

THE PROFESSIONAL

AUTUMN 2009

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EVENTS CALENDAR

Autumn Event

21st November 2009
Portland Hotel
Birmingham

A memorable event in the Midlands

For further details visit our website

"Surviving the Credit Crunch"

Date and venue to be announced

6th Annual General Meeting

24th April 2010
Venue and details to be announced

Please visit APSL website

www.apsl.org.uk
for more details

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



The APSL is stepping into its sixth year, and growing rapidly with current membership exceeding 500. I would like to thank the founding members and all leaders who have worked voluntarily and tirelessly to bring our Association to this healthy position today.

The past five years has been the most enjoyable and a unique experience for me in my career. Working with a large number of professionals from every sector has enriched my own professional practice in my place of work. Also, it has enabled us to collectively contribute something back to our native country, Sri Lanka.

With the dawn of peace, APSL members are busy designing various development projects and finding solutions to key challenges facing the country. Also APSL is now linking with professional institutes and individuals - both inside and outside Sri Lanka in order to pool their knowledge and skills for the greater good.

Today, Sri Lanka is at a unique point in historic journey where the path is wide open for her to become a peaceful and a fully developed country, building on her natural beauty, rich culture and highly (literate or intelligent which word is more suitable?) work force. I would like to extend an open invitation to all Sri Lankans and friends of Sri Lanka to be part of this noble task.

If you would like to join us, please visit our website (www.apsl.org.uk), fill a membership form and become a member to move forward together.

Professor I M Dharmadasa
President APSL UK

President Meets APSL Delegation in Sri Lanka

Prof I M Dharmadasa, President of APSL and Mr Rohan de Alwis, Executive Committee Member, took part in a



Solar Energy workshop held in July in Sri Lanka. During their visit they met President Mahinda Rajapaksa and other senior ministers to discuss APSL's proposed Solar Power strategy for Sri Lanka, including potential use of "solar villages" to help IDPs and re-development of the North.

WHO ARE WE?

- Promote fellowship among Sri Lankan professionals in the UK, and pool their knowledge and skills for the benefit and development of Sri Lanka
- Encourage members and colleagues to raise their professional outlook and standards
- Project a positive image of Sri Lankans in the UK as a community of capable, knowledgeable and friendly people making a valuable contribution to the UK's economy and culture.

WHAT DO WE DO?

- Seminars and workshops organised around a professional theme or subject of popular interest
- Quarterly events to build fellowship among members and friends
- Development assistance to Sri Lanka such as Tsunami relief, house building initiatives and promoting use of renewable energy
- Mentoring young Sri Lankans through their professional development.

Ask the IT Guru

As part of the APSL's "Ask the Expert" series "Ask the IT Guru" was held at the Sri Lanka High Commission in London on Saturday 7th March 2009.

There was an impressive line up of six speakers making presentations on a range of subjects including "Working with PCs", "Internet surfing", "optimising e-mails" and "Power Point presentations".

A wide cross section of the Sri Lankan community both young and mature, some highly qualified professionals, took part in the event. However, the majority who benefitted from the IT Guru Event were the private individuals who use personal computers on a day to day basis.

A VISIT TO MENIK FARM CAMP for IDPs

With the help of leading APSL member Rohan de Alwis, Mr Stanley Obeysekere of The Association of Sri Lankan Lawyers, had visited Menik Farm Camp for Internally Displaced People (IDP) on the 24th of July with Rotarians and a Team of Doctors from Colombo.

At the time, Menik Farm was catering for up to 300,000 IDPs. According to Stanley Obesekere they were allowed to talk to individuals freely, without any visible presence of Army and get first hand experience of the situation in these camps. Whilst the Doctors in their team helped those needing medical attention, others distributed soft toys to the delight of children and took the opportunity to talk to individuals to understand their issues and concerns. Stanley notes that, due to Government efforts, the signs of hunger and mal-nutrition seemed to have disappeared from the camp since early days of opening the Camp. They also noticed that, under these difficult conditions, every effort was being made to continue children's education.

Stanley also reports that many people in the camp were (understandably) frustrated not having any work to do. He also has identified number of areas in which the Sri Lankan communities abroad could help to improve their life. One area is the need for artificial limbs, another is providing additional toilet facilities. He notes that some of the IDPs may have never had the opportunity to interact with Sinhalese. In spite of that, there was natural warmth and friendship extended by both sides during their visit. Stanley concludes that, today we have the opportunity to win the hearts and minds of those traumatised and displaced by the civil war. If we fail, future generations will hold us all accountable for our collective failure, no matter where we live, whether in Sri Lanka or elsewhere. It is the responsibility of all Sri Lankans to build bridges and win the hearts and minds of all citizens. We who live and work in the West have a significant role to play.

Note by the Editor: Please note that APSL and Sri Lankan Lawyers have already made significant donations to help IDP's

Professional? One definition of a "Professional" is someone who has a high level of education and training, displays a high level of competence, skill and quality, and lead by example for the benefit of wider community. Are you a true **Professional**?

AGM 2009 & DINNER DANCE

Dr Indrajit Coomaraswamy, former Director of Economic Affairs Division, Commonwealth Secretariat, delivered the keynote speech on 'the Global Crisis: Implications for Developing Countries' at the 5th Annual General Meeting of



the Association. This was held on Saturday 25th April at Holiday Inn, Brentford, Middlesex. Dr Coomaraswamy pointed out a few strategic development challenges faced by Sri Lanka. Earlier the day started with paying a special tribute to late Mr I Ariyasena, former Treasurer of the Association, who passed away in December 2008. The new Executive Committee was elected during AGM. Please visit our website for details on members. The day concluded with a dinner dance which went well into the night.



The General Secretary
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APSL @ FOC

For the second year running APSL had a stall at the Festival of Cricket on 14th of July. Among many visitors to the stall was his Excellency the High Commissioner Justice Jayasinghe (pictured left). A large number of new members joined APSL at this event.

www.apsl.org.uk