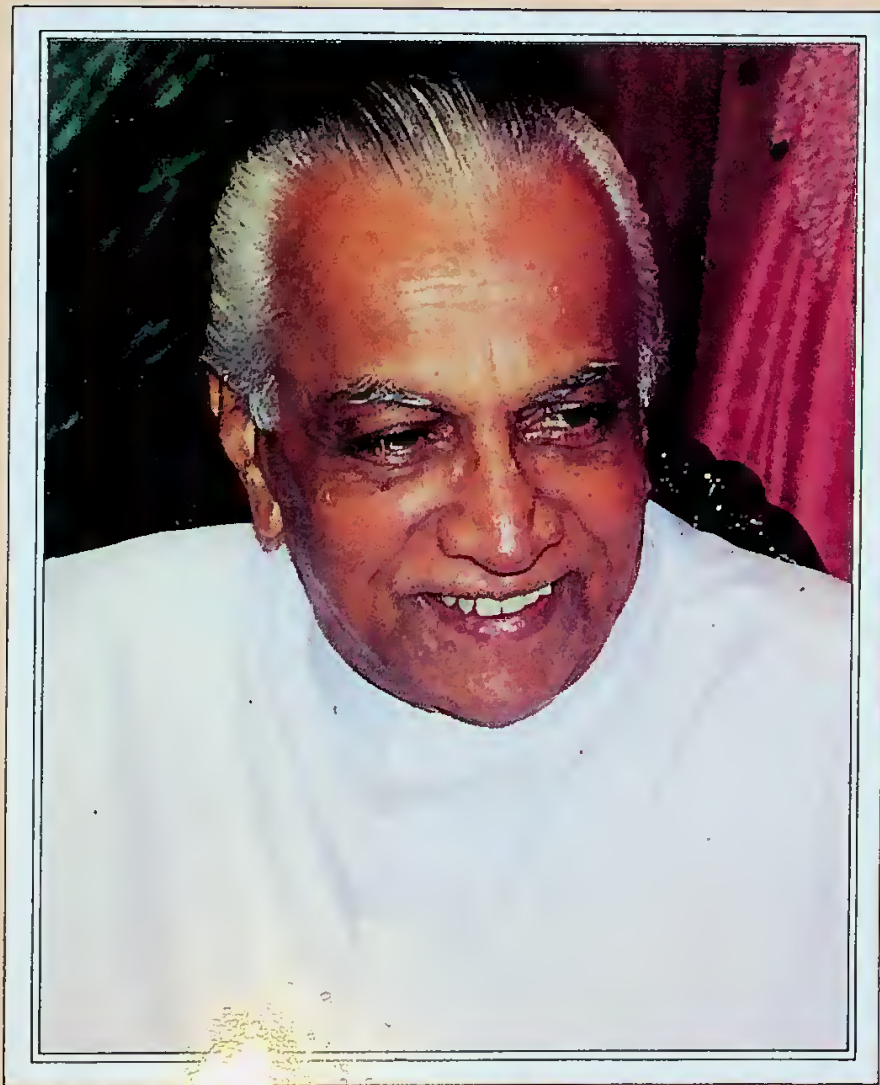


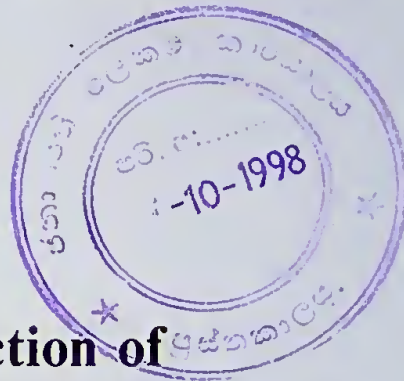


Selected Speeches of
PRESIDENT
D.B.WIJETUNGA



**A PEACEFUL
TRANSITION TO
STABILITY AND
DEVELOPMENT**

**Selected Speeches of
PRESIDENT
D. B. WIJETUNGA**



**A collection of
selected speeches of
His Excellency D. B. Wijetunga
President of the Democratic
Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
made during the first six months
in office as President**

**A PEACEFUL TRANSITION TO STABILITY
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PRESIDENT D. B. WIJETUNGA

In the four years he held office as Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in the government of the late President Ranasinghe Premadasa from 1989, President D. B. Wijetunga acquitted himself so well in his characteristically unobtrusive manner, that he made a hard task look simple.

As Minister of Finance, he presided over the nation's exchequer during the gravest crisis-ridden and momentous periods in the country's history. The entire nation was engulfed in a reign of terror by a misguided group of youths. During this period the massive destruction caused to life and property was such that it had a crippling effect on the economy.

But the restructuring of the economy outlined in his successive Budgets helped not only to overcome the massive losses caused through destruction to state and private property within an astonishingly short period, but also helped to put the country back on the track towards development and progress. This was achieved despite the colossal sums of money spent each year to counter the terrorist violence in the North and Eastern Provinces.

The missions he led to Aid Group Meetings helped the country secure unprecedented foreign aid that was vital to put the country back on its feet. The sound economic policies and management procedures that were set in motion, brought in massive foreign investment.

As Prime Minister he led the Government Parliamentary Group in the country's legislature admirably so as to win the hearts of all Members of Parliament on both sides of the House. He brought into play the wealth of experience and knowledge gathered in the four decades of his public and political life. The knowledge acquired, first as a public official, then as

a politician and from 1977 as a Cabinet Minister holding diverse portfolios of Information and Broadcasting, Posts and Telecommunications, Power and Energy, Food and Co-operatives, Agriculture and Research and Highways, made President Wijetunga one of the most experienced statesmen of our times. He thus presided over the initial stages of the massive infrastructure development in the fields of Power and Energy, Telecommunications and Highways. The amiable and conciliatory manner he moved in resolving issues and problems won the hearts of all sections of the people.

It was natural then that when on the 1st of May 1993 tragedy befell Sri Lanka with the assassination of President Ranasinghe Premadasa the task of guiding the destinies of the nation fell on the amiable and resolute Dingiri Banda Wijetunga.

When the news of the tragedy came, D. B. Wijetunga, then as Prime Minister was leading his constituents in the same May Day Procession, unaware President Premadasa was assassinated. He was gripped with shock and horror when told of the tragedy and was asked to proceed to the Presidential Secretariat post haste with maximum security.

With the nation facing a great catastrophe, he took up the mantle of President with dignity and humility, thus bringing about a peaceful transition of power. Though holding high office, he was self-avowedly not an ambitious man. As he readily admits, his elevation to the Presidency was greatness thrust upon him. He took it up with great humility and a deep sense of responsibility.

The fact he was able to bring about this peaceful transition without violence or bloodshed and later was able to win the cooperation and admiration of all sections of the people, including Opposition parties in Parliament, was testimony of the speed with which he moved to win the hearts of all.

After being sworn in as the Acting President before the Hon. Chief Justice G. P. S. de Silva on 1st May 1993, he was unanimously

elected by Parliament as the Third Executive President of Sri Lanka on 7th May 1993 in keeping with the provisions of the Constitution. He thus became the first Executive President to be elected by Parliament.

The fact that the Opposition did not put forward a candidate and the encomiums he received from Members of Parliament of all political hues the day he bade farewell to Parliament, was testimony of the standing President D. B. Wijetunga had among all sections of the people.

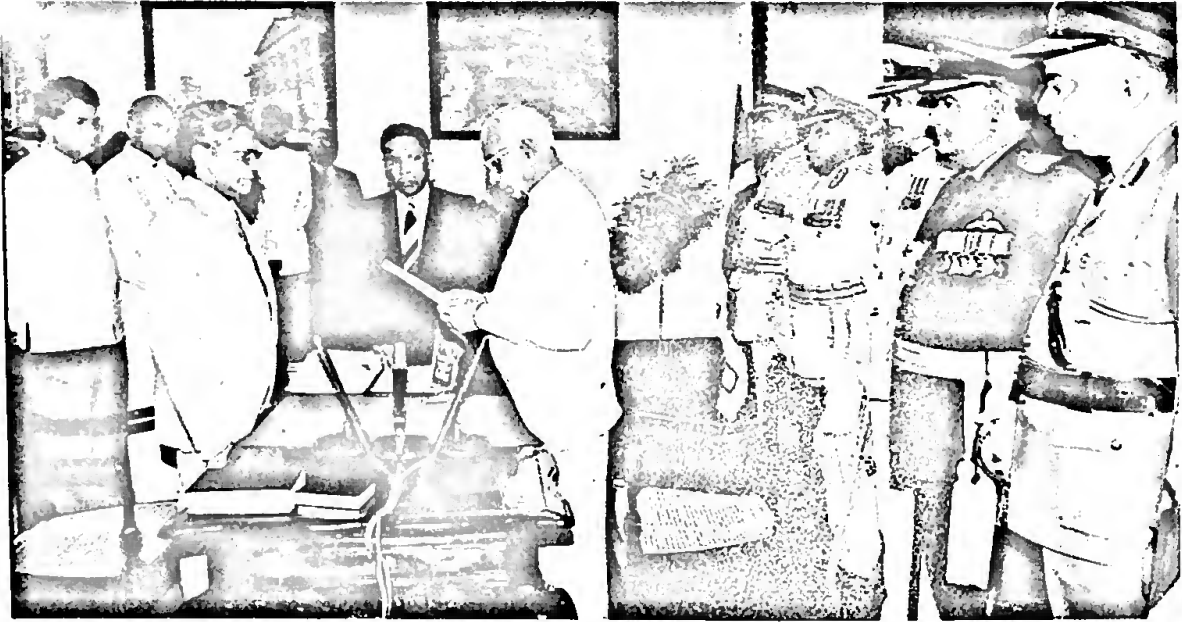
He moved with speed to remove several irritants that divided various sections of the people. He was quick to solicit the co-operation of all and implement decisions to win over even opponents in carrying forward the task of rebuilding the nation.

During the first six months of his tenure of office, President D. B. Wijetunga was able to set in motion a series of measures to consolidate and carry forward the economic development programmes that veered the country towards a market economy since 1977 and which gathered momentum during the past four years. He also moved to modify certain programmes based on experiences gained, so as to make them more productive and cost effective.

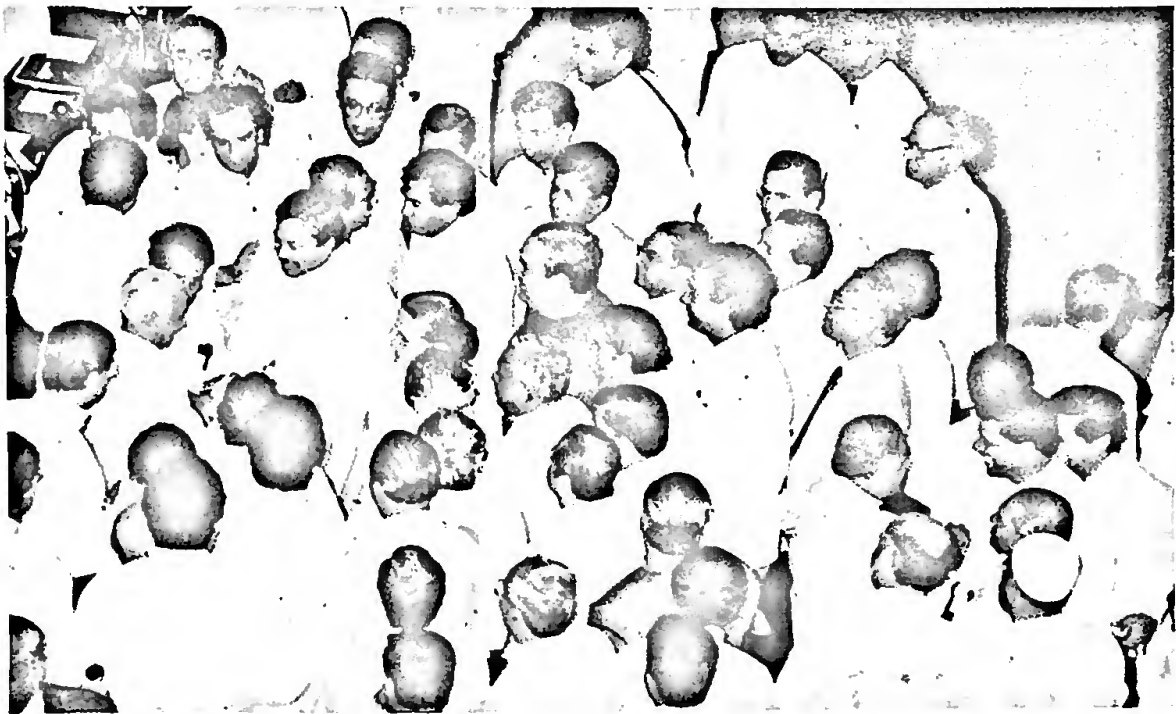
He gave high priority to programmes of poverty alleviation, education, employment generation, and a new impetus to agricultural development. At the same time he took concrete and meaningful steps to attract unprecedented foreign investment and towards technological advancement with the goal of Sri Lanka achieving a Newly Industrialised Nation status by the turn of the Twenty First Century.

—ANTHONY FERNANDO

MAKING HISTORY



His Excellency D. B. Wijetunga, being sworn in as the Third Executive President of Sri Lanka before the Chief Justice Hon. G. P. S. de Silva on 7th May 1993 at the Presidential Secretariat. Prime Minister Hon. Ranil Wickremasinghe, Cabinet Ministers, the Secretary to the President Mr K. H. J. Wijayadasa, Defence Secretary General Hamilton Wanasinghe, Army Commander Lt. Gen. Cecil Waidyaratne, Commander of the Air Force Air Marshal Terrence Gunawardene, Commander of the Navy Vice Admiral Mohan Samarasekera and the Inspector General of Police Mr. Earnest Perera were among those present.



Opposition Members of Parliament led by the Leader of the Opposition Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike joining Government M.P.s in congratulating President D. B. Wijetunga on his unanimous election by Parliament on 7th May 1993 as the Third Executive President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka – the first President to be elected by Parliament.

MEETING PEOPLE AT GRASS ROOTS LEVEL



President D. B. Wijetunga makes it a point to meet the people as often as possible. Here he addresses the people of a village in the Kurunegala District.

BIDDING FAREWELL TO PARLIAMENT

Statement made following the unanimous election by Parliament to the Office of President of Sri Lanka on Friday, 7th May, 1993

Mr. Speaker, Hon. Members, at the outset I would like to record my deep sense of gratitude for the honour accorded to me. It marks a new chapter in the history of this august House. I have been elected by the Representatives of the People to the high office of the President of Sri Lanka. I have accepted this daunting responsibility of guiding the destiny of our nation with humility. I know that our people have implicit trust in me. My constant endeavour will be to honour that trust. I will not betray that trust even vestigially.

In this task, I am fully and totally aware that your co-operation and unfailing support will be always forthcoming.

Mr. Speaker, we are assembled here at a unique moment in the long history of our mother land. The irrevocable writing of the invisible hand of history, has tragically recorded the sudden and grievous passing away of an outstanding Leader. He was a Leader who played a pre-eminent role in all aspects of our national life for several momentous decades. His Excellency Ranasinghe Premadasa, the late President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, was a supreme embodiment of the wishes, hopes and aspirations of the masses of our country. In consequence, the people of this land, whatever the walks of life they represented, could identify themselves unerringly with the late President. In his unforgettable historical role, he re-defined democracy in terms of the teeming down-trodden masses earning spontaneous tribute from the far-flung global community and its leaders.

The values I cherish and the ideals I uphold have all sprung from my early upbringing among the ordinary people of my country. I am familiar with their aspirations. I am familiar with all aspects of their age-old and traditional ways of life.

It has been my life-long commitment to give credit to whom it is due. I am fully committed to the fostering of the wholesome attitudes of respect towards parents and elders, veneration of religious dignitaries and the rendering of mutual assistance wherever and whenever it is needed. These are the values which have contributed vastly towards the social and cultural stability of our nation.

I note with regret that an erosion of these values and virtues has begun to set in. Arbitrariness, indiscretion, violence and uncharacteristic intolerance have begun to raise their ugly head, victimizing outstanding men and women who are the glory of our motherland.

It is my firm determination to eradicate this slur and blemish by bringing into being a new social order in which there will not be even a vestigial place for arbitrariness, violence and other negative and evil forces that mar the sanctity of life. I firmly believe that religions and faiths are

unifying forces. They should not be made use of to unleash divisive forces. In my own philosophy of life I am perpetually guided by the Buddha Dhamma enshrined in the phrase 'Yatha Vadi, Tatha Kari' – 'I will do what I say and will not say anything I cannot do'. Our words and our deeds should match perfectly well, leaving no gap to be filled with empty rhetoric. This will be the guiding principle in all my endeavours.

Along with the new responsibilities I have been requested to shoulder, the time has come to part ways with the House. As you know, my political wisdom matured through my participation in the engrossing transactions of this august Assembly over a considerable period of time.

When I bid farewell to you Mr. Speaker and to the Hon. Members, my thoughts dwell nostalgically on those long years I spent as a Parliamentarian. I take this opportunity to express my grateful thanks to the Hon. Speaker, Hon. Deputy Speaker, Hon. Deputy Chairman of Committees and to the Hon. Members on both sides of this Assembly. I will always remember with gratitude the co-operation readily extended to me by the Secretary-General and his staff.

I consider it essential at this time, to offer my special sense of gratitude to the Members of the Opposition, for their outstanding gesture that enabled the House to register unanimity in electing me as President. Your unanimous approval of my nomination, I am sure, is a personal tribute to me and I pledge that as President of this country, I will continue to act in a manner that such recognition will always be earned.

At this moment a saying of Shakespeare in his work "Twelfth Night" comes to my mind. I quote –

"Be not afraid of greatness,
Some men are born great,
Some achieve greatness,
and some have greatness thrust upon them"

May I assure you Mr. Speaker that the new responsibilities that I have been asked to fulfil, will not at all diminish my accessibility to the Hon. Members on both sides of this House. I will continue to perform my duties in the closest and most intimate association with you. I look forward to the guidance you can offer me in a spirit of wholesome mutuality.

I will endeavour to establish a new social order in which there will not be even a trace of arbitrariness and intolerance. I invite you to join hands with me in working for the achievement of these ideals and the developmental goals as fully-fledged partners sharing hopes and aspirations.

I thank you!

EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Policy Statement to the Cabinet on 19th May, 1993

This is the first meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers since I assumed office as the President. When a new President assumes office, it is customary to make a brief statement of Government policy. This, on the one hand facilitates the smooth functioning of the Governmental machinery. On the other hand, it would define the extent to which the powers and functions are to be shared among Cabinet Ministers under our system of Government.

Let me reiterate the fact that the policies of my Government will continue to be based on the manifesto which was placed before the people by our late Leader President Ranasinghe Premadasa. The New Vision and the New Deal envisaged the restoration of peace through consultation, compromise and consensus. It envisaged the enforcement of discipline through the application of the rule of law, restoration of moral values and the observance of a code of ethics. It envisaged the alleviation of poverty through the re-structuring of the political, economic, social and administrative machinery. I will be guided by these basic principles of government for which we have received a mandate from the people.

My Government will make every endeavour to strengthen the democratic process. Towards this end, I intend fostering the multi-party system of Government. We should charter a course of bringing about equity and social justice. We should give pride of place to the full utilisation of our economic and human resources. Through these means our objective is to ensure a better quality of life for all our people.

My Government is committed to pursuing a liberal market oriented economic policy. The accent will be on economic growth with equity. The fruits of labour should be shared equitably. Local and foreign investments will be encouraged. Direct involvement of the State in production and distribution will be minimised.

We will make every endeavour to empower the people economically so that they will be able to stand on their own feet. We must direct all the resources at our command to bring administration closer to the people. We must make a determined effort to eliminate corruption, waste and injustice. We must restore discipline in society.

The following on going programmes should receive priority attention:—

- (a) Janasaviya and the 15,000 Village Level Projects;
- (b) Production for export and export promotion;
- (c) Employment generation through the dispersal of export oriented production activities such as the 200 Garment Factories Project to the Rural Areas;
- (d) The Peoplisation programme;

- (e) Decentralisation of administration through Divisional Secretariats;
- (f) Increasing avenues of foreign employment.

We should pursue the implementation of these and other such programmes based on our manifesto with vigour, during the remaining period of our term of office.

As far as individual Ministers of the Cabinet are concerned I have, acting under Article 44 of the Constitution, determined the Ministries to be in their charge and the subjects and functions they are to be responsible for. Subject to the general policy determined by the Cabinet, I expect each Minister to exercise the responsibilities he has been entrusted with. I shall exercise my own Constitutional responsibility by a continuous general monitoring of the activities of all Ministries.

The purpose of this monitoring would be to ensure that policy laid down by Cabinet is being implemented as expected and that targets are being kept to rather than to give specific directions on details of implementation. In other words, I expect Ministers to take full responsibility for all activities in their respective functional areas subject only to the policy determined by Cabinet. This last mentioned qualification is very important and therefore bears repetition. Ministers should not embark on any new programmes or extensions or modifications of existing programmes except with Cabinet approval.

Under Article 52(2) of the Constitution a Secretary to a Ministry exercises supervision over the Departments and other Institutions in the charge of his Minister, subject to the direction and control of the Minister. Secretaries of Ministries should exercise this constitutional responsibility. It cannot be transferred to any other authority. There can however be various fora for the purpose of mutual consultation and co-ordination. Such fora will not have any authority superseding the Constitutional authority and responsibility wielded by Secretaries in respect of their individual Ministries.

A Code of Conduct for persons holding high office has already been promulgated under the authority of the Cabinet. This Code applies to all persons occupying responsible positions, right down from Ministers. It is essential that this Code should be taken in the right spirit. It must not be taken as an imposition curtailing individual freedom. Persons in Public life are always in the public eye. The public judge their official performance from what they see even in the matter of personal conduct. The sum total of the conduct of each Member of the Government also reflects on the Government as a whole.

It is an unfortunate but observable reality that discipline has suffered heavy erosion in society generally. Restoration of that which is lost is an uphill task, but it is imperative that we should make that attempt. Discipline at the work place is most crucial. Here, practice would be more effective than precept. The Head of the Institution and his senior deputies must set an example. Maintenance of discipline should be considered one of the primary duties of every Head of Institution. The rules of discipline must be enforced uniformly. There should not be favourites. Favouritism leads to frustration and demoralisation.

There is no need to elaborate on the fact that our resources are limited. Some of the resources available to us have been obtained at great cost even to future generations. Therefore, it is a crime against society to waste our resources. Every Rupee's worth of resources we have should be devoted to making the life of our people better. At other levels also there is a great need to exercise economy. In fact there should be an all embracing economy drive, touching all aspects of the activities of government institutions. Economies achieved should be one of the indicators through which performance is monitored.

Waste takes many forms. One of the most conspicuous is the holding of various tamashas. The people expect us to work hard and to demonstrate the results by the improvement which comes about in their daily lives. We should therefore take a firm policy decision to stop all tamashas. If any Programme or Project is important enough to merit a ceremonial inauguration a very simple and inexpensive ceremony should be organised with the participation of only those directly involved, including the direct beneficiaries.

One important aspect of the avoidance of waste is the proper maintenance of assets such as buildings, machinery and equipment. There should be carefully drawn up maintenance schedules with checklist. There should also be systems in place for monitoring the execution of scheduled maintenance programmes.

NGOS CAN PLAY VITAL ROLE

Address at the Annual Convention of Lions Club
International District 306C – 22nd May, 1993 at BMICH

District Governor Lion Hiran Gunasekara
Past Governors
Ladies & Gentlemen

I am happy to be with all of you today. First, I would like to thank your Past Governor Lion Asoka Gunasekara and District Governor for inviting me to the Annual Convention of District 306C as your Chief Guest. During the past few days I have been preoccupied with several matters of the State. However I accepted your invitation for many reasons. Firstly to appreciate the work 'Lions' are doing all over the country for the sick, blind and the suffering. Your work is directed, by and large, towards the poorest of the poor. It is in this context the state could draw a parallel. The Late President Ranasinghe Premadasa's interest in serving the poor through numerous development programmes is well known. Thus we could call the Lions Organization as our partners in service.

I was particularly pleased to note that your most important programme is for the Prevention of Blindness which you call 'Sight First'. I am made to understand that your organization was able to obtain 17 Million Rupees from Lions International USA to develop Eye Care facilities in the country. You have thus, voluntarily accepted some part of the responsibility of the State in the area of blindness prevention. In addition to this effort I am fully aware of the many donations of spectacles and expensive equipment constantly donated by International Lions.

Serving the blind is a very noble deed as said by none other than Gauthama Buddha. Therefore, I wish the Lions every success. In order to assist you, our Government has produced a National Plan for the prevention of Blindness. It is expected that by the year 2000 we would have effectively tackled the problem by 75%. Towards this end we have provided Personnel, Wards, Theatres and equipment to many hospitals in the country.

Our Government will encourage all Non Governmental Organizations to assist the State in serving the people with dedication. The great Mahatma Gandhi once said that, I quote 'Service for show only stunts the man and reduce his spirit'. I therefore appeal to the Lions to serve the people with humility and dedication.

The other area in which Non Governmental Organisations can make a significant contribution is to liberate our people from want. When you are poor and in want, you are desperate. A large majority of our people live in poverty. They suffer from malnutrition. They are under-nourished. We must work to uplift their living standards. Half of our population live on food stamps. We must understand the problems of these people and their aspirations.

The human beings are our greatest resource. Unfortunately, it has not been fully utilized. Our people have great ability and talent. They are very practical and pragmatic in their approach. It may be that all of them are not well educated. However, with little effort, they can be trained to pick up anything. In fact, our people are very creative. They can produce the most wonderful things.

In conclusion may I thank you once again for your kind invitation and on behalf of the Government I wish you all success in serving the less fortunate.

WILL UPHOLD CONSTITUTION AND UNP POLICIES

Statement made as the Leader of the United National Party at the Meeting of the Working Committee on 24th May 1993.

This is the first Meeting of the Working Committee since my election by Parliament as the President of our country. It is also the first Meeting of the Working Committee at which I preside as the Leader of the Party. It will be my solemn object and duty to uphold the Constitution and the ideals and policies of the United National Party. I will spare no pains in my efforts to maintain the public image of our Party which has resulted in the people of this country repeatedly placing their trust in us at every election held in this country since 1977.

I must also thank all of you for your effort in ensuring the victory of our Party at the Provincial Council elections. The team of International Observers has described the election as being free and fair. This adds moral strength to our victory. I must also record our thanks to our General Secretary, Hon. B. Sirisena Cooray, for successfully co-ordinating the Party election campaign.

The Ceylon Workers Congress once again contested together with our Party. They repose their trust in us because of our fair and just policies. Our Party records our thanks to the Congress and its leader for their valuable support. We look forward to continue working together in the national interests.

The All Ceylon Muslim League, the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party and the Liberal Party also have our thanks for their support.

We must now make an in-depth study of the pattern of the election results and redress any weaknesses or shortcomings on our part, so that we could achieve greater success at future elections and thereby be in a position to serve the people even more effectively than in the past.

OUR AIM IS TO REPLACE AID WITH TRADE

Address at the luncheon hosted in honour of Heads of Foreign Missions in Sri Lanka – Monday, 31 May 1993 – Visumpaya, Colombo

It is a great pleasure meeting you in these pleasant surroundings this afternoon. I am extremely thankful to you for accepting my invitation. We Sri Lankans hold you in high esteem. On the one hand you are the accredited representatives of your respective countries to Sri Lanka. On the other hand all of you are our close friends. So I welcome you today very warmly. I do so in a spirit of friendship.

The regular reports you make to your respective countries regarding our progress and welfare are very important to us. They determine your Government's attitude towards Sri Lanka. Therefore, it is our duty – Ministers and Officials alike – to be available to you at all times to enable you to understand what is happening here and to clarify any doubts you may have.

Sri Lanka has recently passed through a very sad and traumatic period. Our country has lost one of its greatest sons – in President Ranasinghe Premadasa. His contribution is immeasurable. Only future historians will be able to truly estimate the value of his work. He was taking our nation steadily and surely towards the goals of peace, discipline and prosperity. Regretfully, he could not live to see the fruits of his labours. We who are privileged to follow, have dedicated ourselves to reaching the goals that have been set for our people.

Your Excellencies,

You would have noted the exemplary conduct of our people during this time of travail. The people of Sri Lanka have shown a maturity and resilience which undoubtedly would have evoked the respect and admiration of the World Community. Their behaviour was restrained throughout the trauma. The manner in which our people conducted themselves at the recent Provincial Council Elections, indicates that they have the capacity to successfully overcome the most severe of challenges. It is now our duty as leaders to keep faith with them. Our people deserve to succeed. With the support of our good friends abroad, I am confident that this country will not fail.

Your Excellencies,

The basis of our foreign policy is friendship and co-operation with all countries in the common interests of securing international peace, achieving goodwill among nations, and ensuring the prosperity of all people. We have no enemies. We regard all countries and people as our friends. I intend doing all I can to enhance and deepen the ties of friendship and co-operation with you all. I am certain that you will reciprocate these sentiments and give me your support and co-operation.

Sri Lanka, as you know, has embarked on an economic policy of export-led growth. We believe that this is the correct path to bring meaningful employment and prosperity to our people. Our products, not only the traditional ones of tea, rubber and coconut, but our new manufactured

industrial products too have proved to be of high quality and competitive in price. Our garment exports to the United States alone last year reached the figure of US \$850 million. This is almost the level of the foreign aid that we normally look forward to from the global community.

We hope to get away from our dependence on aid. Sooner or later we will replace aid with trade. When our exports grow we will have all the resources we need to pay for our essential imports. I know that the whole world is moving towards freer trade. Protectionism is coming to an end. Our endeavours in the Uruguay Round have that goal in view.

We hope to achieve growth with equity. We will do so preserving the democratic systems which our people have freely chosen. The democratic way of life is well established in our country. Our cultural heritage and our institutions clearly demonstrate that. The recent Elections illustrate our commitment to democratic practices.

There is unfortunately still an unsettled state in the North of our country. We are going to quicken the pace of arriving at a settlement. We want to bring about peace throughout this land. This is the goal fervently wished by all of us. We will need your understanding and assistance in that endeavour. Once peace has been restored, we will solicit your support in the massive task of rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Your Excellencies,

So far you have done your best to help Sri Lanka individually and collectively. You have done so in a spirit of friendship and co-operation. I want to thank you for all that you are doing to help us in our march towards progress as a free and independent nation. I invite you most cordially to continue to work with us, with increased vigour. I invite you to become partners in Sri Lanka's development and future prosperity.

I thank you.

WE OFFER SOME OF BEST INCENTIVES FOR INVESTMENT

Address at the Closing Session of the Economist Round Table Conference with the Government of Sri Lanka – 1st July 1993 – Colombo

I am happy to be associated with you at this Closing Session of the Economist Roundtable Conference with the Government of Sri Lanka. I understand that there was a meaningful and open dialogue. In that sense, the Conference has proved its usefulness. I was told that the participative sessions were held in an informal atmosphere. You would have acquired a greater awareness of the policies of my Government. You would have noted the progress we have achieved through a continuous liberalisation process of our economy.

This occasion itself is one of special significance to Sri Lanka. It is the first ever Economist Roundtable Conference to be held in Sri Lanka. These Economist Conferences are organised by the internationally known Economist Group. The Group's Economist Magazine is widely read in Sri Lanka. Studies carried out by the Economist Intelligence Unit have always been considered valuable sources of information in this context, we are justifiably proud to be selected as a venue for this Roundtable.

This Roundtable is a timely exercise. It is a forum where senior international and local executives meet to exchange views and information. It comes at the juncture when we are actively seeking foreign investment. It comes at a time when we are vigorously seeking foreign markets for our exports.

In the past two days, several of my Ministers and Senior Officials would have briefed this Conference on prevailing Government Policy. The Private Sector participants would have exchanged views on the benefits and constraints of doing business in Sri Lanka. The dialogue that took place would have given insights into our economic, social and political trends and future business prospects. We have taken stock of our achievements and now look ahead with confidence.

Sri Lanka has achieved rapid advances in economic liberalisation and social progress over the past few years. Our per capita income is the highest in the South Asian region. Our average growth rate has exceeded 5 per cent per annum over the last 4 years. We are determined to achieve "Newly Industrialized Country" (NIC) status by the year 2000.

We have already made spectacular progress in education and social welfare. Our quality of life is very impressive. Literacy at 88 per cent compares favourably with Japan and many developed nations of the West. Life expectancy at 71 years is comparable with Singapore. School enrolment rates stand at near 100 per cent, surpassing countries such as Germany and Canada.

The comprehensive economic reforms already implemented include adoption of flexibility in exchange rate management, liberalisation of trade, removal of administrative controls, rationalisation of fiscal and financial procedures and the grant of liberal tax incentives. These have

borne fruit. A vibrant industrial sector has developed, which over the years has continued its growth momentum. In 1992, Sri Lanka's manufacturing output grew by 11 per cent in real terms, while manufactured exports exceeded 60 per cent of total exports.

Agriculture is also being fostered – in particular, the export of non-traditional agricultural products and processed commodities. Agro-industrial and rural industrial based activities are being diversified and actively encouraged. The on-going privatisation of estate management will give an impetus to the plantation sector. Sri Lanka continues to lead the world in the production of fine quality tea.

Measures are being taken to further liberalise the trade and payments systems and introduce a competitive environment with regard to imports. We have a well-developed financial system with off-shore banking facilities. The banking sector has considerably expanded. There are 23 commercial banks of which 17 are international banks. Seven money brokers are active in the interbank market and 15 stock brokers operate in the growing Colombo Stock Exchange where 196 companies are quoted. Several Unit Trusts and venture capital companies have also been formed recently.

The commercialisation of state ventures is being steadily implemented. It has attracted the interest of international investors. Public Sector inefficiency in the use of resources is being progressively eliminated. Public Enterprises are being treated on par with Private Sector Firms. Direct involvement of the State in production and distribution will be minimised.

New avenues of investment and trade are being opened up as a result of the granting of many incentives to the Private Sector. Private Sector participation is being actively promoted. We look upon the Private Sector as the engine of growth.

The economic policies of my Government are aimed at the full utilisation of our economic and human resources. Our objective is to bring about economic growth and ensure a better quality of life for all our people. To achieve this objective, effective mobilisation of resources and investment, must be ensured. Local and foreign investments will be encouraged.

The Board of Investment of Sri Lanka as the sole investment authority offers some of Asia's best incentives for foreign and local investment. With BOI operating as a "One-Stop-Shop" service centre, the investment process has been considerably streamlined. Policies and procedures are kept transparent and simple.

The entire country is considered an Export Processing Zone enabling export-oriented projects to establish operations without geographic limitations. We have investment from over 25 countries. Our investors confirm that they have had the least bureaucratic and administrative delays when setting up operations.

As the result of our liberal economic reforms investor confidence is at its peak. We have achieved an impressive increase in investment approvals over the last year. Market capitalisation transactions on the stockmarket have considerably increased. Despite recession in most developed countries, we have continued to see our economy grow.

By stimulating investment we hope to reduce our dependence on aid. We intend replacing aid with trade. We are actively promoting our exports. As our exports grow, we will have the resources needed for economic independence.

We are making every endeavour to empower the nation economically so that our people will be able to stand on their own feet. We are directing all the resources at our command to decentralise the administrative process. We are making a determined effort to eliminate corruption, waste and injustice.

One of the principal tasks of my Government is to ensure economic, political and social equality and stability. I am firmly committed to the enforcement of discipline through the application of the rule of law and, the restoration of ethical and moral values. The task of ensuring the safety and security of all our people is one of my highest priorities. A negotiated peaceful settlement to Sri Lanka's internal conflict, taking into account the interests of all our people continues to be our goal.

In recent times my country's economy and our people have demonstrated exceptional resilience. The shedding of anachronistic ideologies by adopting an open, outward-looking approach, the creation of a just and tolerant society and a firm commitment to upholding the democratic process, have resulted in extraordinarily consistent investor and donor confidence. Sri Lanka thus continues to be a land of promise, not only for our people but for those who invest in the island's future.

I thank you.

OUR AIM: A FAIR, SIMPLE AND EFFICIENT TAX SYSTEM

Address on the Occasion of the Ceremonial Opening of the Regional Training Programme of the Commonwealth Association of Tax Administrators 5th of July, 1993 – Colombo

It gives me great pleasure to be associated with you at this Opening Ceremony of the Eighth Regional Training Programme of the Commonwealth Association of Tax Administrators. At the outset, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Participants of this Training Programme to Sri Lanka. I hope your stay here will be pleasant and rewarding. Sri Lanka is hosting this Programme for the Second Year. We did so very successfully in 1992 also.

I wish to add a special word of welcome to Mr. Inthiran Chelvathurai. He has guided the affairs of the Commonwealth Association of Tax Administrators as its Executive Secretary for the past 10 years. Mr. Inthiran Chelvathurai had a brilliant career in the Inland Revenue Department of Sri Lanka before moving over to the Commonwealth Association of Tax Administrators (CATA) as its Executive Secretary about ten years ago. Sri Lanka's loss has been CATA's gain.

The Commissioner-General, Inland Revenue, informs me that you come from many different countries. Such variety and diversity is only to be expected in an International Programme of this nature. I cannot help remarking, however, that behind this variety and diversity of Race, Religion, Language and Culture, there are many things that we share in common.

Most of us are from small countries. Most of us have had a common colonial past. Yet out of this experience we have derived certain benefits and advantages. Most of us have had access to the rich treasures of the English Language. Most of our Revenue Statutes are broadly similar to British Legislative Enactments. As you know they are based on British Legislation. We have also followed the Judicial precedents that originated from the same source.

All of us share one other thing in common. We are not affluent countries. Yet, all of us share one common hope and aspiration. That is to provide a better quality of life for our people.

It is in this last bond that I see great relevance and value in the Training Programme whose commencement we witness today. The path of development is long and arduous. There are many theories of Economic Development. As the ancient Romans said "Tot Homines Quot Sententiae" – meaning "As many opinions as so many men". But no theory denies the importance of Revenue in the funding of the development process.

Let me make a brief reference here, to the contribution that the Inland Revenue Department in Sri Lanka has made in this respect. The history of the Inland Revenue Department in Sri Lanka can

be traced back to its small beginning in 1932. At that time it was called the "Income Tax Department". The Department then collected about Rs. 15 Million out of a total Government Revenue of Rs. 126 Million. This was about 12% of the Revenue.

The Inland Revenue Department now collects over 50% of total Government Revenue. The collections for 1992 have reached an all time record of 44.3 Billion which amounts to 51.55% of total Government Revenue. The total collections in the last ten years, i.e., from 1983 to 1992 amounted to Rs. 231.6 Billion. The annual average cost of collection has not exceeded 0.5% of annual collections. The monies collected by the Inland Revenue Department have enabled a host of valuable services to be provided by the Government for the welfare of our people and the development of Sri Lanka. I thank the Officers of the Inland Revenue Department and the Tax Paying Public for this massive contribution to the progress of Sri Lanka.

The Report of the Taxation Commission of 1990 has recommended many changes in the Sri Lanka Tax structure. Some of these recommendations have been implemented already. The other recommendations will be implemented in such a manner as to ensure the establishment of a Tax System that is Fair, Simple and Efficient.

A fair and efficient Tax Administration is a prime requirement for any country. This is the importance and significance of a training programme of this nature. As a layman, I will not venture to pronounce on what areas or issues should be included in such training. I have not the slightest doubt that the organisers of this Programme have formulated a valuable and comprehensive course of training in Management, Administration and Investigation.

I am also happy to hear that two of the Modules for this Training Programme will be handled by the Officers of the Department, namely, the Tax Administration Module and the Investigation Module. This will enable the discussions and training to be conducted from a Sri Lanka perspective.

I wish all Participants and Resource Persons from the Commonwealth Countries, a very pleasant and enjoyable stay in our country. I am sure you will carry happy memories of our beautiful land and the hospitality of our people.

I thank you.

LET THE TRUTH PREVAIL

Address at the Esmond Wickremasinghe Award Ceremony for Journalism – 17th July 1993 at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, Colombo

I am extremely happy to be associated with you at this simple but impressive Ceremony. At the very outset, let me thank the Esmond Wickremasinghe Awards Trust for inviting me to give away the Esmond Wickremasinghe Awards for Journalism. I understand that this is the Second in the series of the Esmond Wickremasinghe Awards for Journalism. The First Awards Ceremony was held in May 1991. I am told that these Awards are made every two years. I must congratulate the Esmond Wickremasinghe Awards Trust for maintaining its momentum enthusiastically and uninterruptedly.

I am particularly pleased to see with us today, our young and energetic Prime Minister, Hon. Ranil Wickremasinghe. As you know, Hon. Ranil Wickremasinghe is the distinguished son of a distinguished father, the late Mr. Esmond Wickremasinghe. Mr. Esmond Wickremasinghe was one of the most accomplished, talented and distinguished journalists of our time. Indeed, he has made a lasting contribution to the development of professional journalism in Sri Lanka. The Standards he strived to achieve in journalism are a lasting legacy to his memory. He inculcated in the young journalists of our country a highly principled code of ethics of journalistic conduct, which is worthy of emulation, especially, in today's context.

It looks as if we have discarded or forgotten the high journalistic standards which were practised by all journalists with great pride and honour, about two or three decades ago. The people have a right to gain access to information freely, truthfully and objectively on all matters of public interest. Is this happening today? When I turn the pages of certain so-called newspapers, I find that by and large they contain falsehoods, half-truths, fabrications and fiction. I do not think that the people can be fooled all the time with this kind of stuff. I am sure the truth will prevail in the end. The credibility of these so-called newspapers will be lost. Finally they will go bankrupt.

It is a well-known ethic of journalism that the right of the people to have a balanced and fair presentation of views on questions of public interest should be honoured by the media. Furthermore, responsible newspapers should promote the languages, cultures, religions and the social values of our people. They should also contribute to the preservation and promotion of high standards of decency, morality, discipline, integrity and the highest standards of public conduct. How many of our newspapers, national or otherwise, are doing this? I hope the large number of young professional journalists present here will take back with them, these thoughts on good journalism. I hope you will make every effort to transform what I am conveying to you in words, into deeds.

Freedom of the press pre-supposes the adoption of the highest standards of publication and reportage. While facts are sacred, comment should be free and independent. Free comment may detract the sanctity of truth if such comment is based on a tissue of lies or unfounded rumours.

Therefore if the press and the media exercise and enjoy the freedom that they desire, they must project foremost the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It is then that the press and the media will earn the respect and admiration of its patrons, the public and, of course, the nation.

What made Mr. Esmond Wickremasinghe such a distinguished journalistic personality? First and foremost, he was a learned man. He had access to a sound and comprehensive education which made him a complete man. He was not only talented but versatile. His activities embraced many fields including law, journalism, publication, commerce, diplomacy and politics.

In his public life Esmond Wickremasinghe reflected deep intellectual perspective. His nationalistic fervour emanated from an honest understanding of the national interest. It was a blend of patriotism with nationalism. It was a non-sectarian perception of Sri Lanka.

The democracy he believed in was a consensual democracy more than adversarial politics. He believed that national problems require national solutions and that they should not be made the subject matter of unending party wars. He also believed that an ongoing dialogue among all democratic political forces was essential for the survival of democracy in Sri Lanka.

How can we help our journalists to achieve these high professional standards? Firstly, they must receive professional training in journalism. At present, there is no institutional arrangement for this purpose. I understand that the Hon. Prime Minister has initiated discussions on this matter. He has already met a cross-section of the media and I understand that discussions are underway. A Committee will be appointed shortly to formulate proposals for the establishment of a Training Institute for Journalists. Let me assure you that the Government is prepared to give all possible assistance towards the successful implementation of such a project.

Secondly, journalists should have opportunities to travel to other parts of the world and gain exposure to true journalism; free of inhibitions. Thirdly, journalism should receive high recognition as a respectable profession. Fourthly, the journalistic profession should be financially rewarding to the journalist.

In conclusion, let me congratulate today's Award Winners for their excellent contribution to journalism. It is my wish that the Esmond Wickremasinghe Awards for Journalism will encourage others to make their own significant contributions to journalism.

In conclusion, let me congratulate today's Award Winners for their excellent contribution to journalism. It is my wish that the Esmond Wickremasinghe Awards for Journalism will encourage others to make their own significant contributions to journalism.

I thank the organisers and members of the Esmond Wickremasinghe Awards Trust for their continuing efforts to perpetuate the memory of Mr. Esmond Wickremasinghe.

HORTICULTURE – A BIG MONEY SPINNER

Address at the Opening of the Horticultural Exhibition –
1993 at Gannoruwa – 19th July, 1993

I thank Hon. Dharmadasa Banda, Minister of Agricultural Development & Research and the staff of his Ministry for inviting me to participate in the opening of this Horticultural Exhibition. I consider it an important need of our times to promote agricultural activities. Our people can derive many economic benefits from agricultural pursuits. With the increase in population, the land area available for agriculture would get reduced. It therefore, becomes necessary for us to make a special effort to engage in intensive farming systems. That means the use of techniques and methods of cultivation to derive greater productivity from a limited land area. We use this method of cultivation in horticulture. The Horticultural Exhibition that we are inaugurating today, therefore, assumes special significance.

Cultivation of fruits, vegetables, flowers and foliage plants are the main horticultural activities in our country. An important thing we have to keep in mind in this connection is that for us to get optimum results from horticulture, scientific methods of cultivation should be popularized. Well, you are the people best equipped with the modern scientific knowledge about these cultivation techniques and methods. It, therefore, becomes your duty to transmit your knowledge to the people. I believe that this Exhibition will be of much educational value to the viewers and a source of encouragement to those engaged in horticulture.

We have in our country a considerable number of people who engage in horticulture. It is an important means of earning Foreign Exchange for our country. The open economic policies of the Government have given an impetus to the cultivation of fruits, vegetables, flowers and foliage plants. These products are being exported as there is a demand for them in the world market. Now there are over 35 large scale export oriented horticultural projects owned by large scale producers. On the one hand, they bring a considerable amount of Foreign Exchange into the country. On the other, they provide employment to a large number of people.

A large number of citizens of this country who own only small plots of land can immensely benefit by engaging themselves in horticulture. They can grow horticultural crops in their homegardens for commercial purposes as well as to meet a part of their food requirements.

Nature has blessed us with a variety of climatic zones. We also have a fertile soil throughout the country. We, therefore, must try more and more to further agricultural research as well as development. In a way this could be considered a challenge that lies before our Department of Agriculture. The many new techniques of cultivation and crop varieties that the Department has developed over the years, show that the Department has responded to this challenge positively.

It would undoubtedly be most useful if Horticultural Exhibitions of this type could be held in other suitable areas too in order to provide wider knowledge on horticulture to the people.

I congratulate the organizers of the Exhibition and all others who have contributed towards its success.

I thank you.

SRI LANKA'S RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE – A HISTORIC SETTING FOR ICOMOS SESSIONS

Address at the Inauguration of the 10th General Assembly of the International Council on Monuments and Sites – B.M.I.C.H., Colombo – 30th July, 1993

I consider it my great pleasure and privilege to be associated with you today. We are assembled here to participate in the Inauguration of the 10th General Assembly of the International Council on Monuments and Sites. This is, indeed, a unique event for all of us in Sri Lanka and, for that matter, in Asia as well. I would like to call it a Historic Meeting in a Historical Setting. Why do I call it a Historic Meeting? I say so, because, this is the first time ever, that this professional body called the ICOMOS is meeting in Asia. By some strange coincidence that first country in Asia happens to be Sri Lanka.

I also said that we are having this Historic Meeting in a Historical Setting. Why do I call this a historical setting? This is, because, ours is a small country with a unique cultural heritage. We, in Sri Lanka, are heirs to a civilisation that can be compared favourably with some of the most advanced ancient civilisations of the world. In fact, Sri Lanka is heir to 6 out of the 292 World Heritage Cultural Sites.

We, in Sri Lanka are very fortunate to have had the opportunity of being associated with ICOMOS for quite some time. ICOMOS is an International Non-Governmental Organization. It has brought together people and institutions actively concerned with the protection and the conservation of Archaeological Sites and Monuments, and such other Architectural and historical edifices.

As a NGO, both nationally and internationally, the activities of the ICOMOS are directed by its Members. Naturally, its effectiveness and the scope of its influence are dependent on their number, their competence and their dynamism. Undoubtedly, it is the dynamism and the enthusiasm of your Organization that has brought about the international recognition that you enjoy today. I am happy to note that you enjoy both consultative and associate status of UNESCO.

I am told that your Organization came into focus in 1965 under the sponsorship of UNESCO. Since then, it moved across the Atlantic to capture the minds of the American people. Now this massive cultural invasion is on its onward march through Asia and the Pacific. I have also been informed that several of our friendly countries, such as, Pakistan, Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand, have joined your Institution. I am equally happy to note that China, one of the patrons of Asian Culture, which is still not a Member of ICOMOS has sent a five-member Delegation as Observers with the intention of joining your Organization.

As you know, the aims and objectives of ICOMOS have been spelt out as follows:

“An Organization that works to promote the application of theory, methodology and scientific techniques for the conservation of Architectural Heritage.”

This, briefly interpreted, in its totality means the conservation of the cultural heritage of every nation. In fact, it covers every corner of the world, over the full span of time. What a noble thought! What a noble objective! What a noble Organization!

As you know, Art, Architecture and Sculpture constitute the very foundations of our Sri Lankan culture. This great cultural tradition was not only internally derived but also organic and harmonious with our environment. Let us have a brief look at our heritage. The great cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa depict a civilisation and a culture enriched by the creativity of the people and the freedoms cherished by them. In Architecture, Sri Lanka has contributed to the creation of some of the finest cultural treasures of mankind. The Abhayagiriya Monastery at Anuradhapura covers 243 hectares. It housed 5,000 Monks. In the 5th Century AD, the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hsien had lived there. This was not the only monastery at Anuradhapura. It is said that there were 17 such Institutions with a probable Monk population of 14,000.

Imagine the constructional, administrative and organizational capabilities required for the establishment and the maintenance of these institutions. Then, there are the edifices such as the Jetavanaramaya – 122 meters – and the Abhayagiriya – 113 meters – two of the tallest Stupas in the world. The Ruvanweli Maha Seya – 90 meters – is the most venerated of the Stupas in Sri Lanka. The Lovamahapaya still displays 1,600 columns and covers an area of 77 meters by 77 meters. In its heyday, it reached the height of 9 storeys of over 49 meters. At an international and practical level, see the genius and organization of our forefathers, in providing services to the people, such as the many hospitals, the wayside rests or Ambalamas and the intricate stone and wooden bridges of ancient times.

Even in town planning, we had our own experts in ancient times. King Pandukabhaya of the 4th Century BC can be regarded as the father of town planning in this country. He laid out the old city of Anuradhapura with four gates, facing the four cardinal directions. He fortified the city with walls and protective moats. The Palace was in the centre of the city. He provided space for merchants and foreigners, for monasteries and ashrams, villas of the nobles and for the common people. It was all done in a thoughtful and practical manner. Where did the knowledge for all this architecture and town planning come from? They came from the experiences of the people. They did not suppress their knowledge and keep to themselves, but wrote them down on ola leaves.

Civilisation, as we know it, dawned more than 10,000 years ago. Since then, mankind has advanced through major thrusts of reform and renewal. In the 19th Century, a new moral order ended the ancient institution of slavery. At the same time, we saw the evolution of the social welfare state. In the mid-20th Century, a new political order ended old-style colonialism. Then, we saw the evolution of a large number of nation-states. A new social order has added human and civil liberties, the rights of women and minorities, to the global agenda. Now, a new international economic order and a new information order offer the potential, for more equitable distribution of goods and services.

In delving into these ideals and objectives, an important question came to my mind. What are our priorities? Are they Monuments only? Certainly, not. Our priorities should be Man, Monuments and Mountains. It is for this reason that Lord Buddha, 2500 years ago, when asked by His Disciple, Ven. Ananda, "to whom should a Stupa (Monument) be built", Lord Buddha was silent. When pressed for the 3rd time, Lord Buddha replied, "for a King or a Noble Leader", and he quickly added "If Monuments were built for all, where is the living going to live."

These words of wisdom, although 2500 years old, have still a message for us today. As professionals, you have to balance your sentiments with the wants of society, on the premise that the survival of Man is of prime consideration. The commitment and the joy of Man to save Monuments are, indeed, themselves, a want of Man. If this be the demand of Man, then you have more than a cause for preservation and protection. The same is true for mountains and the nature-made heritage of the Universe.

In conclusion, I would like to share with you, a thought that has crossed my mind. To my mind, cultural heritage is my village, my surroundings, and the Shrine at which I worship. I wish to place before you, the Professionals of the Heritage of Man, the thought that man lives not only in palaces, but in peasant huts as well; that Gods and Devas not only live in massive Monuments, but in the simple village Shrines as well. If your noble Institution is groomed to protect and safeguard the full heritage of mankind, please pay equal respect to the rich and the poor, the magnificent and the simple. Let your Organization be universal not only in word, but more in deed.

As the President of this country, may I welcome you to this pleasant land of simple people. If we have no material riches to endow upon you, we, at least, have a spiritual welcome in a sincere smile that is, deep and spirited.

I hope you will enjoy your stay in Sri Lanka and feel free to express and exchange the views noble to your profession. I wish your General Assembly every success. Ladies and Gentlemen, I have great pleasure in declaring it open.

I thank you.

DEVELOPING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY VITAL IN ACHIEVING NIC STATUS

Address at the 13th National Computer Conference
Organized by the Computer Society of Sri Lanka –
Hilton Hotel – 6th August, 1993

I congratulate the Computer Society of Sri Lanka for having organized this "National Computer Conference". I thank the Organizers for inviting me to inaugurate it. I accepted your Invitation, without hesitation, for three reasons. Firstly, I consider it my duty to lend my patronage to the Computer Society of Sri Lanka, which is an important Professional Body, engaged in the development and promotion of Information Technology. Information Technology is one of the most advanced technologies developed in this Century. Secondly, I consider it my duty to recognize the important work you are engaged in, as a non-profit-making Voluntary Organization at the National Level.

Thirdly, I find that the Theme of your Conference this year is extremely topical and results oriented. Your Theme this year is "The Role of Information Technology in Achieving Newly Industrialized Country Status by the Year 2000". As you know, the World today has now entered the Information Age. In this Information Age, Computers are an invaluable asset. They are also an indispensable vehicle in our march towards rapid economic development. In fact, the transfer of appropriate Information Technology, including Computer Technology, is a sine-qua-non for achieving Sri Lanka's objective of "Newly Industrialized Country Status" by the Year 2000.

Today, we are very much in the middle of the Information Revolution. This is the third such Revolution in human history. History has recorded the Agricultural Revolution. History has also recorded the Industrial Revolution. Both Revolutions contributed to high productivity, greater automation and modernisation. Both Revolutions contributed to the improvement of the quality of life of the people. Undoubtedly, the Information Revolution will produce similar or better results.

Satellite Communication together with the Electronic Media have broken down all geographical and political barriers. The speed with which information can be exchanged has made the world much smaller than what it was. In fact, the world is shrinking all the time.

The Information Revolution has been with us for about a decade. Today, Computers have become indispensable in the processing of data. The information systems we have, include, Main Frame, Mini and Personal Computers. Modern Telecommunication Systems have played a key role in the optimum utilisation of Information Technology. The marriage between Computers and Communications has revolutionised our work. Packages of maximum information within minimum space are now a reality. As we move into the high-tech age, networking and integration are becoming household words.

We are living in a new world from what we knew 25 years ago. The Information Revolution is upon us. Today proficiency in Information Systems is an essential pre-requisite for success in almost every conceivable human endeavour. Our ability to ensure the best use of our resources comes from the reliable and the good use of Information Technology. It gives reliable information. It enhances the decision making process.

Today, the use of Computers in Sri Lanka has spread far and wide. They are providing information to the Public and Private Sector Agencies, for better decision making. They are providing better customer services at our Banks and Business Houses. They are expeditiously processing our children's Public Examination Results. They are providing many other services. Where Banking services are concerned, Sri Lankans are beginning to have the services equal to that of people of developed countries. We are now having access to Automatic Cash Dispensers, which I am told, will spread out Islandwide, in a few years' time.

All this has been made possible because our people are highly intelligent and educated. Our people can easily acquire new skills. They can easily adapt themselves to the application of new technologies. We must keep abreast of all new developments in Information Technology. We must, specially, concentrate on Software development. Software development will link us to the Computer Industry. It will open the doors for Exports. It will create avenues of employment.

Infotel Lanka '92 held last October, gave Information Technology a national character. As you all know, Infotel was a success, because people from the Computer Society, as well as, the other relevant associations worked closely with the Government, in bringing to Sri Lanka it's first truly International Telecommunications and Information Technology Conference and Exhibition. As you all know, the exhibition was attended by people from many parts of the country and many parts of society. In addition, the Schools Programme provided a large number of students with the opportunity to see and understand some of these technologies. Infotel was the first tangible proof that our people were interested in Information Technology. Also, that interest was not confined to Colombo.

While public interest was clearly demonstrated at Infotel, the value of Information Technology and it's role in our development was recognized in 1984, when the Computer and Information Technology Council (CINTEC) was established. However, over the years, due to other pressures, we were not able to focus on Information Technology. Nevertheless, there is a positive note to this because technology has been changing rapidly and, at the same time, costs of technology have dropped. As a result, we, as a developing nation, are now able to leap frog the older technologies into the newer technologies. If we had embraced the older technologies on a national scale, the transition to the newer technologies would have been difficult and costly.

Sri Lanka is now at a threshold where Information Technology can play a significant part in our goal of achieving NIC status. As you are aware, there is an accelerated programme to upgrade our Telecommunications Infrastructure. We are implementing Digital Switches which are necessary, not only for voice, but also for data communications. Similarly, Sri Lanka is part of an international effort of introducing a fibre optic link to the international network. As a result of these developments, it will be possible for us to offer some of the newer Telecommunications Technologies, which will allow our network to transmit not only our voices, but also data and video images at fairly low costs.

In line with developments in the Telecommunications infrastructure, as you are aware, we have appointed a new Chairman of CINTEC and we are in the process of restructuring CINTEC. We are also developing a National Information Technology Policy Framework which will be announced

in the near future. In addition to this Policy Framework, we will announce a set of Strategies and specific initiatives to implement these strategies. Information Technology is one of the most important components of our strategy for achieving NIC Status by the year 2000. Therefore, my Government is fully committed to implementing all that is required to achieving this.

We must focus on manufacturing industries. We must also focus on industries that can exploit the intellectual capacity of our people. One of the most important components in our development effort is the development and harnessing of this intellectual capacity. In order to harness this, we need to strengthen the Information Technology related training programmes in both the formal and vocational educational institutions. More students are turning to Information Technology to acquire specific skills not provided in the usual educational process. This is clearly demonstrated by the many private training centres that are in operation.

My Government sees an opportunity for Sri Lanka to successfully participate in the global software market, which is estimated to be about US\$ 400 billion by the Year 2000. For us to capture even a small part of this market we must look to overcoming the barriers we face.

In conclusion, the message I want to leave with you, is that Sri Lanka as a nation, if we are to successfully compete in the global market, has to move in the direction that the industrialized nations and our competitors are moving. Therefore, in the context of Information Technology, we must move away from proprietary hardware and software to an Open Systems environment. We must embrace the fourth wave of computing which is the Client/Server concept as soon as possible.

I wish The 13th National Computer Conference all success.

I thank you.

WE MUST FURTHER DIVERSIFY PRODUCTS AND MARKETS

Address on the occasion of the presentation of the Presidential Export Awards – 1992 – BMICH – 10th August, 1993

I congratulate the Ministry of Trade and Commerce and the Export Development Board for organizing this “12th Presidential Export Awards Ceremony.” You have done so, with a great deal of precision and attention to detail. You have also, ensured the continuity of this Awards Scheme since 1981. At the same time, you have maintained the highest standards of impartiality and objectivity in the selection of the Award Winners.

The promotion and expansion of exports is a key element in our development strategy. Export development acts as a catalyst in the achievement of our several macro-economic objectives. On the one hand, it promotes economic growth while earning valuable foreign exchange. On the other hand, it generates employment, while bridging the gap between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots.’

The Government’s intentions have been made very clear by declaring the period 1992 to 2001, as the “Decade of Exports.” The Government is offering a package of incentives to the export sector. Among these incentives, the Export Awards Scheme conducted by the Export Development Board, is of special significance. It gives the nation an opportunity to appreciate and acclaim excellence in export performance. The Award winners of today have contributed to the Export Development process in an exemplary manner. They have set standards for the others to emulate.

Our products, not only the traditional ones of tea, rubber and coconut, but our new manufactured industrial products too have proved to be of high quality and competitive in price. Our garment exports to the United States alone, last year, reached the figure of US \$850 Million. This is almost the level of the foreign aid that we normally look forward to, from the global community.

Sri Lanka has embarked on a policy of Export led Growth. We believe that this is the correct path to follow. This policy will enable us to provide full employment and a better quality of life to our people. Exports can, also, contribute to the transfer of new and advanced technology. They also ensure the continued maintenance of high quality standards. They ensure the upgrading of the technological processes while enhancing competitiveness.

We are determined to achieve “Newly Industrialized Country” (NIC) status by the Year 2000. The past few years have seen Sri Lanka achieve spectacular advances in economic liberalisation and social progress. We hope to get away from our dependence on aid. Sooner or later, we will replace aid with trade. When our exports grow, we will have all the resources we need to pay for our essential imports.

As you are aware, we have encountered many difficulties, in the expansion of our exports. Attracting adequate investments and finding steady export markets are two major constraints. We have to upgrade and modernise our infrastructure. As a developing nation, we will have to overcome these shortcomings by resorting to basic structural changes.

The world before us is changing rapidly. The International Trade scenario, in particular, is undergoing unprecedented changes. The economic superpowers like USA and the European Community are now moving towards forming Custom Unions, in order to strengthen their economies. Europe is now being transformed into a "Single European Market" with a single currency, a unified banking system and free trade, devoid of geographical boundaries and customs barriers. Furthermore, USA, Canada and Mexico are joining hands to form a Customs Union, where free movement of goods and services are to take place.

In the South East Asian Region, ASEAN is also exploring possibilities of forming a Free Trade Area. What will be the real impact of these changes? Are these countries going to buy more from us? This is unlikely. The greater chances are for the expansion of Regional Trade. Some are of the view that the volume of trade will be increased as a result of the removal of customs and tariff barriers.

There is also currently an aggressive campaign by countries like Vietnam, China, Pakistan and India to attract foreign investments. We also need foreign investments to start new ventures. The challenge before us is the economic recession prevailing in the developed world. Since some of our export products are recession-sensitive, we will have to diversify our markets, as well as our products, to counter the ill-effects of recession. We will have to constantly monitor the attractiveness of our Incentive Schemes in comparison with those of our competitors.

Apart from monitoring the developments in the international trading environment affecting exports, we will have to study the flow of our import-export trade, in order to identify priority areas, where our attention is required. If we have a look at our trade balance, which is a determining factor in the overall balance of payments position, there has been a recurring imbalance for the last few decades. In 1992, the trade deficit was SDR 686 Million. Although there was a gain of SDR 61 Million against the previous year, still we cannot be satisfied as there is a large gap in the trade balance.

At present, we are experiencing an adverse trade deficit with India. India with her 840 Million Population is potentially a good future market for Sri Lanka. Also, we should not forget the other SAARC neighbours. We believe that more trade could be generated among SAARC countries when the provisions of the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) are being implemented in the near future.

The countries we will have to concentrate on, in developing our exports during this decade, are unquestionably, those in our own South Asian Region and in the Far East. In this regard, countries, such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hongkong and Singapore are very important. If we can promote our products aggressively in these markets we will be able to reduce our trade deficit considerably. Therefore, I am sure you will pay greater attention to Intra Regional and Inter Regional Trade.

While we concentrate on these markets to push our exports in the immediate future, we should also look out for other possibilities. In this regard, I wish to make special mention of the Russian Federation and the Commonwealth of Independent States. These countries, as you know,

belonged to the former Soviet Block. All these countries are now following open Economic Policies. Their doors are being opened to the rest of the world. They may be having initial problems of cash flow and other resource constraints. However, in time to come, they will become potential outlets for our products. In fact, we are encouraging our entrepreneurs to make contact with their counterparts in those countries.

The economic policies of my Government are aimed at the full utilisation of our economic and human resources. Our objective is to bring about economic growth with equity, alleviate poverty and ensure a better quality of life for all our people. To achieve this objective the fruits of labour must be shared equitably. Local and foreign investments will be encouraged. Direct involvement of the State in production and distribution should be minimised.

We must further diversify our products and markets. Unless we do that, we will experience sluggish growth in respect of our exports and trade. We welcome your new product ideas, new ventures and new investments, to cater to future market needs. In achieving the national objective of rapid growth in trade, the Export Development Board renders an invaluable service to the Export Sector.

The "Export Awards Scheme" is also one such programme, designed to encourage those who are involved in various activities in the field of exports. No country can develop without the dedication and the commitment on the part of all its people. Therefore, I appeal to the export community, in particular, to work hard for the future prosperity of our Motherland.

I thank you.

DEVELOPMENT WITH EQUITY – SRI LANKA'S GOAL

Address at the South Asia Regional Conference of the
Society for International Development – Oberoi Hotel,
Colombo, 18th, August 1993

I am extremely happy to be associated with you at this important South Asian Conference convened by the Sri Lanka Chapter of the Society for International Development. I am happy to note that the South Asian Countries are represented at the Conference by several distinguished personalities in the field of economic development. I find that the theme of your seminar is "Economic Growth and Human Development with Equity, Security and Sustainability". It is a topic which is very relevant to Sri Lanka in the current context. It is also a topic which is very much in line with Sri Lanka's current development strategy. Your theme is intimately linked to the content and direction of social welfare policies in Sri Lanka in the last forty years.

As you are aware, our Economic Policies are aimed at achieving two major objectives. One is to stabilize the economy. The other is to move on to a sustained growth path. In 1989 our GDP growth rate was 2.3 per cent. Since then we have been maintaining an average growth rate of around 5 per cent. In 1990 the rate of inflation was almost 22 per cent. Today it has been brought down to 12 per cent. Industrial exports have become the primary engine of growth. Industrial growth has surged to 11 per cent per annum. At present, over 65 per cent of our exports are industrial products. Garment exports have taken the lead with 50 per cent of total exports.

Our achievements in the field of empowering the people are many. We have devised many methods of empowering our people. The first is to give them strength nutritionally and economically. This is being done through "Janasaviya" and the 15,000 Projects Programme. The second is to increase their incomes and the buying power. This is being done by increasing production and generating employment. In fact, unemployment has been brought down from 15.5 per cent in 1990 to around 13 per cent in 1992. Economic and Administrative restructuring has enabled the creation of 1.3 Million job opportunities in the Public and Private Sectors since 1989. The third strategy is to stabilize prices through greater production and higher productivity. The fourth is the reduction of family expenditure.

Presently, we are empowering the people through the Janasaviya Programme. Janasaviya is now in its Fourth Round. It is giving coverage to more than one-third of the country. Altogether, up to now 2.2 Million persons have benefited under this Programme. The 15,000 Projects Programme is another way of empowering the people. These Projects will cater to the needs of our people. They will harness the ingenuity and the experience of our people. They will project the independence of our people. These projects will be chosen by the people themselves. They will be implemented by them. They will be owned by them. These projects will help increase production and employment.

Social welfare expenditure in 1988 was only Rs. 1,895 Million. Today it has increased to nearly Rs. 10,000 Million. This is more than a five fold increase over this period. Incomes of low and middle income families have been augmented. In the case of Government employees, considerable salary increases have been granted since 1988. On wages alone, the Government is now incurring an additional expenditure of over Rs. 8,500 Million. Similarly, the Government has increased pension payments.

We have succeeded in empowering our people both qualitatively and quantitatively. Sri Lanka has recorded the highest per capita income in South Asia at US\$ 550. There is a phenomenal increase in purchase of consumer goods, household goods, clothing and vehicles. In 1990 there were 630,000 registered vehicles including motor cycles. Today, it is over 900,000. It is quite obvious that our people are enjoying a better quality of life than their South Asian neighbours.

In regard to "human development", it is clear that Sri Lanka's progress when compared with other developing countries is indeed remarkable. Throughout the last four decades, human development in Sri Lanka has focused both policywise and implementationwise on equity. Likewise, Sri Lanka's social welfare and poverty alleviation programmes have been sustained even though the cost of these programmes has imposed continuing strains on Government finances. Successive Governments have sustained the social welfare and poverty alleviation programmes because they have given economic security and contentment to the large mass of our people.

Sri Lanka had embarked upon social welfare programmes from the time we gained Independence. These programmes have been progressively expanded since the nineteen fifties. For some considerable time, perhaps until the late eighties, social welfare programmes and specific measures aimed at poverty alleviation were not looked upon with favour by economists and leading International Lending Agencies. Sri Lanka had frequently come in for criticism from the latter for spending large sums of money on social welfare from the Government budget. Despite this, Sri Lanka has had these policies in operation for more than 45 years.

Following free education and health services, the Government also provides irrespective of income levels, subsidies on basic food stuff, particularly rice and flour. The prices of milk foods and infant milk foods were also kept low through subsidies. Rents had been under control for small houses from the late forties and similarly public transport fares have had a heavy element of subsidy. Before 1977 these were not specifically targetted to the poor. As a result, the Government budget annually had to set apart increasing sums of money to provide these services to the rich and the middle income earners also. After 1977, except free education and health services, all other social welfare programmes were targetted to the poor.

As a result of the welfare measures, Sri Lanka was able to produce a healthy and educated labour force and an economically very active population. In terms of development of human resources, Sri Lanka has gone well ahead of most of the other South Asian countries. The Social indicators such as the population growth rate, birth rate, death rate, infant mortality rate, maternity mortality rate, literacy and life expectancy are now on par with those countries which are referred to as Newly Industrialised Countries and some of the developed countries in the Western World.

Even after the extensive liberalisation of the economy, in 1977 and the removal of controls and the encouragement given to the private sector to invest and to do business, as far as the poor were concerned, the Government did not curtail the most essential social welfare programmes. The liberal and open economic policies did not forget the poor. The Government continued with the commitments to the needy and destitute.

After 1977, the wide range of food subsidies were replaced by a Food Stamp Scheme which was designed only for the poor where the latter were identified on the basis of a particular income cut off point. The Food Stamp Scheme has been in operation since 1978 and nearly 50 per cent of the population are beneficiaries under this scheme.

In 1989, after the election of the present Government under the leadership of President Ranasinghe Premadasa, the Government introduced the most innovative Poverty Alleviation Programme that the World had seen so far. It is no exaggeration to say that hardly any other country in the World has had a comprehensive and sharply focused programme designed to uplift the poor and for the development of the human being than our Janasaviya Programme. The programme indeed is unique to Sri Lanka.

The Janasaviya or the National Poverty Alleviation Programme has two components. The first is to provide over a period of two years a package of food so that a family would get over immediate difficulties of getting adequate levels of nutrition. The second part of the programme is that the Government provides a capital sum which will be used to procure equipment and working capital to engage in productive economic activities.

The Janasaviya programme is now in its third phase. The first round of the programme covering 160,000 families started in 1989 and was completed in September 1991. The second round which commenced in December 1990 was completed in November 1992. The third and fourth rounds which are now in operation commenced in February and March 1993 respectively. The first and second rounds of Janasaviya programme have been fully completed and more than 320,000 families or approximately 10 per cent of the families in the country have been covered by the programme.

You will appreciate that the Human Development Programme in Sri Lanka has been considerably accelerated by focusing the development effort primarily on the poor people. It is indeed by improving the living conditions of the poorest of the poor that we can ensure that all people in our country will be entitled to living standards which will not show significant disparities.

I invite this forum to look at Sri Lanka's experience both appreciatively and critically. I trust that the experience that we have gained and the progress that we have achieved will help to implement similar programmes in other developing countries where poverty continues to be the main social challenge. I wish your deliberations all success.

I thank you.

KNOWLEDGE – A TREASURE THAT CANNOT BE STOLEN

Address at the Graduation Ceremony of the Aquinas College of Higher Studies – 20th August, 1993

This is my first visit to Aquinas College of Higher Studies. I welcome this opportunity. It will help me to understand the working of one of the premier private Educational Institutions in Sri Lanka. Aquinas College was founded by late Rev. Fr. Peter Pillai in 1954 as an Undergraduate Department of St. Joseph's College, Colombo. The primary objective of the College was to prepare candidates for London University external examinations.

During the last four decades, several hundreds of students have graduated from Aquinas College in the various fields of educational and professional studies. It provides courses of studies, especially for adult students, who fail to gain admission into Universities or being employed are unable to follow full time University courses.

I am extremely happy to find that your College has given the teaching of English a prominent place. The School of English, opened in 1973, by Rev. Dr. W. L. A. Don Peter has helped especially the adult students who are badly in need of acquiring proficiency in both spoken and written English. This helps them to better their prospects for study or employment abroad. I am informed that the school provides a three-year course in speech, grammar, composition, comprehension and literature. Nearly 4500 students including several Buddhist Monks have participated in the English courses and an equal number of students have obtained Degrees. This is indeed a unique achievement for any institution.

I also find that the Undergraduate Department has produced nearly 600 graduates. Nearly 500 students have successfully completed the Diploma in Journalism and obtained the Diploma. Aquinas College today provides nearly 13 courses of study and more than 5000 students are on roll.

Yours is a non-profit making educational institution. It caters to the low and middle income groups of this country. The majority of the Diploma in Agriculture students are, I am told, from the poorest families of the rural areas.

The main objective of education should be the building of character. The building of character involves the inculcation of discipline. Discipline is a word that means many things to many people. Restraint and the determination constitute the heart of discipline. Discipline is essential to build a free, just and prosperous society. Discipline does not come only from outside. Self-discipline is the most effective form of discipline. However, self-discipline is not a genetic attribute. It can be learned. It can be taught. It is evident in the character of your students. As with individuals and institutions, it is so with nations. We must remember that indisciplined societies hardly ever make any progress.

Character is not built from text books. It is also not obtained by passing examinations. Character is formed by example and inspiration. Teachers must understand that it is their duty to be examples to their students. Their personal discipline will be reflected in the behaviour of their students. The aptitude and attitudes of students will not all be the same. Their interests will be diverse. Good teachers will discover varying aptitudes and nurture those that are constructive.

As you leave these portals of learning and erudition, do not for a moment presume that you have completed your education. In fact, if I may say so, you have only just embarked on a voyage over the vast ocean of education. As you know, the term 'graduate' comes from the Latin word "gradus" meaning "step". So you have only taken a step. I hope you will not stop there. The learning process does not end with this initial step but goes on, no matter till when. Drink deep from the fountain of knowledge, always remembering that a little learning is a dangerous thing.

Knowledge is a treasure which cannot be robbed by thieves or enemies; which cannot be washed away by flood waters nor be grabbed by kings and potentates even if they became enraged. This is how our poets have translated this concept into verse:

“නිබ්බන්දන සොර සතුරන් ගත නොහේ	නා
එසැබ මනාවත් වතුරෙන් වල නොහේ	නා
කෝප වුවත් රජ මැනිලත් ගත නොහේ	නා
උගනමනා සිල්පයමයි මතු රැකේ	නා”

Therefore, it is not in vain, that our nation’s poets have extolled the virtues of learning:–

“අල්ලව සිහුවත් රසනැති කැටිලි	නකා
වල්කොල බිම අතුට නිදි නොලැබ දක්	නකා
කල්ගිය රෙදි වැරලි හැඳ දැලි කෑතත්	වකා
ඇල්මෙත් අකුරු උගනිටි දුදිඊ වැඩ	නකා”

This verse tells you that, even if there is no tasty food to eat, no proper clothing to wear and no comfortable bed to sleep on, yet, for your own future betterment, learn your letters with great devotion.

So remember that acquisition of knowledge and learning is in your own interest and for your own future. Knowledge is power and the learned, as you know, wield power far mightier than any that can be achieved, bought or sold. Also do remember that your own motherland, your country and the nation and of course humanity should be the beneficiaries of your learning. And in that process you should ask not what the country should give you, but rather what you should give your country, your motherland, which is your own native land.

These are the thoughts which I wish to leave behind with you. I wish you success in every endeavour that you will undertake in the future.

I thank you.

SERVE NOT ONLY TO SATISFY BUT ALSO DELIGHT CUSTOMER

Address at the Postal Excellence Awards Ceremony on
22nd August 1993 at the BMICH

I consider myself fortunate and privileged to have been able to attend this ceremony in this Conference Hall on the invitation of the Hon. Minister of Posts and Telecommunications. When I see the many smiling faces, my mind goes back to the period between the late 1970s and early 1980s during which time I functioned as Minister in charge of Posts & Telecommunications. As you all know, the Postal Department has a history of more than 175 years. During the long period of its existence, the Postal Department has functioned more as an organisation rendering a community service than as a commercial venture. The Department's development process, its attitudes towards the introduction of new technology and processes and the development of human resources, etc., have proceeded in keeping with this basic objective.

From the time of the formation of the new Government in 1977 by our party, we formulated and implemented Governmental and economic policies, more to suit an open economy. As an enterprise, Postal Department's functions also should be organised to suit the changing needs resulting from open economic policies, as it is a national requirement to do so. Otherwise, the Postal Department would be pushed aside from the path of development. Apart from this, there is another reason why a rapid development should take place in the postal sector. All over the world communication development takes place at an extremely rapid speed. Therefore, competition has become stiff and intense. It is not surprising for competitors to resort to modern technologies and marketing systems like electronic mail services, sophisticated telecommunication systems, and speed post services. In this background, if the postal service lags behind, the result will be for it to get pushed aside by competition.

In short, this means that in an atmosphere of intense competition where enterprises strive to maintain a competitive edge by using the latest technological advances, our failure to meet the needs and expectations of our customers will result in dire consequences. This situation is by no means unique to the postal sector. It is a phenomenon common to all sectors of the economy, and provides an object lesson. We have therefore not only to satisfy the customer, but to "delight" him as well.

The answer to the question how to "delight" the customer is simple. The customer can be delighted, it may be said, by achieving very high and maximum excellence standards in quality of service. This is a very simple answer. However, it is extremely difficult to realise this in the field of management. Had it been a simple process, no business in Sri Lanka or any other country would ever have gone bankrupt. Government institutions such as Departments, Corporations would not have been subjected to severe criticism in the Parliament and by the media. That is why I wish to emphasise the fact that attaining high levels of excellence in management is not an easy task.

The customer will return to us depending on how successfully his needs are fulfilled in relation to reliability, timeliness in service, etc. In short, the success of the service would depend on customer satisfaction. This is a common feature applicable not only to the postal service but to any enterprise, for that matter.

We can see three stages where the quality of a service or a product is classified. The first is the Fundamental Quality Standard. The ability to deliver a letter to any part of the island within 24 to 48 hours is a fundamental quality standard. The second is the Competitive Quality Standard. As an illustration of this, I am reminded of the Speed Postal Service commenced by the Department of Posts in 1993 to deliver letters to Singapore in 24 hours and to have letters delivered from Singapore to Sri Lanka within the same time. The third level is Quality Creation. I am informed that the Postmaster General is taking action to have about 50 Fax Machines installed in the main Post Offices which would make possible the remittance of money from any one of them to another within a matter of minutes. That is creation of high quality standard in service. The customer will be "delighted" by such activities.

By the year 2000 we expect to enter into the Newly Industrialized Country Status (NIC). An important pre-requisite for this is the capability to produce high quality goods and services. For that, Postal and other communication media should develop rapidly along with other sectors such as industry, agriculture and exports.

The Postmaster General alone cannot achieve a high standard of service. The Secretary of the Ministry alone cannot do so. The Hon. Minister cannot achieve it all by himself. For that the strong and dedicated commitment and cooperation of the employees are essential. Excellence is not achieved effortlessly. It has to be planned. It has to be created within the organisation. Therefore, it is an exercise where everyone from top to bottom in the postal organisation should participate. Participation should be accompanied by attitudinal changes as well. Therefore, it can be stated that excellence in service is the outcome of a mixture of dedication, correct attitudes, talent, communication skills, management and aspirations. Towards this end, it would be necessary to have training, education, supervision and appreciation of employees by the Management.

This evening, we witness a step taken towards excellence development. What we do today is the appreciation of managers and other employees who toiled hard for the upliftment of service standards. I expect these Excellence Awards would result in encouraging the twenty-three thousand strong work-force of the Department of Posts to greater effort in the performance of their duties. The appreciation of the work-force, as done today, I hope, will be an example to other Government Institutions as well.

I fervently hope that others in the public service would be similarly motivated to enhance their talents and knowledge. In the process of evaluation of excellence in service the Management itself would have better understood the weaknesses in the organisation and identified the areas where management development should take place. I consider this another salutary benefit flowing from such programmes.

Last year too I attended the Excellence Awards Ceremony of the Postal Department. It is with much pleasure that I attend this ceremony today for the second time. I sincerely thank the Hon. Minister and the organizers for inviting me to this ceremony. Lastly, I would like to remind you of the saying "do the right things right, first time – every time". If you adhere to this saying, you are bound to receive the felicity, fortitude and guidance necessary to achieve excellence. I congratulate and extend my good wishes to all Award Winners. Finally let me wish the Postal Excellence Awards Programme all success.

Thank you.

J. R. J. CULTURAL CENTRE – A RICH SOURCE FOR STUDY OF HISTORY AND CULTURE

Address on the occasion of the Ceremonial Inauguration of the J. R. Jayewardene Cultural Centre at No. 191, Dharmapala Mawatha, Colombo 7 – 27th August, 1993

I am extremely happy to be associated with you today. We are participating in a historic ceremony. It is indeed historic in every sense of the word. The J. R. Jayewardene Cultural Centre is the brainchild of President J. R. Jayewardene. It has been established under the J. R. Jayewardene Centre Act, No. 77 of 1988. The Act describes the J. R. Jayewardene Centre as a Depository for Historical Research, Archives and Library.

The Law provides for the J. R. Jayewardene Centre to be administered and managed by a Board of Governors with the President of Sri Lanka as the Chairman, and consisting of living past Presidents, the Prime Minister, the Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, the Secretary to the President, the Public Trustee, the Director of National Archives and two other members appointed by the President. The Law stipulates that the Centre shall be housed at No. 191, Dharmapala Mawatha, Colombo 7, which, as you know, was the home of the late Hon. E. W. Jayewardene, K. C., a Judge of the Supreme Court and the father of President J. R. Jayewardene.

This beautiful and majestic bungalow later on changed hands. The Embassy of the People's Republic of China came to be housed here for some time. Subsequently, in February 1988, the Sri Lanka Government purchased this property for a sum of Rs. 50 million from the Government of the People's Republic of China for the purpose of establishing the J. R. Jayewardene Centre. Further, the President's Fund has given a grant of Rs. 35 million to be utilised for the establishment of this Centre and for its upkeep.

This Cultural Centre is made up of a Museum, a Library, an Archival Depository, a Japanese Hall and a Museum, a Japanese Garden and an Auditorium. The aims and objects of this Centre are, indeed, laudable and far-reaching. First and foremost, it will encourage and foster the ideals and the causes which President Jayewardene cherished and championed during his long, arduous and distinguished career.

I understand that the Museum at this Cultural Centre contains approximately 600 exhibits – mostly gifts from Heads of State and Government to President Jayewardene. Some of these exhibits are priceless. One such exhibit is the original of a manuscript brought to Sri Lanka from Arakan in Burma for the higher ordination or the 'Upasampada' Ceremony of Buddhist Monks, more than 300 years ago. The Archives will contain over 1000 documents pertaining to events in which President Jayewardene played a significant role such as the Colombo Plan in 1950 and the Japanese Peace Treaty Conference of San Francisco in 1951. It will also contain his personal diaries from 1932 to 1978.

Also, only a few of us are aware that the Library at this Cultural Centre contains over 16,000 volumes presented by President J. R. Jayewardene from his father and other members of his family. Also it contains thousands of valuable books meticulously collected by President Jayewardene himself from his school days at Royal College, Colombo.

Many are under the impression that this Centre has been set up to foster and promote the life and work of President Jayewardene. This is absolute nonsense. For the benefit of those under such wrong impressions, may I respectfully point out that "Ignorance is Bliss".

On the contrary, this Centre has been set up to promote the study of Buddhism and Comparative Religion. It has been set up to promote the study of and research into the historical, social, political, economic and legal development of Sri Lanka. It will promote the study and practice of democracy and the Rule of Law in Sri Lanka. It will also promote the development of the arts and literature of Sri Lanka. These are some of the noble objectives of this Centre.

Therefore you will appreciate that the J. R. Jayewardene Centre is a Public Institution. It is a repository of rich source material on contemporary history as well as religion, art and culture. It contains some rare documents on the Freedom Struggle and the Upsurge of Nationalism. These valuable documents will be preserved, conserved and stored in this Centre for present and future generations to make good use of them.

These documents are available to us today due to the generosity, foresight and public spiritedness of President Jayewardene. They are available to us today because he had been so methodical in his ways and far-sighted in his thinking from his young days. I hope present and future Scholars, Researchers and Students will make the best use of this great Treasure House of Knowledge, Experience and Fortitude.

I understand that Japan has granted substantial assistance towards the establishment of the J. R. Jayewardene Cultural Centre. Japan is Sri Lanka's eternal friend. That lasting friendship is due to the great support that President Jayewardene extended to Japan in her hour of need at the Japanese Peace Treaty Conference in San Francisco in 1951. Among the gifts in the Japanese Hall at this Centre is a bronze bust of President Jayewardene from the people of Japan. The inscription on this bust reads, "Dedicated to President J. R. Jayewardene, the great benefactor of the Japanese people as a token of their deep gratitude for President Jayewardene's effort at the San Francisco Peace Treaty Conference in 1951".

As you all are aware, it was at this Conference in 1951 that President Jayewardene, quoting Lord Buddha, stated that "Hatred does not cease by Hatred but by Love alone". I wish to conclude on precisely that note. Let me convey the same Message of Peace to all our communities in Sri Lanka and especially to those who are terrorising our brethren in the North and the East. Forget the past and unite to develop our country. Love begets love and conquers all.

We in Sri Lanka are the beneficiaries of Japan's generosity and kindness. This has been made possible through the words of non-violence and friendship uttered by President Jayewardene on that historic occasion. What was considered good for Japan must surely be good for all communities in Sri Lanka.

I am confident that in the years ahead the J. R. Jayewardene Cultural Centre will become an International Centre of excellence patronized by students, scholars and the learned alike for the collection and the dissemination of knowledge for the greater good of humanity.

I thank you.

ACCOUNTANTS PERFORM VITAL SERVICE BEHIND THE SCENE

Address at the 43rd Annual General Meeting of the Sri Lanka Accountants' Service Association – Sarasavipaya, Colombo – 3rd September, 1993

It gives me great pleasure to be associated with you, at the 43rd Annual General Meeting of the Sri Lanka Accountants' Service Association. When I received your invitation to be the Chief Guest at today's proceedings, I had no hesitation in accepting it because, as Finance Minister, I am the Minister in charge of the Accountants' Service. As you are aware, you are an important group of public officials in this country. Very often people do not see you. However, I know that a large number of you work long hours and provide a very vital service to the Government, to the country and to the people. In every institution, there is a need to manage funds. Therefore, some knowledge in accounts is needed in every institution. As the institution becomes more complex in terms of financial management, we also need more skilled and senior Accountants to handle the finances of such institutions.

I am informed that your service which started in the late 40s, provided an opportunity for a number of Accountants to get together in 1950 and form an Association. During the early days, when the service was "young and growing" your responsibilities were confined to looking after the finances of fairly small Ministries and Departments. As you know, this picture has changed drastically during the last four decades.

The changes initially took the form of managing commercially oriented activities within the departmental framework. Since the departmental framework was inadequate to handle such activities, we had to gradually bring such activities under more flexible and often commercially oriented public corporations. These activities and corporations cover not only the directly productive sectors, such as industry, agriculture and fisheries, but also service oriented activities in the area of transport, communications, electricity, trade, construction and many more. It is thus clear that your service had to gear itself to the task of acquiring newer skills and additional hands to meet this wide range of challenges.

With the expansion of trade with the rest of the world and the enhanced thrust on development and foreign aid, you Accountants had to handle several matters with the rest of the world. The simple rules that we evolved during the early years to manage the Ministries and the Departments of the 40s had also to be changed over time to suit international procedures and conditions. This naturally made it necessary for Accountants to secure foreign training as well.

I see from the Financial Estimates of the Government that the strength of your service is 1,089. This is including the Local Government Accountants' Service which was amalgamated with the Sri Lanka Accountants' Service. These numbers compare well with the numbers in other parallel services like the Administrative, Planning, Engineering and Scientific Services.

As you know, the Sri Lanka Accountants' Service was restructured in 1981 and brought on par with other management services, viz, the Sri Lanka Administrative Service, the Sri Lanka Scientific Service and the Sri Lanka Engineering Service, with a three tier structure. The salary scales have also been fixed on par with other services. In keeping with the recommendations of the Administrative Restructuring Committee the management and control of the Sri Lanka Accountants' Service was transferred to the General Treasury with effect from 2nd July 1990.

I am aware that you have made requests regarding certain changes in designations. You have also made requests concerning a Management Board. In principle, I am in agreement with you that the development and utilisation of accountancy skills and professional growth, require advice of competent personnel in Public Financial Management. This may be facilitated through a Board of Management. The details of executing these take time as they involve careful studies. The process can be speeded up if you do the initial work and prepare the necessary documentation.

As the State Sector Accountants, you are shouldering vast responsibilities. On the one hand, you are accountable to the Government, to Parliament and to the People for every Rupee that passes through your hands. You have to maintain proper Books of Accounts. You have to introduce systems, checks and controls. You cannot leave loop holes for rats to creep in. I am not talking about the four-legged rats who would eat up your currency notes, but, the two-legged ones, who will steal public funds.

I know that you are performing an unenviable task. The whole country has reposed the greatest trust and confidence in you. Considering the vast sums of money that you handle, the losses and pilferages are few and far between. This is the best certificate that an Accountant can aspire to have. All of you must strive to acquire professional skills so that you will be better equipped to handle your work, while at the same time defeating the designs of those who want to rob public funds.

The Government and the people of this country are aware that Billions of Rupees are handled by members of your Association every year through the Government Budget. Our day to day activities and development works meant for present and future generations depend on your dedicated, honest and sincere service, about which I have no doubts.

When you do your work, please be guided by the ground rules that you are working under. At the same time, do not become slaves to the rules. If they are on the way, please bring the difficulties with your recommended changes to the notice of the Government.

Time is precious as the finances that you handle. I, therefore, wish to conclude this brief address with my best wishes to all of you and your Association in the challenging tasks that are before you.

I thank you.

GOOD PROGRESS IN SPORTS DURING PAST THREE YEARS

Address at the 19th National Sports Festival –
04th September, 1993 – at Matara

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hat was conducted on this occasion under the direction of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports was the 19th National Sports Festival. At the end of this year the 6th SAF Games will be held in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. Similarly, next year the Asian Games will be held in Hiroshima, Japan. Therefore, the National Sports Festival held on this occasion is most important to our sportsmen and women. There is no doubt that this Sports Festival must have been a rehearsal for them.

There are many State institutions that help in the development of the field of sports in Sri Lanka. Among them, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports takes pride of place. This Ministry takes the initiative in conducting two very important Sports Festivals each year. One of them is the National Sports Festival. It was first held in 1972 at the Sugathadasa Stadium. One of the aims of this Sports Festival is to introduce talented sportsmen and women from Grama Seva Division level to national level. Many of the prominent sports enthusiasts that we have today emerged from these National Sports Festivals. The other Sports Festival is the Youth Sports Festival organised by the National Youth Service Council. It was begun in 1987.

It was 45 years ago that a landmark was set in the annals of sports in Sri Lanka. It happened in 1948 when Duncan White came second in the 400 metres hurdles event at the Olympic Games and won a Silver Medal.

Then, again, the 5th South Asian Federation Games held in Colombo in 1991 marked another important occasion in our history of sports. Our country came second in that sports competition winning 44 Gold Medals. In 1984 at the inaugural South Asian Federation Games held in Kathmandu, our competitors were able to win only 07 Golds. Thereby, we can surely be pleased with the progress we have been able to make in the field of sports during these past years. Even so, there is a long way still to go for us to enter the world arena of sports.

Our sportsmen and women did not have sufficient opportunities to take part in international sports competitions and gather experience. Consequently, they failed to make the grade at international levels. Therefore, the Government took suitable steps to ensure their increased participation in international sports festivals. Eleven Sri Lankan competitors participated in the 1992 Olympic Games held in Barcelona. A large team will also take part in the next South Asian Federation Games.

It is essential that the required basic facilities are improved for the development of the standard of sports in this country. It calls for frequent sports competitions. Sports grounds, stadia and swimming pools of international standard will have to be provided. The Sugathadasa Indoor and Outdoor stadia are of international level. In fact, our Indoor Stadium is the best in South Asia. Now,

the Khetarama Stadium and the modern Sports Complex on Reid Avenue are recent additions to the field of sports. The Government is taking steps to expand sports facilities not only in Colombo but also in outstations. Sports grounds of international standard are already available in towns such as Galle, Kandy, Kurunegala, Matara and Anuradhapura, and in far flung areas as Buttala.

The service of national trainers is also extremely important for the purpose of raising the standard of sports in this country. The training provided by them should be correct and methodical and carried out with dedication. The gradual increase in the number of sportsmen and sportswomen emerging from village areas is indeed a cause to be happy about. The Sports Ministry is taking action to give them a basic training in the village itself. Similarly, a very important service is also being done by the National Olympic Committee, the National Sports Association, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and other such institutions for the improvement of sports in this country.

About 2,000 sportsmen and women participated in the National Grand Festival of Sports that concluded today. They competed in 17 sports events. Those who are due to participate in the next South Asian Federation Games also displayed their prowess today. May the experience they gained help them to bring further fame to our country.

My thanks and best wishes go to all those who helped in various ways to make this 19th National Sports Festival a success.

JUSTICE DELAYED IS JUSTICE DENIED

Address at the Opening Ceremony of the Lawasia Conference – 1993, and the fifth conference of Chief Justices of Asia & The Pacific Region – BMICH, Colombo, Sunday, 12th September, 1993

I am happy to be associated with you on this unique occasion. I call this an unique occasion for two reasons. Firstly, we are assembled here today to witness the Joint Opening Ceremony of two important Legal Conferences, embracing the whole of Asia and the Pacific. They are the "Thirteenth Lawasia Conference – 1993" which is being attended by some 800 legal luminaries representing 25 countries of our region and the "Fifth Conference of Chief Justices of Asia and the Pacific Region".

Secondly, this is the first time that the Lawasia Conference is being held in the same location for the second time. As you are aware, The Lawasia Conference – 1979, was held in Sri Lanka. So naturally, we Sri Lankans are justly proud of the fact that the foremost Law Conference in the Asia-Pacific Region is being held in Sri Lanka for the second time.

I find that the theme of your Conference is "Asia on the Leap – The Role of Law." The theme of your Conference is both topical and thought-provoking. I understand that your Conference will be dealing with the law relating to Environment, International Property, International Practice, International Supervision, Drug Trafficking, Media, Sports, Human Rights and many other related subjects.

As you know, the law is one of the finest achievements of human civilization. It has brought about order from the welter of conflicting aspirations of the multitude. It has provided a rational frame-work, within which human affairs can be conducted for the greatest good of the greatest number.

The substance of the law, however, is something dynamic. While preserving cardinal values that underpin the legal heritage of mankind, the law must respond to the varying needs of society. Today, in a world which is trying to come to terms with many momentous changes, the greatest challenge that we, in this part of the world face, is the eradication of poverty.

There is no short cut to the eradication of poverty. We must forge ahead along the path of sustainable growth. To achieve this we need to increase our productive capacity. In our attempt to do so, we are bound to come up against many issues and problems, where the lawyer has to make a contribution. These relate to areas such as protection of investment, labour relations, intellectual property, arbitration of contractual disputes and many others.

History tells us that law is an essential ingredient of civilization. All the major religions also have been distinguished by their belief in law. The Buddha Dhamma is founded on the Theory of Impermanence and Law of Karma. The whole structure of Buddhist thought has a very special

relationship to this. It has a bearing on other laws such as the Laws of Dependent Origination, the Laws of Morality and the Laws of Discipline. Basically, all these are the Laws of virtuous living. The practice of these virtuous laws will be beneficial to oneself and others as well.

Hinduism, too, has its own profound laws. The Laws of Manu, codified around the 3rd Century A.D. are the greatest source of Hindu jurisprudence. The Hindu theme of Dhamma has the implication of law. Islam, in both concept and practice, is a faith deeply rooted in law. Even today, expressions of worship are defined by different schools of law. Christianity has accepted and advanced the idea of Law. The Ten Commandments remain respected injunctions of morality. Canon Law governs the conduct of many representations of Christianity. In fact, for the great founders of Faiths, Law was a means by which eternal truths were made available to society.

The foundations of independent Sri Lanka are deeply rooted in the law. Our constitution, our Judiciary, our Legal System and our Codes of Law are manifestations of this. We have perhaps one of the most comprehensive legal structures in the world. Public and private life, civil and criminal activities, inheritance and property matters are all governed by law. The State itself, the highest sovereign expression of the people, is subject to law.

In Sri Lanka, we have nurtured and developed our Judicial System over several centuries. This system has inbuilt qualities of discipline, objectivity and procedures. It is a great national asset. We must expand the use of our Courts of Law for purposes of investigation, examination and determination of causes and consequences. There is no doubt that our Judicial System is able to investigate and declare judgment on any major issue. Making effective use of this resource will reduce the expensive tendency to multiply tribunals and para-legal structures.

We have another Judicial System in Sri Lanka which dates back to more than 2,500 years. This is the "Sanghadhikaranaya" or the Judiciary of the Order of Buddhist Monks. It is an unique institution which is comparable to a Conciliation Tribunal solely devoted to the administration of justice as laid down in the "Vinaya Pitakaya" or the Code of Discipline to be observed by Buddhist Monks.

The Tribunal comprises one or more Adhikarana Nayakas or Bhikku Judges appointed by the Sangha Sabha or the Order of Buddhist Monks. To qualify for appointment as Adhikarana Nayaka, a Buddhist monk should satisfy four conditions. He should be well versed in the Law which is embodied in the **Vinaya Pitakaya**, its interpretation, case Law and possess high intellectual capabilities.

Cases are determined on the facts and the authenticity of the evidence placed before the Bhikku Judge. In determining the case, greater emphasis is laid on the reformative aspect, rather than retributive or penal aspect. Those found guilty are subjected to warnings and a probationary period of good behaviour. There is also the right of appeal to a higher body comprising a Panel of Senior Bhikku Judges. I thought of outlining this unique Judicial System to you, to show that our 2,500 year old Buddhist background and tradition has given our people the knowledge, capacity and practice to understand, respect and abide by the Laws of the Land.

The Judges are the torch bearers of the Rule of Law. The task of protecting the innocent, punishing the guilty and applying the law is not an easy one. It has to be carried out with balance and maturity. It has to be carried out with speed and impartiality. These are qualities that the public have come to expect from judicial officers. A celebrated former Chief Justice of Sri Lanka, the late Sir

Edward Jayetileke, once said: "The people give us high respect because we are judges. If we do not dispense justice, our office alone does not entitle us to that respect." Sir Edward Jayetileke was absolutely right. It is the manner of functioning, rather than the position, which earns esteem in the modern world.

It is the bounden duty of the Judiciary to administer justice fairly and squarely. In doing so, Judges have to understand the imperatives of social justice. A Judicial Officer has to be a model of rectitude and propriety. His independent status and his immunities protect you from outside influence. They do not lessen indeed they increase, the need for self-discipline. In most circumstances, the Judiciary is its own Judge and Jury. It is a role you must fill well, if it is to be maintained.

In many ways the Judiciary has a special responsibility. The Judiciary must assure the discharge of Justice with speed. Our Constitution guarantees the independence of the Judiciary. Attempts to interfere in the judicial process without legal authority are punishable offences. Certain immunities are provided to Judicial Officers. It is important to ensure that constitutional safeguards are not used to conceal lethargy or inefficiency.

All of us hear of unbelievable stories about law cases that continue for years without end. What is the cause of these delays? Is it the legal system which permits endless obstructions? When delay becomes the order of the day, the public will lose confidence. People begin to resort to extra-legal methods of resolving their problems. Then, the value of the legal system comes down. Confidence in the law is the foundation of an effective legal system. When that confidence is eroded by delays the very structure of law is in danger. Eventually, it may destroy the system itself.

We should not forget the fact that the law to the citizen must be a source of strength and refuge to him. We have often quoted the dictum that justice should not only be done, but must appear to have been manifestly done. We know that justice delayed is justice denied. Justice should be accessible to all and dispensed honestly and expeditiously.

I hope this Conference would address its mind to some of these practical issues. How can we make the law to serve the best interests of the people? To my mind, this should be the ultimate goal of Law and Justice. After all the Courts are meant for the litigants and not the litigants for the Courts. Justice should be within the reach of the large mass of the people. A good case of a poor citizen may be lost due to inadequate handling. Are the law enforcement authorities the embodiment of Justice? Can we think of ways and means of getting them to give a fair deal to all and sundry, the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated?

Today; we live in societies where passions are easily inflamed. The results of emotion destroying logic are all around us. Violence, inhumanity and brutality are visible consequences of emotionalism. In this sea of passion we need to raise the standard of reason. We need to respond to the call of balance and impartiality. The inherent nature of law is rationality and objectivity.

The legal profession is the custodian of these values. Let us guard them well because they are now in short supply. Let us develop them in others because only then can we all live in peace and harmony. I wish your deliberations all success.

I thank you.

SAARCLAW – ANOTHER FORUM FOR PEOPLE TO PEOPLE CONTACT IN SAARC COUNTRIES

Address on the occasion of the Induction of the President of SAARCLAW – BMICH – 14th September, 1993

This is an important occasion for all of us in South Asia. We have witnessed the Ceremonial Induction of the President of SAARCLAW. Let me congratulate Hon. Mr. Justice Nasim Hasan Shah, Chief Justice of Pakistan, who was elevated to this high office today. SAARCLAW is one of the most active Non-Governmental Organisations in our region. The Hon. Chief Justice of Pakistan, has done SAARCLAW a great honour by accepting the Presidency of this Association.

I understand that SAARCLAW provides a Forum, for both Judges and Lawyers to meet and to deliberate on issues of common interest. You will appreciate that interaction between these two major groups of the legal profession is of vital importance to the legal community. Such interaction would contribute effectively towards making our legal system meaningful to our people.

When the Sixth SAARC Summit was to be held in Colombo in 1991, the view was taken that apart from the Summit itself, efforts to create a widespread SAARC consciousness amongst our people should be promoted. Such a consciousness would be possible, it was felt, if activities to promote people to people contact within the region were organised. We, of the Government, called on professionals to work with us towards achieving this objective.

It is with a sense of pride that I recall that the Legal Profession was one of the first to respond to this call. Their efforts brought forth the establishment of SAARCLAW. I can say with a sense of great satisfaction that an Organisation of such recent origin, has contributed so effectively towards the creation of a SAARC consciousness. SAARCLAW has also contributed effectively towards stimulating a process of closer co-operation in matters of relevance to the legal fraternity within the region.

We of this region, are actively pursuing a series of initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life of our people. Because of the similarities of circumstances, culture and proximity of location we are naturally to gain by sharing our experiences. In this regard, there is no doubt that the potential of the law should be harnessed to achieve maximum benefits. This is because the law and the legal system touches the very foundation on which the hope of peace is built. It is heartening indeed that the legal fraternity of the region has pledged to provide a supportive role in the endeavours of the respective Governments.

The achievement of SAARC objectives can be a reality only if we obtain the participation of our people. It is on an acceptance of this concept that SAARC has now laid down guidelines for the recognition of Regional Apex Organisations, which are concerned with matters relevant to the

process of promoting social, economic and cultural development of the region, as envisaged in the SAARC Charter. Through this mechanism of according affiliation status, people's participation is encouraged and their expertise harnessed.

The Legal community has a primary duty to make the law, and the legal system relevant to the vast majority of our people. It would not suffice to maintain a system which is impressive in its intentions, but which fails to be meaningful to those to whom it applies. If the legal system fails to command the confidence of our people, if it is unable to respond effectively to uphold fundamental values, and if it fails to have any meaning to them, then we face the reality that it will be rejected in essence and in spirit.

Whatever lawyers may achieve in other fields, it is their duty and their obligation to ensure that the administration of justice filters down to the needy in its most competent form, so that no man shall be deprived of his rights due to the defects of the system, or the lack of a skilled defender. The dramatic rise in case loads in our countries and the inordinate delay in settling disputes via the traditional system calls for an urgent re-evaluation of our methods. There is a challenge to improve the judicial system. There is a challenge to ensure that access to Courts and recourse to Justice is not merely a doubtful luxury to be enjoyed by the rich only. We must ensure that the poor, who need it as much, can also have it, and that the door to the Court-room need not be opened only by a golden key.

A united approach may be a productive effort. Yours is an Organisation which incorporates membership of Judges, Lawyers and Academicians alike. The input of all of these disciplines in adopting a common approach would be extremely valuable.

The Judiciary of this region has reacted in a positive manner to the concept of public interest litigation. The granting of redress to the needy, who are without the means to retain Counsel to vindicate their rights, the grant of redress to persons who labour under a disability even without the traditional processes required to institute legal action represent a demonstration of true justice in operation.

The exposition and clarification of constitutionally guaranteed rights now seems to be an area of ever-increasing judicial activism and, this is an acknowledgment of the need to give constitutionally guaranteed rights their full import in the context of a progressive society.

The noble sentiments as expressed in the Magna Carta reflects the attitude, which may, perhaps, be adopted by all those involved in the processes, which mete out justice, "To none will we sell, to none will we deny, to none will we delay right of justice".

Your Lordship, the Chief Justice of Pakistan and President of SAARCLAW, may I, once again, offer you my heartfelt felicitations on your appointment and wish you and the Organisation every success in the years to come.

I thank you.

POVERTY AMIDST PLENTY NOT CONDUCTIVE TO STABILITY

Keynote Address at inauguration of Workshop on Economic Management, Tangerine Bay Hotel, Kalutara, September 27, 1993

I was very happy indeed to hear that all of you together have taken the initiative to hold this Workshop on National Economic Management, with the support of the Prime Minister. My special thanks are due to the Central Bank for organising this Workshop at its own expense.

The business of managing an economy has become increasingly complex in recent times, that even experts on the subject will find it difficult to agree on major issues. Diversity and freedom of thinking is the essential hallmark of any branch of knowledge, and it is the task and duty cast on us, as the political leaders, to consult with those who specialise in various fields, to ask the right questions, to sift the answers we get and to seek feasible solutions to our national problems, which will ultimately help advance the welfare of our nation. In this respect, I welcome the holding of this Workshop and hope that this will be the first of many more to come.

Managing the Sri Lanka economy, in all its various facets, to achieve the long-term objective of raising the living standards of our people and alleviating poverty, while preserving our freedoms, is the major challenge facing us today. Sixteen years ago, in 1977, we consciously made a dramatic change in the national economic policies that guided our country for the previous 30 years. Basically, we changed over from an economy shackled by controls everywhere to a free economy, where the people were made free to engage in their own economic activities and enjoy the benefits of a competitive market. We set about to reduce the role of the government to the role of provider of services to the private sector and as the protector of the poor. We changed our outlook from a country producing for the local market to one producing for the world market.

This was the only option available for a small country like ours. We were the first country in South Asia to do this; and we did it long before many other countries in South America, Eastern Europe and Russia and South Asia started on their own paths to economic liberalisation.

The radical changes in economic management, which we initiated in 1977, were not based on any ideological grounds. The simple people of this country gave us an overwhelming majority to do away with an irksome control regime because that system only led to rationing, queues, shortages and widespread unemployment. They simply wanted a change to a free economy. As all new converts to economic liberalisation are finding out now, we found the dismantling of a long regularised economy difficult at the outset. We accelerated our liberalisation policy since 1988, under the late President Ranasinghe Premadasa, when we made rapid progress towards an open market economy and ceased to make apologies for dismantling controls and a public enterprise

system which had become a burden on the country. Under the leadership of Hon. Ranil Wickremasinghe, the Minister of Industries, we completely liberalised the industrial sector, which has now emerged as the leading export sector.

It was only six months ago that we lifted exchange controls on all current transactions, and contrary to fears expressed in some quarters of an outflow of our foreign assets as a result, we have increased our assets by 15 percent to US.\$ 1,775 million, which is good enough for about 6 months of imports. We should not forget the days in the past when our reserves were only adequate for about 1 - 2 weeks of imports. This has all happened because of the confidence we have created about our country and its policies.

We have reduced our import tariffs to make domestic economic activities internationally competitive. Again, contrary to fears that our industries will fold-up under foreign competition, our industries have accepted the challenge and are exporting with world standard goods. We have a new generation of entrepreneurs, who are blazing new trails in world markets.

The results of these policies are clearly evident. We have more than doubled our rate of economic growth. Our average (per capita) income has risen from Rs. 1,902 (US.\$ 214) in 1976 to Rs. 24,234 (US.\$ 553) in 1992, despite having 3.7 million more mouths to feed during the 16 years. We have made a significant dent in unemployment, which has declined from about 24 percent to around 14 percent. The structure of the economy has changed so much that we have ceased to be an economy that is dependent mainly on trade in tea, rubber and coconut. We, who could not produce a decent yard of cloth, now make and export high quality textiles and garments. We also make and export products from fish and chemicals to computers and electronic equipment. Thanks to heavy investments, our infrastructure is reasonably satisfactory. Our ports are among the best. Investment by local and foreign businessmen is rising. There is hope in the air and the international community has developed confidence in our land and its policies.

That is not to say that everything is rosy for the future. It is sad to reflect that our brethren in the North and Eastern regions have been denied a chance in sharing in our progress by a handful of people who are terrorising them and denying them the right to be free. The young and the brave of the rest of the country are laying down their lives in combat to uphold our right to a unified nation and our right to be free. I hope to see an early end to this senseless conflict, so that we can all join hands and march to prosperity.

It is also disappointing to see that the fruits of our success are not being shared reasonably between the rich and the poor. Poverty amidst plenty is not conducive to a stable and just society; and our policies must be fashioned to ensure a better distribution of incomes, at least to reduce worst forms of deprivation. What we need is more income earning avenues to the poor, not merely "give-away" which are an affront to human dignity. We also need to protect the health and learning of all.

More fundamentally, we have to get our economic policies consistent and right. Liberalisation of the economy alone will only yield limited short-term benefits. For sustained economic advancement, liberalisation has to be supported, first, by prudent macro-economic policies that keep prices stable or inflation under control, and secondly, by reducing structural bottlenecks that impede the progress of various sectors of our economy.

Sri Lanka is a country which has had budget deficits every year since Independence in 1948. That means that successive governments have been living beyond their means for a very long time. History amply demonstrates that budget deficits are the primary cause of inflation. It is not surprising,

therefore, that we have been living with high inflation for a very long time. Inflation means sharp rises in prices of goods which people buy. When prices go up, people's real income falls because they can now buy less goods with their given incomes. The poor people suffer more in the process than the rich, because unlike the poor, who are defenceless against price increases, the rich can afford to hedge against price rises. Thus, inflation is the great monster of our times. As far as I know, no government in the world has been able to bring prices down. Hence, we must endeavour to keep the price increases to the minimum. Therefore, I would like to make a categorical statement today that bringing down the inflation or the cost of living is one of the highest priorities of our economic policy. All other policies must be geared to achieve this objective. In fact, if you look around the world, you will see that those countries which achieved the greatest success have been those which kept inflation at a very low level.

It is an accepted fact that we have to produce more goods (or import more goods out of higher exports) if we are to moderate the cost of living. At the same time, we must be mindful not to fuel inflation by creating lots of new money. This new money is created by large budget deficits and by excessive lending by commercial banks. Hence, we have to support our drive to contain the cost of living by very cautious and prudent fiscal and monetary policies. This means a reduction in the budget deficit and moderation of bank credit expansion. We have a problem in this regard because of heavy and unavoidable expenditure of about Rs. 20 billion a year on national security, which is essential to save our country, But it is not productive, in terms of producing more goods in the market. As long as this burden exists, we will have to be more prudent than otherwise in our budgetary and monetary policies.

The other set of supportive measures which I referred to are collectively called "structural adjustment". This means the removal of various impediments to the development of free enterprise in various sectors. One major bottleneck is the existence of large-scale public enterprises, which often monopolise the market and prevent the emergence of private enterprises. Our peopling strategy envisages the handing-over of these public enterprises from bureaucracies to the real owners, the people. That is why large chunks of shares of peopled firms are sold in small lots to large numbers, with some percentage going free to the workers. When one talks of letting the private sector take-over these economic activities, we are not thinking only of the rich capitalist classes. We must not forget that the millions of poor farmers, fishermen and carpenters. etc. are the backbone of Sri Lanka's private sector.

If we only look around carefully, we will also see lots of archaic rules, regulations and practices, which hinder the growth of a dynamic free market. On the one hand, there are monopolistic activities which hinder competition. Here the solution is to encourage greater competition, not to break-up monopolies or to control their prices. On the other hand, our markets are not very well developed. Whenever the farmers get their seasonal crops, the prices tumble and they make losses and are ruined. We have to streamline our private marketing system to give a better deal to our producers. We cannot go on blaming the so-called "middleman", because without them, there will be no marketing at all. We have to develop adequate and competitive marketing facilities for our products.

Take a few more examples. No country in the world has as many holidays as we have. Shouldn't we be working more, if we are to grow as a nation? Our expanding firms are reluctant to employ more labour, which will generate more employment, because once they hire a person, they

cannot discontinue him. These laws are supposed to protect the poor, but we have to ask ourselves whether these laws ultimately do not prevent our children getting employment. We control rents on houses and as a result people do not build enough houses for renting. Hence, we have to build more houses at government expense. I can go on and on, endlessly, with instances of structural rigidities that impede our economic growth. It is time we identified them and introduced greater flexibility to economic activity.

Let us also take a good hard look at our welfare services for which we have achieved world renown in the past as a result of which we do have a healthier and a educated nation, when compared to many other countries at our stage of development. The provision of universal and free education and health services will cost us about Rs. 21 billion in 1993 or 15 percent of budget expenditure. However, there is a heavy emphasis on the curative side where we treat people at hospitals with imported drugs, when what is spent on the side of preventing illnesses is minimal. I am sure you will all agree that it is better to prevent than cure. Also, let us not forget that an enormous private medical practice has developed because of the inadequacies of the state system. The same problems seem to be affecting our educational system, where private schools and tutorials are reducing the efficacy of the free education system. It would also appear that our system is producing skills that are not relevant to what the market needs. We have to review the content and quality of our educational system. Overall, we should endeavour to target our welfare measures to the really needy. We should not allow the affluent classes to hijack the deserving poor of state welfare.

These are some of the major challenges we face today as we march towards the next century. The issues I have raised are not once thrust on us by alien institutions such as the World Bank. They are fundamental issues which we ourselves have identified as standing in the way of our march to progress. We have to find our own solutions to these problems.

I hope that you will address these and other issues during your Workshop as carefully as possible. We will need your assistance in the fashioning of future policies, which will take Sri Lanka to a higher threshold of income and employment as soon as possible.

ENGINEERS PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN ACHIEVING NIC STATUS

Address at the inauguration of the 87th Annual Sessions of the Institution of Engineers, Sri Lanka on October 15, 1993 at the BMICH

I am very pleased to be with you on this occasion of the inauguration of the 87th Annual Sessions of the Institution of Engineers, Sri Lanka. Over my long tenure in public life, I have been associated with several of your members in official work. However, my participation at this programme is of special significance. This is the first occasion I am meeting all of you as your patron.

Your Institution has a long history starting from the turn of the century. For about 50 years since 1906, you carried the name of the "Engineering Association of Ceylon". The Association had as its main objective "the general advancement of the Science and practice of Engineering in all its Branches and for the purpose of effectively carrying out its objectives according to rules agreed to by its members". In 1956, your Association was changed into "The Institution of Engineers, Sri Lanka".

Engineering in the old days was broadly categorized into civil, mechanical and electrical. University Degrees in Engineering were awarded in these areas. Most of our engineering staff were engaged in works which involved construction of buildings, irrigation works, highways etc.. With the challenges placed before us during the course of our economic development, the engineering specialities widened very considerably. Today, some of the common and widely know specialities in engineering are telecommunications, electronics, minig, metallurgy, chemical engineering and agricultural engineering. Members of your profession had therefore many opportunities to develop their talents over the years and contribute towards the development and the well being of the people of our country.

While we continue to develop engineering and technology, it is necessary to remember that the world is changing rapidly. I am aware, that a number of young and energetic engineers go in search of assignments abroad. There are several parts of the world which provide opportunities to engineers in new areas with challenging tasks and remunerative positions. We in Sri Lanka do not view the mobility of such professional personnel as a loss to the country. Temporarily there may be difficulties created as a result of persons going out of the country. However, the increased knowledge gathered and the likelihood of these persons coming back to Sri Lanka with their skills enhanced are positive factors which will help the country.

In an open society and in the context of liberalised policies followed by my Government, we are not adopting any restrictions to stem the so-called "brain drain". However, as you are aware, the Government has been handling these matters through increases in the output of engineers and incentives to the engineers who remain in their positions. Such incentives have been from time to time provided in the form of various professional allowances, concessions on vehicle use as well as

vehicle purchases etc.. We have also provided liberal leave facilities to enable engineers and others to take temporary assignments abroad and return to their respective work places after such assignments.

Another way of encouraging our engineers to remain with us for longer periods is to provide opportunities for training and specialisation within our country. In this context, I wish to state that an institution like yours has a very important role to play. The training could take the form of in-service and on-the-job training as well as training through special courses and programmes. I am aware, that the Institution of Engineers conducts several such programmes which lead to professional qualifications for our young engineers. While continuing with these programmes I would like to see your Institution broad-basing the several training programmes and courses to cover the wide-ranging specialities in engineering to which I made reference earlier.

A major thrust of our development programme is towards poverty alleviation. It is well known that the Janasaviya Programme stresses on human resource development. To implement these programmes, we need support from institutions like yours. We need technologies which are productive and at the same time oriented towards harnessing and developing our vast human resources which are scattered in all parts of the country.

A major aim of my Government is to take the country towards NIC status by the year 2000. This is no easy task. Achievements in this direction will need contributions from professionals like all of you. In order to accelerate the movement of the country towards the above goal we have to depend on foreign investment and the new technology and knowhow which accompanies such investment. It is this area which is going to pose several challenges to our professionals. Working with the professionals who are brought in by the new investors will enable our young professionals to acquire the technology and knowhow as fast as possible.

Industrialisation is often accompanied by environmental pollution. This could take the form of pollution of land, water and air which are basic to our living. Several countries which have neglected their environment have found themselves in difficulty. Some of them have realised the need for protection of the environment very late in the day. I would, therefore, like to see you as engineers work hand in hand with other developers as well as environmentalists to ensure that we do not fall into the pitfall that others have got into through their lack of attention to the environment dimension.

In every industry, it is very necessary to have adequate measures built in to tackle the pollution problems that accompany production. While doing so you must also bear in mind the costs involved in the remedial and control measures. If too much of our resources are utilised in the control and remedial measures, we may end up pricing our products out of the market. I have every confidence that your institution and its members are alive to these challenging tasks. Success depends on the proper identification and the correct balancing of our initiatives on various fronts.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is not for me as a layman to speak at length before you on highly technical matters. I have sought to focus on some critical issues and challenges that we have to face, not only at the moment, but also in future years. The nation's future prosperity depends on the way we tackle these issues and challenges.

I thank your institution for giving me this opportunity to inaugurate your Annual Sessions and address you on this occasion and wish you all success in the development and extension of your work.

Thank you.

SRI LANKA PIONEERED MARKET REFORMS IN SOUTH ASIA

Address at the 10th Biennial Conference & General Meeting of the Association of Development Research & Training Institutes of Asia and the Pacific – BMICH, Colombo – 5th October, 1993

I am extremely happy to be associated with you at this 10th Biennial Conference & General Meeting of the Association of the Development Research & Training Institute of Asia and the Pacific (ADIPA). ADIPA is the Asian counterpart of similar Regional Organisations in the field of Development Research and Training, that have been formed in Europe, Latin America and Africa. It has a membership of 95 institutions from 18 countries. It consists of almost all the premier National Institutions, engaged in Development Research & Training in the Asia and the Pacific Region. This is the first occasion on which ADIPA is holding one of its Biennial Conferences in Sri Lanka. It is both fitting and timely that Sri Lanka has been selected as the Venue.

The theme of this Conference is the Transformation of Asia. It is well known that East and South East Asia have spearheaded this transformation during the last three decades. We are now witnessing far-reaching changes in South Asia. The countries of the South Asian region are implementing major economic reforms, in order to take their place as dynamic partners, in the Asian economy, as well as, in the world economy. Sri Lanka can justifiably claim to have pioneered this process in South Asia. In this context, there is, as it were, a special significance in holding this Conference in Sri Lanka.

I understand that this Conference is being hosted by the Marga Institute. As you are aware, the Marga Institute was established 21 years ago in 1972. Today, it has grown in stature and reputation. It is a non-governmental, non-partisan Institution devoted to the study of national and regional development problems. It has a multi-disciplinary approach to development. Its work is aimed at contributing to development policies and strategies, which promote a democratic pluralistic society, and an economy which combines growth with equity. I must congratulate the Marga Institute for the excellent arrangements made for the hosting of this Conference.

This conference will be addressing itself to a wide range of issues concerning developments in the Asian region. Its focus appears to be both on the economic transformation, as well as, on the social, political and ecological perspectives of that change. This implies an approach to development, that is important for all our societies. All too often in our pursuit of economic growth, we tend to forget the other essential ingredients of development, without which we will not be able to sustain even our economic development.

Development also means a political order in which people enjoy the freedoms and rights, which we have come to regard as fundamental to a modern society. It is, at the same time, necessary for us to find a path of economic growth, in which we are able to eradicate poverty very rapidly and

enable all people to live productive, and healthy lives within a rich and spiritually satisfying culture. But, above all, there is the most difficult task – the task on which, perhaps, the survival of the human species will depend. We have to evolve life styles which enable us to live in harmony with nature and find the right balance between the material and spiritual goods that human beings need.

The ADIPA Conference seems to have a very ambitious agenda which attempts to place the development of Asia in the context of all these problems. It has assembled scholars from different disciplines and different parts of Asia. This should bring to the Conference the rich diversity of Asian societies at different levels of development, each with its own ways of managing the problems of development and growth – each with its own cultural response to the demands of modern industrial civilisation.

It will be useful to reflect on the state of development, or better still, underdevelopment of Asia in the 1950's and the 1960's. Most policy makers and scholars outside Asia were pessimistic about its future. Many scholars and Economists referred to the experience of developing Asia and, to a large extent, also to its future as a tragedy of stagnation. But the last three decades have changed our vision of Asia and its future in a very dramatic way. Asia has today become the fastest growing part of the world economy, and is likely to remain so for a long time to come. What surprised other regions was that it was able to maintain high average rates of growth at a time, when the world economy, as a whole, was in a state of recession. Today, we can safely say, that this region will witness social and economic developments, which will transform the lives of people unlike any similar transformation.

But when we reflect on the performance of Asia, as a whole, during the last three decades, we must not forget the great disparities that still exist in the region. Indeed, deep contradictions still persist. On the one hand, Asia and the Pacific region contains some of the most modern industrial societies, which are capable of providing their peoples with the highest standards of living. On the other hand, it contains some of the poorest and the most deprived societies. This strikes us very sharply when we examine the ranking of the countries in Asia and the Pacific, according to their per capita incomes. The region contains some of the poorest countries in the world, with per capita incomes below US \$ 600. These include countries with very large populations. China and India alone, account for 34% of the world's population.

This group of poor countries, taken together, account for nearly 54% of the total population in the Asia and Pacific region. We also know that two third of the poorest of the poor in the world are concentrated in the Asian region. The large majority of them live in South Asia. However, these great inequalities, and this contrasting pattern of poverty and wealth, should not daunt us. The countries of the region, both rich and poor, each through their own national policies, as well as together are demonstrating a new determination and capacity to meet the challenges.

In Sri Lanka, we have embarked on an ambitious programme of structural change and industrial development. We hope that this will put us firmly on the path, that leads us to the advanced levels reached by the Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs). It is our goal to achieve that capacity as we enter the 21st Century. This Conference, therefore, has a special significance for Sri Lanka. Hopefully, it will be able to draw out the most important lessons of the ongoing transformation in Asia. By doing so, you can indicate the critical factors which helped the NICs and the fast growing South East Asian countries to achieve their rapid growth and reach their current levels of development. There is much dispute and debate on what the right mix should be. Various parties draw different lessons from these successes. This Conference would provide a unique opportunity to review these experiences.

But, as stated earlier, the economic transformation alone is not enough. It is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of development. In Sri Lanka we have learnt about the complexity of development the hard way. We had to manage the development process in a multi-party democracy which had to respond to all the pressures and demands of a poor population, which was fully democratically empowered. We have considered democracy as one of the "goods" of development we must enjoy at all times, and should not be traded for anything else. In that process, at the very low level of income, we created what might be called a welfare state which gave education, health and food security to the entire population.

The democratic, welfare-oriented system itself brought some of the major crises, which we have to face. Our forms and institutions of democracy created the political crisis, in which the task of reconciling the demands and aspirations of the majority with those of the minorities became increasingly difficult. Our welfare state created an excessive dependence on the Government and public expenditure and led to slow economic growth and high unemployment. If we had to do it all over again, there are many things which we would do differently learning from the experience of our past. But I think, we would without question hold fast to the freedom we enjoyed in a multi-party democracy. We would still need to be firm in our commitment to all our social welfare programmes, which helped to educate the poor and gave them healthier and longer lives. These have given us a quality of life for which we have been acclaimed the world over.

In fact, Sri Lanka's development experience has yielded lessons, which are of value to most poor developing countries. Ultimately, it has also given us the institutions and the human resources to find solutions to, what might seem, intractable problems and move to a new and rapid phase of development. Therefore, just as much as we, in Sri Lanka, will benefit a great deal from the rich exchange of experience, which this Conference has to offer, the development experience of Sri Lanka has something of value to offer to this Conference.

As you know, Sri Lanka has embarked on a wide ranging national programme for the alleviation of poverty. Our strategy marks a significant break with past social welfare programmes, which had made the poor depend indefinitely on the benevolence and charity of the State. We are approaching the poor as a human resource with great productive potential. We are, therefore, implementing a strategy in which the alleviation of poverty is linked integrally to economic growth, to the income earning ability and the productive effort of the poor. In discussing the social aspects of development, this Conference should help to exchange the knowledge and experience in the region, regarding the nature of poverty in our societies and the policies that are needed to eliminate its root causes.

But in our effort to alleviate poverty, we must not forget that poverty is not only a physical condition but an attitude of mind - a subjective experience. Poverty as an attitude of mind, makes us conscious of what we lack, rather than, what we possess. In this frame of mind, the tendency is to continue to compare ourselves with others and what they possess and what we lack. In this way we will continue to feel that we are in a state of relative poverty. This traps us in an endless pursuit of material satisfaction, in the endless effort to create new wants and make new products to satisfy them. The industrial civilisation has been quite successful in creating and satisfying this unending flow of new wants and new goods. But this same process has led to the grave ecological crisis which is threatening the basic conditions, which are essential for the survival of the human species. Therefore, in our effort to satisfy our material wants, there has to be a balance, a sense of moderation. The industrial civilisation and the world as a whole is beginning to learn this the hard way.

The avoidance of over consumption and excesses the sense of moderation, the desire to reach a balance which keeps us in harmony with nature, which sustains our living - all these are virtues and values, which are alien to the spirit of industrial civilisation. We have to go to other sources to acquire them. We have to go to the spiritual roots of our societies. This Conference has provided us an opportunity to examine the religio-cultural dimension of development. Asian societies are, perhaps, the societies with the longest traditions, the oldest cultures. They are the oldest storehouses of human knowledge and experience. We, in Sri Lanka, are confident that we can harmonise the conflict between the value systems that come with industrialisation and, the value systems of the great religious and spiritual traditions.

We, in Asia and the Pacific, should discover life styles and modes of development, which avoid the over consumption and excesses of the industrialised societies and show ways of reaching the balance, which is needed, not only for their own societies, but for mankind as a whole. It is not enough for Asia and the Pacific to adopt life styles, which produce a sane balance between the material and the spiritual needs and between man and nature. These life styles have to be adopted by other societies as well. They must be adopted by the developed societies in particular, if human beings are to share the earth's resources equitably and in a manner which sustains them for future generations. Therefore, the way in which Asian societies develop in the next few decades will have a profound impact on the future of human civilisation. The Asian societies have the best combination of material success, and spiritual roots to cope with these problems. I am confident that Asian Societies would provide the leadership in this field at the regional and international levels.

I thank you.

Att.

Juan Panchikewo

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CENTRAL PROVINCE

**ELECTORAL DISTRICT
NO. 4 - MAHANUWARA**

UNITED NATIONAL PARTY

WIJETUNGA, DINGIRI BANDA (b. ... February 1922) was appointed Prime Minister and Minister of Finance by President R. Premadasa in the 1989 Cabinet of the 9th Parliament.



He was Minister of Posts and Telecommunications and was appointed Minister of Food and Agricultural Development and Research on 30th

November 1987 in the Jayewardene Cabinet. He was earlier Minister of Information and Broadcasting.

Mr. Wijetunga has represented Sri Lanka at the Asian Development Bank Meeting in Beijing in May 1989. He is a Governor of the Bank.

He presented his first Budget as Minister of Finance in November 1989.

Mr. Wijetunga represented the President at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in November 1989. Earlier in September he held talks with the Board of Governors of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

He studied up to the Inter-Arts, and was a good sportsman and an orator in his day.

From 1942-47, he served as an officer of the Co-operative Department, and

organised the first union of Co-operative Inspectors and became its first President.

In 1946, he joined the U.N.P. and began his political career with Messrs. Geo E. de Silva and A. Ratnayake, both prominent Ministers of that time. From 1947-52 he was Private Secretary to the Minister of Food and Co-operative Undertakings, and from 1952-56 to the Minister of Home Affairs.

In July 1960, Mr. Wijetunga contested the Uduwara seat in the House of Representatives and lost by 213 votes. In 1965, he contested the same seat again and won comfortably. In 1970, he lost again, but regained Uduwara in 1977 with a majority of nearly 11,000 votes.

In September 1978, Mr. Wijetunga was appointed as Minister of Power and Highways.

As Minister of Power and Highways, he negotiated for substantial aid from the World Bank to rehabilitate some of our roads and bridges. He was also responsible for augmenting the Rural Electrification Programme and taking electricity to the remotest parts of Sri Lanka; he negotiated a massive loan from the Asian Development Bank for extending the Rural Electrification Programme to all the villages in Sri Lanka.

To combat the shortfall in electricity until the commissioning of Victoria and Kotamale Projects, Mr. Wijetunga introduced the gas turbines. He held his second portfolio as Minister of Power and Energy, till the latter part of 1981.

He held the portfolio of Posts and Telecommunications. During his tenure of office as Minister, he introduced vast changes in the administration of the Posts and Telecommunications Ministry.

The International Telex Exchange and the Overseas Telephone System have

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MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

ABDUL CADER, ABDUL RAHEEM MOHIDEEN



is UNP MP for the Mahanuwara District. He was Minister for Health, Trade and Commerce in the Central Provincial Council but resigned to contest the 1989 general election.

Mr. Abdul Cader had his education at St. Mary's College at

Nawalapitiya. He is a fluent speaker and writer in Sinhala, Tamil and English. He started life as an Examiner of Motor Vehicles and joined the UNP in 1960. He was also elected to the Ulapane VC.

DUNUWILLE, TIKIRI BANDA HARINDRANATH



(b. 29 September 1946) was first elected to Kandy's Municipal Council 1977 and resigned to contest Parliamentary elections in 1988. He was returned as M.P. for the Kandy District at the 15 February 1989 General Election.

An old boy of Trinity College,

Kandy he carried away the 'Ryde Gold Medal' awarded to the best all-round student.

After schooling he entered the Sri Lanka Law College where he was also President of the Law Student's Union. A cricketer, he turned out for Sri Lanka in the Gopalan Trophy match.

DE SILVA, HETTIHEWAGE CHANDRAMAN



(b. 3 December 1948) was in local politics since 1977 and became a member of the Gampola U.C. in 1979. He has been General Secretary of the Gampola UNP Youth League since 1970.

Mr. de Silva has served as General Manager, Land Reforms Commission (Estate Management Services)

Assistant Regional Manager NADSA Peradeniya, Public Relations Officer, Mahaweli Authority and Vice Chairman U.C. Gampola.

He studied at Gampola Wickramabahu Madya Maha Vidyalaya and passed his GCE (O/L). For ten years he has been in business and is a Justice of Peace for the Gampola Judicial Division.

ATTANAYAKE, ATTANAYAKE MUDIYANSELAGE KUDA BANDA TISSA



(b. 17 May 1961) played a prominent role in youth activities. He is a member of the UNP Youth League's National Executive Committee and an executive member of the All Sri Lanka Youth Front, and Secretary of the UNP Youth

League's Sub-Committee on International Affairs and Foreign Relations. In 1985 and 1987 he participated in the Moscow International Youth Festival.

Mr. Attanayake was a personal aide to UNP Chairman Ranjan Wijeratne and an Executive Officer of the Fisheries Harbour Corporation from 1985 to 1987 he was on the advisory committee of the Central Regional Transport Board.

He started schooling at the Uduw-