues and its replacement with goat milk as a healthier option..

#### Update – Nov 2018

There is apparently an ancient heirloom rice variety called “**Svayangjaatha Hala**” that has no “Pottha” and grows in normal soil. The writer was told the seeds are available in a well-known shop/house in the village of Vatugedara, Ambalangoda. In addition, it is supposed to be good for Diabetes and other illnesses.

As a “Climate Smart” measure,, perhaps this is the type of rice that we should be growing as it does not require the large amounts of water required in a traditional paddy field and in addition, does not need milling to remove the husk as it has no “pottha”.

As a bonus it could help heal the diabetes epidemic (35% of Sri Lankans are Diabetic -according to the Ministry of Health in 2017)

**Note – Researchers now find that the husk (or pottha) in seed grains (wheat, rice, oats etc. contain plant Lectins (bio-poisons) that these plants produce to protect its seeds. But “Svayangjaatha Hala” like Millet and Sorghum does not have husks and therefore do not have plant Lectins.**

*Ranjit Senani Seneviratne*

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Professional Associations: Chartered Engineer (CE), F.I.MarEST, MRINA, Date Joined UN: FAO Consultant 05.08,1974 -,1978 (Malaysia, Singapore, Kuwait, Rome HQ, Nigeria, Malta), FAO HQ. 01/1979 Assist. Fleet Manager 01/1991-1998 Project Operations Officer, Current Responsibilities: Member, Board of Management Gami Seva Sevana, Galaha., Co-Director, Amuthu Association, Colombo*





## HOW AFICS SRI LANKA WAS BORN AND ITS BEGINNINGS



A letter dated 1 June 1992 had been sent to Secretary-General FAFICS, Geneva by Convenor Mr. Earle Samarasinghe, saying that he is working on a possibility of forming an Association of Former International Civil Servants and starting a Roster of officials who want to apply for membership and then have an inaugural meeting at which the Constitution and Rules to be discussed. Also mentioning that Dr. Gamini Corea, former General-Secretary of UNCTAD, was keenly interested and has offered his support. The letter further requested the help of the Federation to assist in sending materials to guide the formulation of the Constitution and Rules and to keep the new association on their mailing list to receive relevant materials for use by members.

At that moment, only 18 Country Member Associations (two from India) were affiliated to FAFICS.

The reply dated 15 June 1992 from Mr. Aamir Alim states that the Executive Secretary, Ms. Angela Butler has sent constitutions of some member associations to help draft “your own”. The letter also mentioned that the FAFICS Council Meeting in Montreal is to adopt guidelines for FAFICS membership. The proposals submitted stressed the following points:

an association should have aims and purposes in harmony with those of FAFICS;

the association should be open to all former officials of the UN system;

it should be independent;

it should not be established where a member association already exists;

it should be capable of meeting its financial obligations; and

it should be of a viable size, (say a minimum of 50 members).

The letter concluded by saying “ There is, of course, was no obligation to join the Federation and I’d like to assure you that even if you don’t, you will have our full cooperation and help”.

A letter dated 17 July 1992, following the FAFICS Council Meeting in Montreal says that the FAFICS membership had increased to 14 and that Sri Lanka and other 8 associations are to join sometime later.

Two constitutions, one of AAFI/AFICS, Geneva and one from FFOA (Former FAO and WFP Staff), Rome, in the English language were available at hand was sent by letter dated 28 July 1992 and a list of Member Associations for us to contact one or the other.

The FAFICS Council at its deliberations at the Montreal meeting had also discussed doing projects in a developing country but decided against it, as it was too cumbersome but decided to encourage member associations to help projects of their own choosing, as some are already doing.

The Minutes of the inaugural meeting held on 17 December 1992, reveals that 32 former members of the International civil service of United Nations system, the Specialized Agencies, World Bank, IMF, ADB, GATT and ITC and including filed staff were invited to the inaugural meeting.

Dr. Gamini Corea was asked to take the Chair by the Convenors Earle Samarasinghe and Upali de Silva.

Dr. Corea outlined the objectives of the Association, in the course of a short address, which he said: extended beyond the holding of meetings and dinners to a role in social and economic development of the country”. As a first step, the creation of a database of the expertise available among the membership would make it possible to identify the fields in which the Association could assist national and international agencies involved in development projects in Sri Lanka through the provisions of experts and advice from its membership.

Mr. Samarasinghe speaking next stated that the identification of a role for the Association in national development seemed to be unique for AFICS as the other Associations seemed to give more emphasis to protection of their pensions and

privileges.

Dr. Gamini Corea and Mr. Earle Samarasinghe were elected as Chairman and Secretary pro-tem for the meeting.

After the adoption of the Agenda, the discussion was focused towards the draft Articles of Association. It had been decided to have a General Committee of 15 members with a President, 2 Vice-Presidents, Secretary-General, Treasurer and ten (10) committee members. The assembly also amended the articles regarding former UN and other international organization's General Service staff to be eligible for ordinary membership. Modifications were also made to include ordinary membership to former staff of Commonwealth Secretariat and other multilateral organizations. Surviving spouse of a member of the association who was receiving a pension from UNJSPF or any other organization was also eligible for ordinary membership. It also decides to that twenty (20) member's present was to constitute a quorum for meetings.

Further, during the meeting, the Articles of Association was approved with the above amendments and the following Office-Bearers elected for 1993 :

Dr. Gamini Corea - President

Mr. Earle Samarasinghe - Secretary-General

Mr. Upali de Silva - Treasurer

and rest of the Office Bearers.

Press Releases were published in Ceylon Daily News, Island Daily Mirror and other News Papers highlighting the aims and objectives and the elected Office Bearers.

The Secretary-General, AFICS Sri Lanka sent to FAFICS Geneva the approved Articles of Association for comments if any. It also informed of the additional objective, i.e; establish a database of membership's expertise for use nationally and internationally.

The Secretary-General also inquired from FAFICS of former staff of other organizations, other than UN and it's specialized agencies, like ADB and Commonwealth Secretariat, being enrolled would affect future relations with FAFICS and requested their comments on it.

At the 1st General Assembly (24/1/1994) the

General Committee was re-elected with four new committee members, vacancies had not been filled until then. Ms. Vijitha de Silva was appointed Social Secretary.

The meeting discussed proposals by Secretary-General to introduce a Scholarship scheme for University Students in the fields of Political Science, International Relations and or International Law but due to non-availability of funds, it was postponed to be taken when donations could be worked out.

The assembly had positively reacted to a suggestion to appraise organizations and individuals like the Election Commissioner, and the availability of AFICS members to be monitors in UN nations or peacekeeping operations.

The Association at its General Committee meeting held on 7 September 1994 decided to formally apply for membership to FAFICS and a letter to this effect was sent on 21 Sept 1994 inquiring about formalities and subscriptions that need to be paid.

AFICS Sri Lanka celebrated UN Day on Monday 24 October 1994 at the Eighty Club, 25 Independence Avenue, Colombo 7, with Mr. Laxman Kadirgamar, Minister of Foreign Affairs and a Former International Civil Servant himself has the Guest of Honour.

The Association had monthly meetings to concentrate on the growth of the association and to recruit new members to strengthen as required by the Federation for membership.

AFICSSri Lanka formerly became a full member of FAFICS in 1996.



## Summary of Events / Seminars / Lectures conducted by AFICS Sri Lanka

|    | <b>Date</b>                    | <b>Event</b>                                                                                           | <b>Venue</b>                                                                 | <b>Remarks</b>                                                                                                                               |
|----|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | 18 <sup>th</sup> February 2008 | Establishment of the Scholarship Programme                                                             | University of Colombo Sri Lanka                                              | Students on International Relations                                                                                                          |
| 2  | 5 July 2008                    | Annual Excursion Saturday 5th to Monday 7th                                                            | To Hunas Falls, Elkaduwa, and wonderful vistas of misty and majestic forests | Group enjoyed good hotel facility, good food , sing song, brainteaser games and treks through towering trees and glittering falls            |
| 3  | 4 Dec. 2008                    | Forum-Fellowship meeting                                                                               | Royal Ceylon Golf Club,                                                      | A DVD presentation on “Sweet Misery”                                                                                                         |
| 4  | 22 April 2009                  | Second Forum - Fellowship                                                                              | Royal Ceylon Golf Club,                                                      | A DVD Presentation on Childhood Vaccinations Mandatory or by informed choice”                                                                |
| 5  | 19 Mar.2010                    | Musical Evening                                                                                        | Royal Ceylon Golf Club,Colombo                                               | Musical Evening with George Anthony Michael with guests artists Ms. Franzika Meyer from Switzerland and Ms. Chethna, and Clifton Gunawardena |
| 6  | 22 April.2010                  | 17th Annual General Meeting                                                                            | Royal Ceylon Golf Club,Colombo                                               | AFICS participants attended                                                                                                                  |
| 7  | October 2010                   | Excursion to Lunugama                                                                                  | Lunugama Estate, Hamurugala, Dedduwa                                         | Excursion went off well except for the bad weather but with sumptuous lunch from fresh garden products.                                      |
| 8  | 25 April. 2011                 | 18th Annual General Meeting                                                                            | Royal Ceylon Golf Club, Colombo                                              | AFICS participants attended                                                                                                                  |
| 9  | 2011                           | Donation of the Scholarship to University of Colombo                                                   | University of Colombo                                                        | Scholarships continued                                                                                                                       |
| 10 | 3 April 2012                   | 19th Annual General Assembly                                                                           | Royal Colombo, Golf Club                                                     | New Committee Elected                                                                                                                        |
| 11 | 9 May 2012                     | AFICS Sri Lanka informed the FAFICS New Committee Members                                              | -                                                                            | By e-mail of 9 May 2012                                                                                                                      |
| 12 | 5 Oct 2012                     | 1st visit to Nagaswatta Community Center by AFICS Committee members with Dr. Kariyawasam CMOH, Colombo | Nagaswatta Community Center, Kirullapone                                     | AFICS Members participated                                                                                                                   |
| 13 | 30 Nov 2012                    | AFICS SL web site opened with the tremendous efforts from the President                                | www.afics.lk                                                                 | However, it has not been active for a long time                                                                                              |
| 14 | 6 Dec 2012                     | UN Commemorative & Christmas Dinner                                                                    | “80 Club” Colombo 7                                                          | AFICS Members participated                                                                                                                   |



|    |                    |                                                                                                                        |                                          |                                                                                   |
|----|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 15 | 10 Dec 2012        | Cash donations made by AFICS members handed over for Nagaswatta X' Mas party                                           | Nagaswatta Community Center, Kirullapone | AFICS Members participated                                                        |
| 16 | 3 March 2013       | AFICS members participated in the Medical Health Camp, with Havelock Town Lions Club at Nagaswatta                     | Nagaswatta Community Center, Kirullapone | AFICS Members participated                                                        |
| 17 | 4th April 2013     | 20th General Assembly of AFICS (SL)                                                                                    | Trillium Residences Club House           | Election of office bearers for 2013-2014                                          |
| 18 | 8 April 2013       | Library Books handed over to Nagaswatta Community Center Library                                                       | Nagaswatta Community Center, Kirullapone | Books donated by the AFICS Sri Lanka Members                                      |
| 19 | 18 April 2013      | Financial contributions made by AFICS for Nagaswatta Children's' Sinhala - Hindu New Year Celebrations                 | Nagaswatta Community Center, Kirullapone | AFICS Members participated                                                        |
| 20 | 12 June 2013       | AFICS (SL) initiated Dengue prevention program for Nagaswatta residents                                                | Nagaswatta Community Center, Kirullapone | Attended by Dr. Kariyawasam CMO CMC, Palitha Jayasundera, PHI, Kirullapone Police |
| 21 | 18 June 2013       | Dengue prevention program Meeting with Community members of Nagaswatta area                                            | Nagaswatta Community Center, Kirullapone | Distributed booklets on Dengue prevention methods                                 |
| 22 | 8 Aug 2013         | Donation of Rs 15,000/- received for Nagaswatta Project from "Israeli Fellowship Sri Lanka"                            | Nagaswatta Community Center, Kirullapone | Letter of thanks sent to Ms. Tikiri Rambukwella of "Israeli Fellowship Sri Lanka" |
| 23 | 21 Aug 2013        | Talk by Mr. H S Palihakkara UN Permanent Representative on "Post Conflict Challenges and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka". | SAHANAYA, Kithulwatta Road, Borella      | Well attended by AFICS members & invitees.                                        |
| 24 | 16 to 18 Sept 2013 | Annual Trip by AFICS members to Kukuleganga                                                                            | Kukuleganga Resort                       | 20 members/guests participated                                                    |
| 25 | 1 Oct 2013         | Nagaswatte Worlds Childrens Day                                                                                        | Nagaswatta Community Center, Kirullapone | Attended by President AFICS (SL)                                                  |
| 26 | 16 Nov 2013        | Visit of Her Excellency The Duchess to Nagaswatta                                                                      | Nagaswatta Community Center, Kirullapone | Attended by President and Additional Secretary-General of AFICS                   |
| 27 | 28 Nov 2013        | UN Commemorative & Christmas Dinner                                                                                    | Colombo Swimming Club                    | Attended by members and guests                                                    |

|    |                |                                                                                                                               |                                          |                                                                                                              |
|----|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 28 | 6 Feb 2014     | Donation of sewing machine from Singer Company. (Sponsored by Mrs. Rukmal de Silva spouse of new member Mr. Leelananda Silva) | Nagaswatta Community Center, Kirullapone | President handed over the sewing machine to Nagaswatta Community Center                                      |
| 29 | 6 May 2014     | 21st General Assembly of AFICS (SL)                                                                                           | Royal Colombo Golf Club                  | Office bearers elected for 2014-2015                                                                         |
| 30 | 20 June 2014   | Presentation on UN Pension Matters by Mr. Roshan Jalaldeen, Pension Department UNHCR Geneva                                   | Royal Colombo Golf Club                  | Participation of approx. 36 members & Spouses                                                                |
| 31 | 24 Oct 2014    | UN DAY                                                                                                                        | UN Head Quarters Colombo                 | Attended by AFICS members                                                                                    |
| 32 | 11 Nov 2014    | Talk on "Aging" - by Prof S. Sivayogan & Mr. Jonathan Thambar                                                                 | Royal Colombo Golf Club                  | Attended by AFICS members and guests                                                                         |
| 33 | 27 Nov 2014    | UN Commemorative day & Christmas Dinner Organized by AFICS Sri Lanka                                                          | Colombo Swimming Club                    | Attended by AFICS members and guests                                                                         |
| 34 | Dec 2014       | AFICS Sri Lanka organized Children's' X' Mas party at Nagaswatta in collaboration with the Havelock Lions Club                | Nagaswatta Community Center, Kirullapone | AFICS Members participated                                                                                   |
| 35 | 8 March 2015   | AFICS members participated at Medical Health Camp, with Havelock Town Lions Club at Nagaswatta                                | Nagaswatta Community Center, Kirullapone | Attended by Dr. Kariyawasam CMO CMC, Members of Lions Club and AFICS Sri Lanka                               |
| 36 | 16 July 2015   | 22nd Annual General Assembly of AFICS (SL)                                                                                    | Monsoon Hall, Colombo Swimming Club      | Election of office bearers for 2015-2016                                                                     |
| 37 | 28 August 2015 | Seminar on Investing & Investments                                                                                            | Anthurium Hall of Renuka Hotel Colombo   | A Panel of Experts from Union Bank                                                                           |
| 38 | 07 Sept. 2015  | Distribution of Spectacles for Children at Nagaswatte                                                                         | Nagaswatte Community Centre, Kirullapone | spectacles to pre-identified 31 school children were distributed                                             |
| 39 | 04 Oct. 2015   | Inauguration of Sewing Classes at the "Building Hope Children Centre" Nagaswatte                                              | Nagaswatte Community Centre, Kirullapone | Classes for the Second Batch of Sewing Students inaugurated                                                  |
| 40 | 26 Nov. 2015   | Seminar on "Current Situation & Trends in Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS in Sri Lanka and Asia"            | "Sundowner" at Colombo Swimming Club     | Delivered by an eminent specialist namely Dr. Weerasinghe from the National Program of HIV/AIDS in Sri Lanka |

|    |                 |                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 41 | 6 Dec. 2016     | 23rd Annual General Meeting of AFICS Sri Lanka                                                                          | "SUNDOWNER" Colombo Swimming Club, Colombo 3                                                                  | AFICS Members along with guests participated                                                                                                                                      |
| 42 |                 | Seminar on Food and Nutrition                                                                                           | Royal Colombo Golf Club                                                                                       | Mr. Ranjith Seneviratne and Dr. Nimal Hettiaratchy conducted the Seminar.                                                                                                         |
| 43 | 28 March 2017   | Seminar on "Last Wills and Deed of Gifts, Nominees, Spousal and Children's Benefits and the like with a Q & A Session". | Hatton National Bank's "The Club", at Ananda Coomaraswamy Mawatha (Green Path), Colombo.                      | The Speaker Mr. Naomal Goonewardena Attorney and Chartered Accountant UK(ACMA), USA(CFA), MBA Sr Jayawardena Pura University, Founder Partner of NYTHYA firm in 1997.             |
| 44 | 15 July 2017    | AFICS/LIONS Medical Camp                                                                                                | Nagaswatta Community Center, Kirullapone                                                                      | Participation from CRC: Nursing Sister, Nursing Officer, Public Health Inspector, 2 Public Health Midwives, Attendant, CRC Coordinator & Staff and AFICS/LIONS - Key Participants |
| 45 | 6 Oct. 2017     | Farewell to Immediate Past President Dr. Panduka Wijeyaratne, who has been serving as President from 2012 to 2017       | Residence of Dr. Panduka Wijeyaratne, Apt. 6/2, No.10, Prince Alfred Tower, Alfred House Gardens, Colombo 3   | All Executive Committee Members participated                                                                                                                                      |
| 46 | 3 to 5 Feb.2018 | AFICS Annual Trip to Uva Province                                                                                       | Visited Bandarawela, Bambarakele, Diyatalawa, Haputale, Beragala, Wellawaya, Koslanda, Ella and Ravana Falls. | !8 Members and friends participated.                                                                                                                                              |
| 47 | 28 Feb. 2018    | 24th General Assembly of AFICS (SL)                                                                                     | Empire Residencies 51, Braybrooke Place, Colombo                                                              | Office bearers elected for 2017-2018                                                                                                                                              |
| 48 | 9 Nov. 2018     | Seminar on Smart Food by Ranjit Seneviratne                                                                             | Empire Residencies 51, Braybrooke Place, Colombo                                                              | AFICS Members and Guests participated                                                                                                                                             |
| 49 | 27 Nov. 2018    | Meeting with the WHO Representative in Colombo                                                                          | WHO Country in Office in Colombo                                                                              | Dr. Nihal Abeyesundere had met with the WHO Deputy Rep in her office                                                                                                              |
| 50 | 2 Dec. 2018     | Meeting with the UNFPA Representative in Colombo                                                                        | UNFPA Office, UN Compound                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 51 | 2 Dec. 2018     | Meeting with the ILO Representative in Colombo                                                                          | ILO Office in the UN Compound Colombo                                                                         | Met with ILO Representative                                                                                                                                                       |



|    |             |                                                               |                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 52 | 3 Dec. 2018 | Meeting with the FAO Representative in Colombo                | FAO Office in the UN Compound Colombo              | Met with the FAO Representative and had a discussion who is scheduled to leave the country                                                                                                                                                         |
| 53 | 3 Dec. 2018 | Meeting with the WFP Representative in Colombo                | WFP Office in Colombo                              | In the absence of the WFP Representative had a meeting with the Met with the Deputy Representative                                                                                                                                                 |
| 54 | 3 Dec. 2018 | Meeting with the UNICEF Representative in Colombo             | UNICEF Office in Colombo                           | Met with UNICEF Representative                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 55 | 6 Dec. 2018 | Meeting with the new UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Hanaa Singer | UN Compound, Colombo                               | A delegation from AFICS Sri Lanka Dr. Nimal Hettiaratchy President with some Committee Members Dr. Nihal Abeysundere, Amb. Laksiri Mendis, Mrs. Jeeva Pillai Essex and Mr. George Michael visited the UN Office to welcome the New UN Coordinator. |
| 56 | 9 Dec. 2018 | UN Commemorative Dinner and Year End Get-together             | Empire Residencies 51, Braybrooke Place, Colombo 2 | Ms. Hanaa Singer the UN Resident Coordinator and other UN Agency Representatives attended. More than 55 members, guests and invitees were present.                                                                                                 |

***A Drawing of The famous Kandy Perahera, in Sri Lanka***



## AFICS ANNUAL TRIP (2018) TO THE UVA PROVINCE

Prof. Emeritus (Mrs) Kamini Mendis

The AFICS annual trip this year (2018) was to the Uva Province from 3 – 5 February. AFICS members and spouses, 15 in all joined the excursion, with 11 travelling from Colombo, and 4 joining from Kandy and Diyatalawa.

The month of February in the Uva Province marks the end of the cold and rainy season there. Although the vegetation is lush after the rains, the climate in February tends to be unpredictable, and so the group took a chance with the weather in deciding on February as the month for the trip.

The group of 11 (Tilak Abeysinghe, Methsiri Gunaratne, Don Gunarante, with a friend, Ranjith and Malkanthi Wirasingha, George Michael and Anita Dassanayake ) left Colombo early on the morning of 3rd February and arrived in Diyatalawa in time for lunch at the country home of a member - Drs Kamini and Nalaka Mendis. Two others from Kandy, Rienzie and Sri Kanthi Nanayakkara joined the group in Diyatalawa. After lunch, onwards to the Bandarawela hotel where accommodation was arranged for the group, except for four who stayed at the Mendis residence at Diyatalawa.

The same afternoon the entire group made a trip to the ancient Buddhist rock temple of Dowa- a place of historical significance (King Walagamba is said to have hidden here to escape enemy invasions), a few kilometers from Bandarawela, and returned to the hotel and Diyatalawa to call it a day.

On the morning of the 4th the group embarked on a tour to visit 3 famed waterfalls in Uva. First to the tallest waterfall in the country – “Bambarakele”, via Haputale with a brief stop to enjoy the panoramic views over the southern plains from the Haputale hills. The falls at Bambarakelle were at the end of a few kilometers trek through uneven terrain, the challenge of which, the group, nevertheless, undertook with courage. Having paid homage at the foot of this magnificently tall water fall, onwards we went on the Beragala –Wellawaya route which spans the transition zone from the peaks of the hill country to the nearly the sea-level location of Wellawaya. A stop at the majestic “Diyaluma” water falls, a mid-morning snack of boiled corn and ripe cocoa fruit at a roadside boutique, followed by a

visit to a gigantic plant nursery in Koslanda were all part of this exciting journey. Arriving at Wellawaya - the town at cross roads between the hills and the southern plains, we took the road back to the mountains, this time through Ella to see the gushing waters of the “Ravana Falls”. A brief stop at the falls’ bridge and onwards through the picturesque road to the scenic and touristic town of Ella where we just managed to find a late lunch.

Then back to Bandarawela for the evening, but this was not quite the end of the day, for George Michael had organised a musical evening at the Bandarawela hotel notwithstanding the fatigue of the long trip. George together with a local musician entertained the group to a serenely beautiful evening. His melodic voice and the favourite songs of all time soothed the exhausted group.

The next morning, the group set off in 3 vehicles on the journey back to Colombo (and Kandy), yet this was far from being the end of the excursion – for the drive was through Nuwera Eliya and Kandy. A stop at the Nuwera Eliya Golf Club was made possible thanks to Ranjith Wirasinghe being a member of the club, where we enjoyed a sumptuous lunch which was a fitting and this is glorious trip to Uva. The group split for the final part of the journey, the larger group taking the Hatton – Ginigathhena route, and the Nanayakkaras and Mendis taking the route to, and through Kandy respectively. Despite adverse weather warnings, the climate held up staunchly with sunny skies for the entire duration of this excursion.





## WIDOW'S AND WIDOWER'S BENEFITS

*(The below articles as it appears in the UNJSPF regulations, please click "UNJSPF Regulations")*

### Article 34

#### WIDOW'S BENEFIT

(a) A widow's benefit shall, subject to article 41 and to (b) below, be payable to the surviving female spouse of a participant who was entitled to a retirement, early retirement, deferred retirement or disability benefit at the date of his death, or who died in service, if she was married to him at the date of his death in service or, if he was separated prior to his death, she was married to him at the date of separation and remained married to him until his death.

(b) A benefit shall nevertheless not be payable if the participant had commuted his widow's prospective benefit under article 28 or 29.

(c) The benefit shall, if the participant died in service or during entitlement to a retirement, early retirement or disability benefit, be payable at the standard annual rate of half the retirement or disability benefit which would have been payable to the participant had he become entitled thereto at the date of his death, or of half of his retirement, early retirement or disability benefit including such part thereof as may have been commuted, as the case may be, provided that the rate shall not be less than the smaller of:

(i) 750 dollars [increased to 4,314.48 dollars under the UNJSPF Pension Adjustment System, effective 1 April 2014] subject to subsequent adjustments in accordance with the movement of the United States CPI under the Pension Adjustment System ([Click here](#))<sup>1</sup> or

(ii) Twice the standard annual rate above.

(d) benefit is payable on account of the participant under these Regulations, than the smaller of 500 dollars [increased to 2,741.04 dollars under the UNJSPF Pension Adjustment System, effective 1 April 2014] subject to subsequent adjustments in accordance with the movement of the United States CPI under the Pension Adjustment System ([Click here](#))<sup>1</sup> or the final average remuneration of the participant.

(e) The benefit shall, if the participant died after the commencement of a deferred retirement benefit which had not been commuted under article 30(c), be payable at half the annual rate of such

The annual rate of the benefit shall, notwithstanding (c) above, not be less, when no other benefit and, if he died before its commencement, at the rate of half the actuarial equivalent at the date of death of the annual rate of the benefit at the normal retirement age.

(f) The benefit shall be payable at periodic intervals for life, provided that a benefit payable at an annual rate of less than 600 dollars may be commuted by the widow into a lump sum which is the actuarial equivalent of the benefit at the standard annual rate under (c) above, or the annual rate under (e) above, as the case may be.

(g) The benefit shall, where there is more than one surviving spouse, be divided equally between the spouses, and upon the death of each such spouse shall be equally divided among the remainder.

(h) Notwithstanding the provisions of (a) and (f) above, with respect to a surviving spouse who had remarried prior to 1 April 1999 the benefit under (a) above shall be payable as from 1 January 2001, subject to recovery (with interest) of the lump sum payment that had been made to that surviving spouse upon remarriage, as provided in the Regulations then in effect.

### Article 35

#### WIDOWER'S BENEFIT

A widower's benefit, at the rates and under the conditions applicable in article 34 to a widow's benefit, shall be payable to the surviving male spouse of a participant.



## EMERGENCY E-MAIL & PHONE NOS. TO UNJSPF AND HEALTH INSURANCE

**EMERGENCY E-MAIL / PHONE NOS. for Death Related Matters. Emergency Fund, Payment Stopped, Request UID, Member Self Service**

**UNJSPF** has closed the usual email unjspf.org from July 2017. The only emergency emails in operation are **Deathrelated@unjspf.org**, **emergencyfund@unjspf.org** and **Paymentstopped@unjspf.org**. But, **UNJSPF** has now introduced a new way of client servicing through the UNJSPF web site <https://www.unjspf.org/>. Under the new system of communication one has to open the website <https://www.unjspf.org/contact-us/>. Once the web site opens, then go to menu and select **contact-us** and click on CONTACT FORM type in the problem faced, state Retiree number and email. If UID is required send email to **RequestUIDOnly@unjspf.org**. If one already has the Unique Identification (UID) mention it. Click on send.. One can expect an email answer from UNJSPF in two to three days. User friendly whiteboard videos (U tube page of UNJSPF) on topics such as separation, two-track option, spouse benefit etc are well integrated and are very useful.

UNJSPF has started help line (like a call centre): Currently these are operational both in New York 00-1-212-963-6931 (9 AM-5 PM New York time) and in Geneva 00-41-22-928-8800 (9 AM to 5 PM Geneva time). The Member Self Service (MSS) is operational but one needs to register first at <https://www.unjspf.org/member-self-service/> with their 9 digit UID. **MSSsupport@unjspf.org** for assistance on MSS

**Call Centre Sri Lanka No. 0112029059  
FROM 7AM TO 7PM**

### Health Insurance

As far as the Health Insurances - Please contact your individual Organisations and Health Insurance Company's for more information.

## Relax & smile

STRANGE NOISE COMING FROM THE GRAVE YARD “ Beethoven Decomposing “

When Beethoven passed away, he was buried in a churchyard. A couple of days later, the town drunken was walking through the cemetery and heard some strange noise coming from the area where Beethoven was buried. Terrified, the drunken ran and got the priest to come and listen to it. The priest bent close to the grave and heard some faint, unrecognizable music coming from the grave. Frightened, the priest ran and got the town magistrate.

When the magistrate arrived, he bent his ear to the grave, listened for a moment, and said: "Ah, yes, that's Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, being played backwards."

He listened a while longer, and said: "There's the Eighth Symphony, and it's backwards, too. Most puzzling." So the magistrate kept listening; "There's the Seventh... the Sixth... the Fifth..." Suddenly, the realization of what was happening dawned on the magistrate.

He stood up and announced to the crowd that had gathered in the cemetery: "My fellow citizens, there's nothing to worry about. It's just Beethoven decomposing."

# MEMBERS LIST OF AFICS SRI LANKA

(This List is prepared based on the available information from the membership Application Forms)

| Name                            | Agency                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Mr.C.Desha Priya Amerasinghe | ADB                                                                                        |
| 2. Dr.A.A.Nihal Abeysundere     | WHO                                                                                        |
| 3. Mr.Tilak Dias Abeysinghe     | UNHCR                                                                                      |
| 4. Mrs.Rohini Abeysuriya        |                                                                                            |
| 5. Dr.Uvais Ahamed              | UNESCO,FAO                                                                                 |
| 6. Mr.D.J.W.Amaratunge          | FAO                                                                                        |
| 7. Mrs.Malini Angunawela        | UN                                                                                         |
| 8. Dr.Iyanthi Abeywickrema      |                                                                                            |
| 9. Mr.Srinath Sinha Basnayake   | UN                                                                                         |
| 10. Mr.Gritakumar Edmund Chitty | UNITLS                                                                                     |
| 11. Mr.Asela Dassanayake        | ICT                                                                                        |
| 12. Mr.Leelananda De Silva      | UNCTAD,UNDP,UNITC,FAO,<br>IFAD,UN,ESCAP,ECA,<br>IMO,WIPO,ILO,WFC,<br>INTERPALIMETARY UNION |
| 13. Dr.H.Santhusitha De Alwis   | FAO                                                                                        |
| 14. Dr.Tuley De Silva           | UNIDO                                                                                      |
| 15. Mr.T.Shantha A De Silva     | COMMDAFALTH, UNCTAD/GATT                                                                   |
| 16. Mr.Susantha De Silva        |                                                                                            |
| 17. Mr.Nihal De Zoysa           | UNHCR                                                                                      |
| 18. Mr.Hema Dassanayake         | WHO                                                                                        |
| 19. Mr.Jayantha Dhanapala       | UNIDIR                                                                                     |
| 20. Dr.Neville Edirisinghe      | WFP                                                                                        |
| 21. Dr.P.A.Annesley Fernando    | UN/WFC, ESCAP, UNTAC                                                                       |
| 22. Dr.Lloyd Fernando           | ADB                                                                                        |
| 23. Mr.R.Bryce Fernando         |                                                                                            |
| 24. Mr.Vitus Fernando           | IUCN, ADB, WMO                                                                             |
| 25. H.A.Brian Forbes            | FAO, ADB,IFAD, UNOG                                                                        |
| 26. Mr.K.B.Lalit Godamunne      | WFP                                                                                        |
| 27. Dr.Wilbert Gooneratne       | ILO, UNCRD                                                                                 |
| 28. Mrs.Soma Goonetilleke       |                                                                                            |
| 29. Mr.Karunairajah Gunaratnam  | UN ,ESCAP                                                                                  |
| 30. Mr.K.M.D.Gunaratne          | COMMONWEALTH SECT                                                                          |
| 31. Dr.Methsiri Gunaratne       | WHO                                                                                        |
| 32. Dr.Pushpa Herath            | WHO                                                                                        |
| 33. Dr.Don Nimal Hettiarachy    | UNICFF, UNFPA, UNDP                                                                        |
| 34. Dr.Wimal Hettiarachchi      | IMF IBRD                                                                                   |
| 35. Ms.Grace Jayakody           | IMO                                                                                        |
| 36. Mr.Nissanka Jayasundera     | FAO                                                                                        |
| 37. Dr.M.Noble Jayasuriya       | AEA, FAO                                                                                   |

|     |                                  |                                |
|-----|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 38. | Dr.Bennett A.Jayaweera           | WHO                            |
| 39. | Dr.Ponnampalam Jayawickramarajah | WHO                            |
| 40. | Dr.S.Suneetha Jayawickrema       | ESCAP ECSCE,UNCTAD             |
| 41. | Mr.A.P.Jinadasa                  | UNHCR                          |
| 42. | Mr.Mahinda Katugaha              | WFP                            |
| 43. | Mr.Sugathadasa Kulatunga         | ITC UNCTAD                     |
| 44. | Mr.Vincent Kumarapelite          | UNDP UNV                       |
| 45. | Mr.Upali S.Kuruppu               | UNESCO                         |
| 46. | Dr.Athula Kahanadaliyanage       |                                |
| 47. | Mr.Wijesena Liyana-Gunawardene   | FAO                            |
| 48. | Mr.Evan Victor Melder            | WORD BANK                      |
| 49. | Dr.Mrs.Kamini Mendis             | WHO                            |
| 50. | Mr.D.Laksiri Mendis              | UNDTCD, UNDP,ICAO              |
| 51. | Mr.George Anthony Michael        | FAO WFP                        |
| 52. | Mr.Jayantha Mudannayake          | ICT CRIMINALTRIBUNAL THE HAGUE |
| 53. | Mr.Joseph Rienzie Nanayakkara    | UNOG                           |
| 54. | Mrs.Sujatha Pelpola              | UNESCO UNIC WHO                |
| 55. | Mr.Bertie Perera                 | WHO                            |
| 56. | Dr.R.Ivan Mohan Perera           | UNESCO                         |
| 57. | Ms.Jeeva Perumalpillai Esseeex   | UNDP, ADB, WORLD BANK          |
| 58. | Dr.Upatissa Pethiyagoda          | FAO                            |
| 59. | Mr.Mohandas Rajasingham          | UNHCR PEACE KEEPING            |
| 60. | Dr. Murugesu Ramasamy            | WHO, FAO                       |
| 61. | Dr.Adrian Senadhira              | WHO                            |
| 62. | Mr.S.Ranjit Seneviratne          | FAO                            |
| 63. | Ms.Methsili Silva-Ehrlich        | UNDP                           |
| 64. | Dr.Sellappa Sivalingam           | FAO                            |
| 65. | Dr.Krishnapillai Sivasubramaium  | FAO                            |
| 66. | Dr.S.B.Herbet Tennekoon          | WHO                            |
| 67. | Mr.S.P.B.Senagama                | UNICEF                         |
| 68. | Mr.S.Thirugnanasambanthar        | WORLD BANK & FAO               |
| 69. | Dr.W.Nimal Vidyasagara           | WHO                            |
| 70. | Mr.Simon Weerasuriya             | IPU GENEVA                     |
| 71. | Mr.Lakshman Wickramasinghe       | UNICEF                         |
| 72. | Dr.Ponna Wignaraja               | UNA                            |
| 73. | Dr.Mrs.Hiranthi Wijemanne        | UNICEF                         |
| 74. | Dr.O.B.Rahula Wijesekera         | WHO, UNIDO                     |
| 75. | Mr.Dharmasena Wijesinghe         | WHO                            |
| 76. | Dr.Panduka Wijeyaratne           | WHO,USAID,IDRC                 |
| 77. | Mr.Ranjith Wirasinha             | ADB                            |
| 78. | Mr.Nihal Wiratunga               | GATT/UNCAD ,UNICEF ,COMONWEATH |
| 79. | Mr.Ranjith Withana               | UNIDO                          |
| 80. | Dr.Nimal A Fernando              | ADB                            |





FEDERATION OF ASSOCIATIONS OF FORMER INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS  
 FÉDÉRATION DES ASSOCIATIONS DES ANCIENS FONCTIONNAIRES INTERNATIONAUX  
 FEDERACION DE ASOCIACIONES DE EX-FUNCIONARIOS INTERNACIONALES Palais  
 des Nations CH-1211 Geneva 10 Switzerland [www.fafics.org](http://www.fafics.org)

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to inform all of you that FAFICS addressed the formal meeting of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly on After Service Health Insurance (ASHI) on 15 March 2019. This happened only twice before and it is encouraging that it has happened again. We should feel privileged for this.

At the meeting I read out a brief message (attached herebelow) summarizing our position on the Secretary-General report on the conclusion to the UN working group on ASHI. Andrés Castellano, Warren Sach and Linda Saputelli attended with me. The message is the result of over three years of intense participation by FAFICS representatives Georges Kutukdjian, Katia Chestopalov, Gerhard Schramek in the working Group and HLCM to whom we send our wholehearted thanks. I also wish to thank Warren and Linda for spending a full day together on the text to make it brief, comprehensive, effective and to the point.

We now hope that the Fifth Committee in their informal meetings will consider the matters we brought to their attention. As per established practice our message is posted on their web page. FAFICS stands ready to continue being involved in the process including participation in a future working group.

Please share this as widely as possible within your constituencies with the hope that it can be of help to you in your work for the benefit of members.

Kind Regards,  
 Marco Breschi  
 President

15 March 2019

Statement on ASHI by FAFICS President, Mr. Marco Breschi

Madam Chair, Distinguished Members of the Fifth Committee,

It is an honour for me to address this prestigious Committee today. As the elected President of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS), representing the interests of all retirees of the United Nations common system organizations, I wish to express our sincere gratitude for this opportunity to present the FAFICS position on managing AfterService Health Insurance (ASHI).

Please allow me to recall that health insurance currently covers approximately 67,000 retirees and their qualified dependents. Insured retirees, as significant financial contributors to ASHI, have a legitimate, material interest in participating actively in all discussions and reviews of ASHI arrangements, which is why retirees appreciate and have been active members in the Working Group process.

With the final report now before you, we bring to the attention of Member States, our views and concerns on health insurance matters. I would like to highlight that the report before you has not been endorsed by the Working Group, but is the Secretary-General's report. Nevertheless, FAFICS was pleased to have participated in the Working Group and supported most of its conclusions. An important exception is the proposal for a new entitlement accrual mechanism, paragraphs 38 to 41 of A/73/662, including new eligibility criteria, because it would place an additional financial burden on future retirees. We observe that the ACABQ is not convinced of the entitlement accrual mechanism as presented. In addition, both FICSA and CCISUA joined FAFICS in not supporting the proposed entitlement accrual mechanism.

Part VII of the Secretary-General's Report under the heading, Funding of the after-service health insurance liability, recommends in paragraphs 55 – 82 that measures be taken to phase out the pay-as-you-go financing and to replace it by pay-as-you-accrue financing. While FAFICS recognizes that the proposals relate only to the UN Secretariat, it supports them as a matter of principle which should guide the entire common system.

We are concerned that the ACABQ does not support the financing recommendations as summarized in the Executive Summary (e) to (g) of the Report of the Secretary-General (A/73/662). As a result, the common system remains exposed to growing risks of significant unfunded liabilities which range from \$8.8 billion upwards, as shown in paragraph 64 of the Secretary-General's Report (A/73/662).

Madame Chair, on behalf of the entire Federation, I wish to thank you and to reassure you that we stand ready to assist the Committee in reviewing this important topic.

# V I S A K A M A L S

Pioneers in Hair Wigs & Kandyan Jewellery Dealers in Cosmetics, Body Shaping Garments,  
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Tel: 0112810968

E-mail: visakamals@gmail.com

Website: www.visakamals.com

You'll be Amazed

The collage features a variety of beauty products and brand logos. On the left, there's a collection of makeup items like lipsticks, eyeliners, and blushes. In the center, there are images of women with different hairstyles and wigs. On the right, there are logos for several brands: HAIR WIGS, TRESemmé, KRYOLAN, KEUNE, OLAY, L'ORÉAL, REVLON, WELLA, Himalaya, Johnson's, jordana, LAKME, St. Ives, and Neutrogena.

HAIR WIGS  
TRESemmé  
KRYOLAN  
KEUNE  
OLAY  
L'ORÉAL  
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" Some of the above sketches were drawn by me during my stay in Rome working with FAO/WFP. The picture on 1st row, 3rd, and 2nd-row 1st picture and sketch in the middle (couldn't find the magazine cover) were drawn for articles written in the "fao casa gazette" - (casa means Cultural And Social Association) by my friend Alex Van Arcadie (pen name "Laksiri"), a Journalist, who also worked in FAO. The picture in the middle, 1st row was drawn for a Sri Lankan Dinner Dance organized by the Rome based Asian Women's Guild - headed by a team of Sri Lankan ladies and their spouses. The 1st picture on 1st row and 3rd picture on the 2nd row were drawn for Sinhala and Tamil Newyear celebrations in Rome for the Sri Lanka Association in Rome, inviting famous Sri Lankan Sinhala artists for shows. - George A. Michael "



IN LOVING MEMORY OF MY PARENTS  
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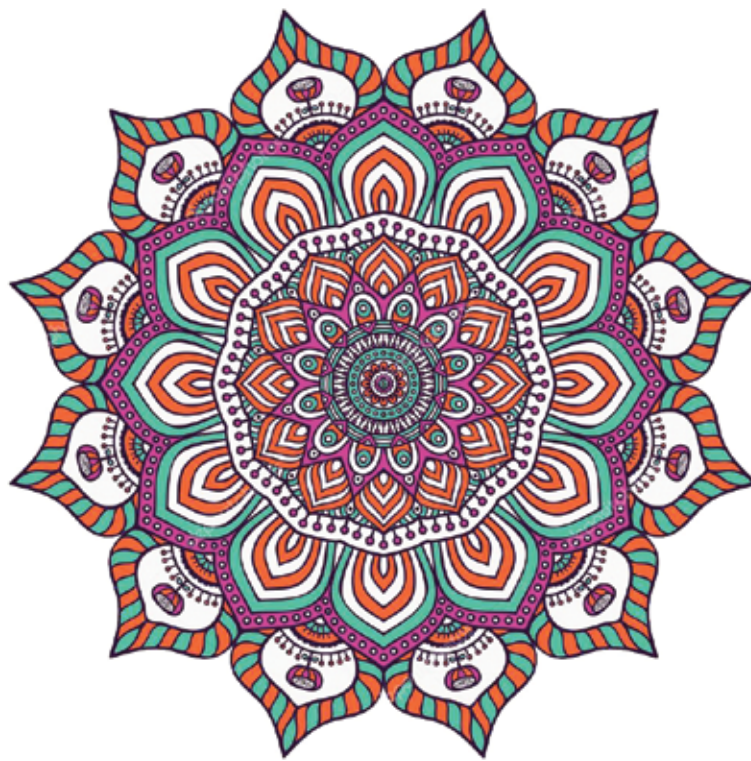
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