Association of Sri Lankan Graduates from Socialist Countries

40th ANNIVERSARY

Nov. 2006
BMICH - COLOMBO

No: 139, D. P. Wijesinghe Mawatha, Pelawatta, Battaramulla.
www.aslgsc.org
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

It gives me immense pleasure to issue this message on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates from Socialist Countries. Forty years ago, it was a group of young men and women having obtained higher education in Socialist Countries headed by the Soviet Union formed the Association mainly for one objective. That was to gain the due recognition for their academic qualifications from the authorities as the education systems in those countries were unknown to Sri Lankan society at that time. We have come a long way since then and I am proud to state that today some of our members serve the nation from the top most echelons of their chosen fields.

A unique feature of the Association is its flexibility enabling the harmonious absorption of different outlooks of generations of members nurtured during four decades of its existence. With the first generation of our members moving into retirement but by no means ending their contribution to the society, it is encouraging to note that a reasonable number of young graduates are joining the Association every year.

It is my belief that the Association is equipped to extend its contribution to the nation in a wider spectrum than it does now, particularly when our country is facing the worst crisis in its long history. For this purpose, I wish to see more and more younger members volunteering to shoulder the responsibilities with the guidance of the experienced seniors and jointly explore the avenues where the Association can leave its mark on the path of progress of our nation.

I wish to end this message extending the gratitude to the past Presidents and the Executive Committees for their selfless and untiring efforts made over the years making it possible for us to have what we have today.

Dr. Hector Weerasinghe,
President,
Association of Sri Lankan Graduates from Socialist Countries
Executive Committee of ASLGSC 2005/2006

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Dr. Hector Weerasinghe

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Mr. Somapala De Silva   Dr. Anil Jasinghe
Mr. R. D. Gunapala   Dr. Gamini Zoysa
Dr. G. Weerasinghe   Mr. Bandula Samarasekara
Past Presidents of ASLGSC

2006 - Dr. Hector Weerasinghe
2004 - 2005 - Mr. U. D. Perera
2002 - 2003 - Mr. W. A. Karunaratna
2000 - 2001 - Mr. K. G. J. Bandara
1998 - 1999 - Dr. G. Weerasinghe
1996 - 1997 - Dr. Pradeep Kariyawasam
1994 - 1995 - Mr. S. Yogaratnam
1992 - 1993 - Mr. R. D. Gunapala / Mr. U. L. L. Wijesekara
1990 - 1991 - Dr. D. D. Ranasinghe
1988 - 1989 - Mr. W. De C. Rupasinghe
1986 - 1987 - Prof. N. R. Arthanayake
1984 - 1985 - Dr. Newton Peiris
1982 - 1983 - Mr. G. Padmaperuma
1980 - 1981 - Mr. S. Sivaloganathan
1977 - 1979 - Prof. N. R. Arthanayake
1975 - 1976 - Mr. Suren Wickramasinghe
1970 - 1974 - Mr. Milton De Silva
1968 - 1969 - Mr. Raja Amaratunga
1966 - 1967 - Mr. Piyasiri Gunarathe
The Association of Sri Lankan Graduates from Socialist Countries was formed in November 1966 when the very first batches of Sri Lankan graduates qualified in countries such as the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia returned to Sri Lanka. The Lanka Soviet Friendship league premises at Rosmead Place was the meeting place and the center of activities of the newly formed Association. The main objects of the Association were to get the degrees from socialist countries recognized by various bodies in Sri Lanka foster friendship and mutual help amongst the members.

Graduates from the socialist countries were new to Sri Lanka and most employers were reluctant to offer jobs to them. Mr. R. Kahawita, Chairman River Valleys Development Board, Mr. Gamini Corea, Secretary, Ministry of Planning and Mr. Charles Abeysekera, Chairman, Steel Corporation were the first Heads of Departments to offer jobs to some of the graduates. Very soon the Irrigation Dept., Dept of Agriculture, Ministry of Trade & Commerce, Ministry of Health, the Colombo Municipal Council and a number of other State Sector Organisations started recruiting graduates qualified in socialist countries. Many medical graduates from the initial batches however decided to go to U.K. and U.S.A. as they were readily accepted in those countries whereas the others who returned to Sri Lanka had to sit for tests to enter the medical profession over here. However the tests to secure employment as doctors were soon lifted and tests were required only to get full registration from the Medical Council. The engineers too had to pass tests to be accepted by the Institution of Engineers Sri Lanka.

During the 1970’s graduates from the German Democratic Republic (GDR), Bulgaria, Poland, Rumania and Hungary joined the ASLGSC. By 1973 the newly established Soviet Cultural Centre in Colombo became the home of ASLGSC activities. In 1975 the Practice Lumumba University celebrated its 15th Anniversary and members of the Association were invited to Moscow to participate in the celebrations. In the meantime the main activity of the Association was the achievement of full recognition of the degrees awarded by socialist countries by the professional bodies in Sri Lanka. In 1981 the Association of Parents of Sri Lankan Students studying in socialist countries was formed and ASLGSC gave all the encouragement and support for its activities.

In 1982 the Ministry of Higher Education of the Government of Sri Lanka signed a Protocol with the Ministry of Higher Education of the Government of USSR on the mutual recognition of degrees. This was a major achievement brought about by the untiring efforts of the ASLGSC. The Association initiated action to prepare draft protocols for degrees awarded by other socialist countries such as Czechoslovakia, and GDR. Two major scientific seminars on the use of ‘Alternative Sources of Energy’ and ‘Agricultural Development in Sri Lanka’ were organized in 1983 and 1984 respectively.

1985 was a very eventful year as Professor V. F. Stanis, Rector of Patrice Lumumba Peoples Friendship University visited Sri Lanka as part of the 25th Anniversary celebrations of the University. The Rector visited only 3 or 4 selected countries out of about 100 countries from which students were studying in the University. ASLGSC was thus selectively honoured for its active role. The programme of Professor Stanis’s visit and the PFU 25th Anniversary Celebrations in Sri Lanka were organized by a National Committee headed by Professor Stanley Kalpage, Secretary to the Ministry of Higher Education. The chief guest at the main commemorative meeting held at the Ananda College Hal was Hon. Gamini Dissanayake, Minister of Irrigation, Lands Power and Mahaweli Development. A 5 member delegation from the ASLGSC was invited to Moscow Friendship University to participate in the celebrations. In the same year the Lumumba University offered a few scholarships to the children of the ASLGSC members to pursue higher studies at the
University. Several senior members of the Association delivered lectures on specialized technical topics and shared their experiences with the others. A special course on ‘Computer Programming’ was organized and about 20 members benefited from it. Life membership was also started in 1985 and a special Building Fund was launched at the same time. The 20th Anniversary of the ASLGSC was celebrated in 1986 with Hon. Minister of Transport M.H. Mohomed as the chief guest.

In 1987 the Association moved out of the Soviet Cultural Centre into a rented office at 103, Main Road, Battaramulla. There was some space to conduct social activities at this new office and with the newly found independence a qualitative change came about in the ASLGSC. Members started meeting regularly on Saturday evenings at the new office. A vigorous membership drive was launched and within a year the membership rose by about 100 per cent to about 400. A number of successful raffles and the vast increase in the life membership contributed towards increased funds. A computerized membership list with useful data of members was compiled and they were published in one of the Newsletters. A donation of Rs. 10,000/= worth coffee was made in 1989 to the Armenian Earthquake Disaster Fund. A number of talks on great Russian writers such as Dostoyevsky, Chekhov etc. were organized with the assistance of the Soviet Cultural Centre. Graduates from the Peoples Republic of China and Cuba joined the ASLGSC in 1988. A Seminar on ‘Business Development’ with the participation of senior ASLGSC members attached to the Export Development Board, NDB, DFCC and Sampath Bank was organized in 1989. In the meantime the Ministry of Higher Education of USSR increased the ASLGSC quota of scholarships from 5 to 15. A fund was launched to assist unemployed graduates until they found work and several young graduates benefited from the scheme.

From about 1986/87 several ASLGSC members were actively participating in the affairs of the Institution of Engineers Sri Lanka (IESL). The President of the IESL Mr. S.M.B. Dolaphilla visited Moscow and for the first time in the history of IESL a Soviet Professor was invited to deliver the Technical Lecture at the 1989 Annual Sessions of the Institution of Engineers, Sri Lanka. This unique honour fell on Professor B.A. Zhivotovsky, Professor of Hydraulics and hydraulic structures of the Peoples Friendship University. A major campaign to support the cause of medical graduates who returned to Sri Lanka in 1987 and 1988 and whose appointments were withheld due to closure of medical colleges in Sri Lanka. Was launched. Several newspapers published leading articles and even editorials in support of these medical graduates. Some ASLGSC members were invited to have a panel discussion with the Registrar of the Medical Council and ensuing debate was broadcast over the SLBC. The Overseas Medical Graduates Association was formed in 1988 under the leadership of ASLGSC members. In October 1989 ASLGSC formed a Limited Liability Company and a land close to ‘Isurupaya’, the Ministry of Education, was purchased for the purpose of constructing a building.

In February 1990 ASLGSC celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the Patrice Lumumba Peoples Friendship University with Hon. Renuka Herath, Minister of Health and Women’s Affairs as the chief guest. PFU invited a member of ASLGSC to participate in the celebrations in Moscow. ASLGSC arranged for Professor Arjuna Aluwihare, Chairman, University Grants Commission to visit Moscow and Leningrad in 1990. They were Dr. Lloyed Fernando, Director National Planning and State Secretary to Ministry of Planning and Plan Implementation, Mr. Marasinghe Perera Municipal Commissioner City of Colombo, Dr. Sarath Obeysekera, Chairman, Land Reclamation and Development Authority. During the same year 3 ASLGSC members were elected to the Council of the Institution of Engineers Sri Lanka including Mrs. Geethi Karunaratne as its Honorary Secretary.

In October 1991 the Council of the Institution of Engineers Sri Lanka approved the full recognition of Civil Engineering degrees awarded by Universities and Institutes of Higher Education in USSR. The Association of Sri Lankan Graduates from Socialist Countries can thus be proud that after 25
years of continuous campaigning it achieved full professional recognition for at least a part of its members.

In April 1992 ASLGSC achieved one of its long cherished dreams of completing the 1st stage of the Building Project at Akuregoda by completing a committee room/library, kitchen, bathroom and a verandah and moving in to the new premises. Ever since then 139 Akuregoda Road, Battaramulla became a hive of activity especially on Saturday evenings. A new tradition was started to have Dinners on the last Saturday of the month where any ASLGSC member or a potential member with their families could participate. Generous members of ASLGSC have helped to continue this tradition uninterrupted up to this date thereby cementing the close friendship amongst the graduates from Socialist Countries. In 1993 Dr. V.U. Ratnayake with post graduate qualifications from Prague Technical University was appointed the Director General of the Central Environmental Authority. The same year Newton Karunaratne was appointed the General Manager of the Water Resources Board.

In 1994 Suren Wickramasinghe, Architect from Moscow Architectural Institute was appointed the Chairman of the Urban Development Authority and Prof. Nimal Athanayake was appointed the Vic Chancellor of the Open University of Sri Lanka. In mid 1996 overseas medical graduates who had served for 5 years in Government Service were granted Automatic Registration by the Medical Council of Sri Lanka. A large number of ASLGSC medical members benefited from this amendment to the Medical Ordinance which was the result of the concerted effort and campaigning by ASLGSC together with the Overseas Qualified Medical Graduates Association (OMEGA)/ This was the first step in obtaining official recognition to the standard of Medical Degrees from Socialist Countries. This campaign in pursued further to benefit all Sri Lankans who study medicine abroad at their own expense or on scholarships and decide to return to Sri Lanka to serve the motherland.

In 1997 U.L.W. Chandradasa was made the Managing Director of the Fisheries Harbour Corporation. Dr. Mahinda Kurkulasooriya, graduate of Moscow Civil Engineering Institute was the first ASLGSC member to be awarded a Doctor of Science (D Sc.) Degree. He thus joined the handful of Sri Lankans who have been awarded this high academic Degree.

1998 has been an important year for ASLGSC as several members were appointed to high office by the Government. Somapala de Silva was appointed the Chairman of the Institute for Construction Training & Development, Leslie Senarath Gamage was appointed the Chairman National Equipment Management Organisation, W.A. Karunaratne became the General Manager of the National Water Supply & Drainage Board. Dr. Krishan Deheragoda of Sofia University Bulgaria was appointed the Director of the Clean Settlements Project under the Ministry of Housing & Urban Development. Dr. Gamini Zoysa, Consultant Gemologist was appointed to the most prestigious International Post of Ambassador at large of the International Coloured Gems Association.

Since the dawn of the new Millenium in the year 2000, graduates from Socialist Countries made further strides in to prominent positions in Sri Lanka. The appointment of Dr. Pradeep Kariyawasam as the Chief Medical Officer of Health of the City of Colombo under the Colombo Municipal Council, Dr. Jayantha Liyanage as the Commissioner of the Colombo Municipal Council, Dr Hector Weerasinghe as the Director National Hospital Colombo, Dr. Anil Jasinghe as the successor to Dr. Hector Weerasinghe to be in charge of the Accident Service of the National Hospital Colombo, Dr. Krishan Deheragoda as the Chairman Urban Development Authority, Leslie Senarath Gamage as the Chairman of the State Engineering Corporation, Tilak Nikapitiya as the Chairman Sri Lanka Land Reclamation and Development Corporation and Mangala Yapa as the General Manager of the Colombo Dockyard Ltd.were some of the
achievements in the year 2000 and 2001. Mangala Yapa is now the Managing Director and the Chief Executive Officer of Colombo Dockyard Ltd.

Apart from the achievements in the engineering and medical fields, ASLGSC members made their mark in other fields such as Accountancy. Dr. W.G.S Kelum was made the Head of the Dept. of Accountancy at the Sri Jayawardenapura University in the year 2003 and was appointed as the acting Dean of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce of Sri Jayawardenapura University in 2004.

We have estimated that there are more than 500 Doctors including at least 25 Medical Specialists who have graduated from Socialist Countries currently employed in the National Health Service of Sri Lanka.

The most Senior Surgeon engaged in the State Sector of Sri Lanka is Dr. D.D.Ranasimghe who happens also to be the current Chairman of Sri Jayawardenapura General Hospital. Former Specialist Oncologist Kandy General Hospital Dr. Dias Atapattu, Consultant Anaesthetist at Police Hospital Colombo. Dr. Gamani Nanayakkara, Consultant Venerologist Colombo North Hospital Dr. G. Weerasinghe, Consultant Surgeon Chillaw Base Hospital Dr. Kieth Chapman, Consultant Haematologist, General Hospital Colombo Dr. Mala Tudawe, Consultant Anesthetist Ratnapura General Hospital Dr. Hemantha Rajapakse, Consultant JMO Anuradhapura General Hospital Dr. D.L.Waidyaratne, Consultant Radiologist Matara General Hospital Dr. Prasanna Jayasekara and Consultant Paediatrician Trincomalee Hospital Dr. Vasanthi Ramanayake are some of the other members who have reached the highest echelons of the medical field in Sri Lanka. The wide variety of specializations of the above ASLGSC members indicate the sound overall training they have received at their respective Universities.

ASLGSC members have also established themselves as prominent Entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka using state of the art technology. Most notable amongst them is Jaliya Dharmasena, an Economics graduate from the Peoples Friendship University, whose Company Design Plastics is in the forefront of the signage industry in Sri Lanka. When Pizza Hut came to Sri Lanka they had decided to get all their signboards done in Singapore. However Jaliya Dharmasena demonstrated to them that Pizza Hut signage can be done in Sri Lanka to the highest professional standards. Eventually Jaliya Dharmasena ended up with making signboards for Pizza Hut outlets in China. The present major signage programme of the Road Development Authority implemented islandwide is also a contract awarded to “Design Plastics”.

The academic and professional achievements of ASLGSC members and their dedicated service to the motherland can be reviewed with pride on the occasion of celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Association. Our mission in the future is to strengthen the bonds between members, maintain friendly ties with countries which provided educational facilities, achieve excellence in the chosen professions and careers and make a greater contribution towards the development of Sri Lanka.

Winston de C Rupasinghe
Chairman
40th Anniversary Celebrations Committee, ASLGSC
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Reminiscences of a ‘Stharee Bolshevik’\(^1\)
A narration by Dr Lloyd Fernando \(^2\)

It was 1961- the year Yuri Gagarin went into space- the first human to do so – the pride of the Soviet Union. That year, I went in my uncle’s old Ford Prefect to the Ratmalana Airport to take flight to Moscow. There, I met for the first time, some of my life long friends- D.W Subasinghe, Somapala de Silva, Mithradasa, Leslie Senerat and several others, many of whom are now enjoying the fruits of professional opportunities abroad. My dear friend, the Ananda College Cricket Captain, the famous Yatagama Ameradasa has left us for more benign abodes in Samsara.

There were then no direct flights to Moscow. We had to have an overnight stopover in Delhi and go via Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. For almost all of us, if I remember right, a group of about 21, it was the first trip abroad. New Delhi offered us the first overseas excitement, but we soon realized that sterling pounds 3.50 allowed to each of us on our passports did not stretch long enough. We had difficulty in collecting enough to pay the bill for short eats and soft drinks taken at the Janpath Hotel, where we spent the first night.

When we arrived in Moscow, we were given a rousing welcome by the first batch of Sri Lankan students to enter the Lumumba University. The first impression we had was that the small Sri Lankan community of about 28 was already split into two or three groups vying for positions in the Zemliachistva, the Ceylon Student Association.

There was Dharmakeerthi, a mature student in comparison, a well known journalist back in Sri Lanka, who was attached to the Lankadeepa, Kuranage, with a similar background, Senasinghe who had already had some work experience, the poet Oruwela Bandu, Jeevaratne, a Communist from Akuressa, and his bete noir, the now famous Rohana Wijeweera, a self assured young man just reaching adulthood, quite popular but not enough to capture power in the Association. He tried that for three years but could get nowhere near what he wanted to achieve.

I never realized that one day the Wijeweera I knew would leave his indelible mark in the history of Sri Lanka. His political vision, passion and dedication to the cause he believed in were quite remarkable for a young man who was just 19 years of age - indeed, the baby of the side. It was not however, very surprising, for unlike the other students, some of whom were more vociferous about their commitment to the revolution, he had experienced the personal trauma of seeing his father being assaulted by UNP thugs and made a cripple for the rest of his life. The perpetrators, of course had gone scot-free, covered by the institutions of a democratic system, which allowed freedom of speech and dissent only to those who held political power. Perhaps, like Lenin, whose brother was executed by the Tsarist Regime, he felt that what was necessary was not to seek

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\(^1\) ‘Stharee Bolshevik’ refers to a veteran Communist, used endearingly in the former Soviet Union to refer to a loyalist.

The ‘Bolshevik’ referred to the ‘majority’ in the Russian Social Democratic and Labour Party led by V’ Lenin, which ultimately converted itself to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

\(^2\) The author studied at the Lumumba People’s Friendship University, Moscow from 1961-’66 in the Faculty of Economics and National Planning. On his return, after a brief stint at the Ceylon Steel Corporation, he joined the Ministry of Planning & Economic Affairs, which sent him to the University of Sussex to read for a PhD. He became the Director of National Planning in 1982 and continued in that position until 1989 when he concurrently became State Secretary, Ministry of Policy Planning & Implementation. In 1993, he retired from Government Service to take up the position of Alternate Executive Director at the Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines. He is currently the Chairman of the Marga Institute and CEO of the Worldview Institute
compensation by punishing individuals, but to prevent injustice by changing the whole social system. So, he sought refuge in Marxism and the ideals of the socialist revolution.

Probably, because he was a student in the Medical Faculty, he did not enjoy the privilege of studying Marxist Philosophy and Political Economy in a systematic manner. His only serious exposure to Marxism was in Mithrapolski’s introductory course conducted in English. Mithrapolski, however found in him a remarkably intelligent man, with photographic memory. Most of Wijeweera’s knowledge of Marxism was derived from the revolutionary writings that came from Latin America, notably the strategic approaches of Che Guevara, to some extent, Idith’s Indonesia and later on Mao’s thoughts. He dismissed with a wry smile, my invitation to join the Marxist Study Circle organized by Professor Vacilchuk, where we tried to understand the classics.

His relationship with me could be best described as ‘cool’. He labeled me a ‘petty bourgeois revisionist’, not worth trying to convert, for he felt that I had degenerated into an apologist for the Soviet Union and the Ceylon Communist Party, though sharing with me my adulation of Dr S.A Wickremasinghe. Wijeweera never indicated, however any personal animosity towards me and strangely later on, after his release from jail had inquired from a friend how I was keeping. I was away in England at that time, reading at Sussex University for a ‘bourgeois’ PhD.

My flirtation with Marxism started long before going to Moscow. I had the privilege, as a young bank clerk and an executive council member of the Ceylon Bank Employees Union, of being introduced to N. Shanmugathasan, General Secretary of the Ceylon Trade Union Federation. He was a marvellous teacher. His lectures were always full. I had by that time completed the London AIB (Associate of the Institute of Bankers) which put me through a good course in economics and finance. I had also studied political systems, democracy and constitutions in school for the HSC. Wilson, Namasiyayam and Appadurai were my favourite authors.

Shan asked me at the first session itself, in front of an impressive audience, ‘what is democracy?’ Government of the people, by the people, for the people, I echoed Abraham Lincoln, quite confidently. ‘Who are these people’ he shot back, ‘are they the same’ and continued, ‘the purest form of democracy, we are told existed in Athens, where the people assembled to deal with the affairs of the state. Which people’, he asked again. ‘Did they count the slaves as people’? Thus, started the introduction to classes, class struggle and historical materialism.

I was fortunate with Sube to be enrolled in the Faculty of Economics and Planning. Sube later left for higher echelons- the Higher Party School of the U.S.S.R. Our class was enriched by some mature students from Kenya, Somalia, Mali, Cuba, El Salvador and Bolivia, who had already had a taste of political struggle in their countries, some of them carrying wound marks as credentials. There were also a few Soviet students- mostly Russian and Uzbek- quite intelligent, even brilliant but naïve and dogmatic. After Mithrapolski’s introductory lectures in the preparatory faculty, we had exposure to stalwart political economists like Strukov, Iskandarov and later, my mentor Vacilchuk.

In the initial years, I was no better than my Soviet colleagues – dogmatic to the core. Beethoven’s moonlight sonata and appasionata are intrinsically beautiful pieces. But I loved them mostly because Lenin did. The Russians were proud of Tolstoy, Chekhov, Gorky, Gogol, Tchaikovsky, Pushkin, Turgenev, Lermontev, Repin, Ivazovsky, who received the official stamp of approval of the Soviet regime, even though they belonged to the pre-revolutionary era. A few who had emerged after the revolution, and sang its praises such as Mikhail Sholokov, Nikolai Ostrovsky, Mayakovsky, and the renowned composer Aram Khachaturian, received official patronage.. I shared the joy of exposure to these great writers, poets and painters with my Soviet friends. Equally, when the stormy petrels of the sixties, indeed products of Kruschev’s liberalization experiment,
such as Evgene Yefushenko and Joseph Brodsky emerged, I initially stood with my Soviet friends, who condemned them as deviants. It took me some time to grasp the essence of their message and disagree with my friends.

I believed in socialism. But I was unable to distinguish between socialism and sovietism. I believed in the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat, as the highest form of democracy’. Strangely, it was Pieter Keuneman in one of his visits to Moscow who told me ‘don’t be stupid.’ I believed in the ‘role of the Party’ as expounded by Lenin in ‘What is to be done’. I believed in the theory of ‘democratic centralism’. I believed in the total ownership of the means of production and distribution by the socialist state’. The mixed economies of Eastern Europe were forgiven for they were in a ‘transitional stage’. Central Planning was the locomotive of socialist development’. GDP calculations which included Services, was considered a bourgeois deviation. The Soviet calculation was called Gross Material Product. Prices had to be fixed. In the Soviet Union, there was no price inflation; only the queues got longer. International trade was a residual activity, to be conducted only when there was not enough local production, making it necessary to import, or when there was a surplus, which could be exported. The problem is that no one wanted to buy soviet products, except raw materials. Trade with Eastern Europe and the developing countries therefore had to be on barter terms.

It took me some time to realize that the Soviet Communist Party was doing some soul searching with the emergence of Kruschev and was gradually changing. We were told that Stalin would never have been endorsed by Lenin. Kruschev was trying to re establish socialist democracy, arguably through a process of liberalization, which he said was in line with Lenin’s thinking. Not everyone though, believed him. We were told that at one of the Central Committee meetings a ‘bold Alec’ had made a long speech arguing that there was no difference between ‘then and now’. After he had spoken and taken his seat, Kruschev asked him: ‘tell me Ivan Georgievich (perhaps not the exact name) where will you go after this meeting’ and ‘where would I, except home’ was the reply. Kruschev triumphantly turned to the audience and said ‘that my dear friends, is the difference’.

On the economic front it was observed that Soviet productivity levels were extremely poor compared with the developed capitalist countries. The phenomenal rates of economic growth observed during the first years of Soviet economic management were dropping drastically. During those years, the Soviet Union concentrated on producing capital goods, starving the people of consumer products. There were shortages of consumer products all the time. Queues got longer and longer. Suddenly, goods appeared and it was the practice to rush and take position in a queue no matter what was being sold. There were jokes floating around of how people carried Tolstoy’s War and Peace to the queue; and wait for their turn to discover after the final chapter, that the precious product on sale is a broomstick. No wonder I was told before leaving for Moscow to carry my own tooth paste and brush, for what you get there is some horrible stuff. That is, in the country, which sent the first man into space.

Most of the problems were related to the system of centralized planning. Countrywide, all inputs and outputs of production were determined by GOSPLAN. Norms in respect of these were set by GOSPLAN so that even where remote regions were concerned, local planning organizations had to use them for planning production. A system of Material Balances were used in order to determine the level of output of each commodity; and there were myriads of such commodities that were produced accordingly. Very few variations were allowed, even in the case of consumer goods, where quality differences were allowed only according to centrally determined standards. Consumer preference had little impact on output. ‘Bourgeois’ concepts such as income and price elasticities had no consequence. Soviet planners got away with this approach of physical targets as long as the concentration was on the production of capital goods, but no sooner the emphasis shifted to consumer goods, the old system started crumbling.
The Soviet people started demanding better quality goods which at least matched goods imported from Eastern Europe. The Chinese practice of getting everyone to wear the same uniforms would have only caused a counter revolution in Soviet Russia. Worst still, the people saw, mostly on TV, not just how the capitalists lived, but also how their great leaders, who used to buy goods in special shops, did. The clarion call for change began to emanate in the early 1960s, accompanied by the de-Stalinisation process championed by Kruschev.

It was during this time that Professor Liberman of the University of Kharkov proposed to use enterprise profit as the basis of Soviet planning, rather than output targets. The idea was to give greater freedom to consumer industries to determine levels of output and quality of products in line with consumer demand and use profits as an index of performance, as well as the basis for bonus payments to workers and managers. It was argued by Liberman that the new profit motive would lift productivity levels of Soviet consumer industries, which were only a fraction of what their counterparts achieved in the capitalist countries.

The economic liberalization process embarked upon by Kruschev, prompted by Liberman, not only convulsed the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, but sent jitters down the spine of the Chinese regime – the root cause of the Sino-Soviet rift, which split up the international communist movement. However, it encouraged liberalization movements in Eastern Europe. Polish economists such as Oscar Lange and Michael Kalescki started experimenting with socialist market planning models. Vaclav Havel and Alexander Dubcek found inspiration in these quests for liberalized socialist models, which tried to marry equitable development with the efficiency of the market.

I had the privilege of working for my thesis under the tutelage of Prof. Kaldamasov, head of the material balances department of GOSPLAN. He was, however not equipped to handle my questions, which were inspired by my desire to find socialist solutions to the problems of Ceylon, which was a mixed economy. Ideas of ‘market socialism’ therefore could not elude my search for knowledge. Meanwhile, ‘bourgeois democratic’ values with due deference to V.I. Lenin, were too ingrained in my soul to be easily dismissed. I was not worried that the Soviet ‘one party’ state would become the norm, for Eastern Europe had a variety of parties, though the Communist party played the hegemonic role. What bothered me was the one candidate election, which was hailed by the Soviets as something to be emulated by those wanting to build socialism.

Similarly, the cult of personality was difficult to be swallowed. Kruschev rarely succeeded in dismantling it, in spite of his rhetoric, even though it irritated Mao Tse-tung, Ho Chi Minh, Kim Il Sung and Ceaucescu. This is where I found common ground with the dissident Joseph Brodsky, even though I did not fully appreciate his example of Lenin. Brodsky said he started despising Lenin already, when he was in the first grade in school, “not so much because of his political philosophy or practice, about which, at the age of seven (he) knew very little, but because of his omnipresent image, which plagued almost every textbook, every class wall, postage stamp, money and what not, depicting the man at various ages and stages of his life.” All this, according to my teachers, however happened only after Lenin’s death, giving an excuse to Stalin to erect statues for himself. Kruschev dismantled all of them. Even though he did not put up statues of himself, as I could recall, he promoted vigorous use of his words of wisdom as scientific truth in the textbooks.

The search for socialist market based development, using planning models led me to long discussions with Professor Vasilchuk. He was a strong communist and was a guest lecturer at the Higher Party School. But, he was different to others, who followed the dogma. He taught us history of economic thought in the Economics & Planning Faculty and was well versed in ‘bourgeois economics’. He was willing to engage in an open political economy discourse, though from a Marxist perspective.
We agreed that in newly emerging ‘socialist’ regimes of Asia and Africa, it would be impossible, unnecessary and even dangerous to push for total state ownership. While one could make a case for state ownership of natural monopolies such as power and energy, railways, telecommunications, airports and harbours, highways – the list seems to be dwindling in the present context – it was difficult to justify it in the case of consumer goods. A much flaunted argument such as low prices had been already debunked, for state ownership provides monopoly power with little incentive for productivity increases, the only basis for lowering of prices or improvement of quality. Otherwise, it is an argument for subsidies. On the basis of state ownership, already Algeria, Egypt, Iraq and Syria were socialist.

Contradictions arising out of state ownership and centralised planning, as we know, ultimately led to the collapse of the Soviet Economy and with it the economies of Eastern Europe. China and Vietnam have learnt the lessons and having rejected Gorbechev’s theory of the ‘Glasnost – Perestroika’ symbiotic link, are hell-bent on using market forces to find socialist solutions, through the hegemony of the Communist Party – a complex subject which must be dealt with elsewhere.

Perhaps, Wijeweera was right – I was ‘petty bourgeois’ (my father was neither a worker nor a capitalist), and a revisionist, for I never believed that Marxism had all the answers to the problems of modern socialism. The strength of Marxism lies in its ability to explain the fundamental contradictions of capitalism and situate its role in human history. It had no prescriptions on the form and shape of socialism – a model that each country desiring to move away from capitalism could adopt. The Soviet experiment that failed (and for that matter, the resilient Chinese path) could only teach us lessons of the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.

The failure of the Soviet Economy should not detract us from the marvellous achievements in the field of human development. The world has witnessed Soviet triumphs in science, technology, sport, art, ballet and music. But, there was a less known side, which we discovered only by living among the Soviet people. As students, we had the opportunity of mixing with the celebrities – artists, poets, musicians, as well as with the rustic workers and agricultural farmers. We travelled a lot, visited many Soviet Republics, spent vacations in collective farms, did internships in factories and government departments. Never, for a moment did we feel a sense of discrimination. The colour bar often worked in the reverse. In the Soviet Union, we discovered a unique human being, a product of socialist upbringing.

Thus, when we completed our academic stint and were returning home, we felt that we were leaving behind not only the Bolshoi Theatre, the Kremlin Palace of Congress, the Stanislavski and the Conservatoire that gave us so much joy, but also those unique human beings we were privileged to meet and share our lives with for five years.
Colombo: Growing Impact of Unplanned Urbanization

Dr. Pradeep Kariyawasam

Introduction

The name Colombo is derived from the Sinhala name “Kola-amba-thota” which means "harbour with leafy mango trees". Traveler Ibn Batuta in the 14th century referred to it as Kalanpu. Colombo was originally a small seaport used by Moor, Arab, Persian and Chinese sailing vessels, and was known to the Arabs, Romans and the Chinese since 2000 years back. Colombo is the financial capital city of Sri Lanka with an area of 37.29 km². It is strategically located as a seaport as planned during the early part of the 20th century. Colombo has a hot and humid tropical climate. Relative humidity in Colombo varies from 70–95 per cent. Colombo receives an average annual rainfall of approximately 2,400 mm and 140 rainy days. The mean annual temperature in Colombo is approximately 25 to 28 °C.

Following the occupation of the coastal provinces of Ceylon by Portuguese, Colombo became the centre of the Portuguese rulers and after the annexation of Kandyan Territory by the British in 1815 it became the capital of the whole island.

When the Portuguese arrived in Colombo it was spread round the bay, which was not more than three fathoms in depth where it was deepest. The land between the fortress and the interior was at first unoccupied and covered with trees. The Portuguese were compelled to reinforce the garrison to resist attacks by Mayadunne, Rajasinha I and Vidiya Bandara. The new population needed houses and supplies. The Portuguese occupation of Colombo ended with the siege of 1656 when the Dutch captured the city. The Dutch occupied Colombo and other parts of the coastal Ceylon from 1656 to 1796, a period of 140 years. The British captured Colombo in 1796 but it was not until 1815 that it became the capital city of the whole island.

The administration of the city was in charge of a Collector and John Mac Dowell of the Madras Service was the first to hold office. After 1833 the Government Agent of the Western Province administered the city until the Municipal Council was established in January 1866.

The city of Colombo has undergone a massive demographic transition over the past 200 years where its population has changes from 31188 in 1824 to 642020 in the 2001 census, with a density of 17,216 persons per square kilometre. It is estimated that approximately 51 per cent of the population live in slum and shanty settlements.

Although the political capital was shifted to adjoining Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte, Colombo remains the financial & commercial capital of Sri Lanka. Due to years of colonial rule most of the Governmental and Private Institutions, the best educational facilities, best health care institutions, the harbour and marketplaces are located in and around the city of Colombo. This has resulted in augmenting the level of migration into the city of Colombo many fold over the past. In order to

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1 The author is the Chief Medical Officer of the Colombo Municipal Council
provide with necessary goods and services to the rising population inputs are needed from other parts and this has resulted in an additional half a million floating population passing through the city. In combination this has lead to an increase in the pollution levels. In addition the unplanned location of industries in and around the urban areas is followed by improper traffic. This has resulted in mushrooming of illegal settlements and slums, increased overcrowding, poor transport facilities, pollution, and increased morbidity and mortality associated with diseases linked to an unhealthy environment, and environmental pollution. The municipal services, such as water supply and sanitation, drainage of storm water, treatment and disposal of wastewater, management of solid and hazardous waste, supply of adequate and safe food and housing, has not been able to keep pace with the urban growth.

History of Sri Lanka – Ancient City Construction

In contrary to the common belief that Sri Lankan Capitals and Cities were developed following the introduction of Buddhism, there is evidence that there were well planned cities even before Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka. According to the “Mahawansa” a post was created as the “Nagara Gutthika” or “night time ruler” for the city of Anuradhapura by its first ruler, King Pandukabaya, and was handed to his brother, and later this designation changed to that of a Mayor (Rahula, 1999). During the same period, a 500 strong workforce of “Sadols” were entrusted the task of keeping the city clean, while an additional 150 persons were allocated to keeping the drains and an additional 150 persons were allocated to transfer the dead to the cemeteries. This indicates that even at the time of king Pandukabaya the 1st Sri Lankan ruler, at the inception of Anuradhapura city, that it was a planned city, with municipal services, functional drainage system and organized system for the dead. Local Government was not unknown in ancient Ceylon. The great cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa had their own Mayors and Town Councils. In the 5th Century B.C, Anuradhapura had a fairly complete and efficient system of administration presided over by a Mayor or "Nagara-Guttika". The Village Council is an ancient and familiar feature of rural Ceylon.

Nurtured by the waters of Buddhism, civilizations flourished in all parts of Sri Lanka. The ruins of the past, give an indication of the ancient glory and technological superiority of the ancient Sri Lankans. They were able to build sky scrapers as witnessed at “Loha Maha Prasadaya”, “Dagabes” or “Stupas” in the likes of “Jethavana ramaya” and “Abayagiriya”, massive water reservoirs like the “Parakrama Samudhara” in Polonnaruwa and “Minneriya Wewa” in Minneriya, and palaces as seen in “Sigiriya”.

“Loha Maha Prasadaya” was a nine story building that housed 9000 monks in the “Maha Viharaya” built by King dutu Gamunu in the 3rd Century B.C., said to be a buildig with a surface area of 167000 square feet on full completion. Jethawanarama Stupa is the tallest stupa in the world, and is only second to two pyramids in Egypt. Fully completed in bricks and mortar, is said to have used 100 000 000 bricks or the equivalent of bricks and sand that would be sufficient to construct a parapet wall five feet tall, one foot wide and spanning 225 miles. Our Irrigation systems were so precise and accurate that the “Jaya Ganga” an eighty mile long canal constructed to bring water from the “Kala Wewa” in Kekirawa to the city of Anuradhapura had a height gradient of half a feet for a mile constant. This piece of ingenuinity is considered as a marvel as today such precision is maintained by laser guided equipment.

Work in this range cannot be completed in such a short time with out the support of a massive work force. Therfore, it is only rational to assume that ancient cities of Ceylon were as populated as the ones of present time. In order to cater for the masses all ameneties were made available in a planned manner, to the public by the then rulers of Sri Lanka. This is evidenced by the archaeological
findings of buildings, hospitals, drains, irrigation canals and systems in the ruined cities of Sri Lanka. One such instance can be seen even today at the museum at the “Abayagiriya” Monastery in Anurahapura.

The living quarters, Sanitation facilities, Bathing facilities, Libraries, Discussion Halls, Hospital complexes in the monasteries indicate that all these facilities were available to the Maha Sanga, and some of the working models indicate that all measures were taken even 2000 years back to detoxify the waste and the excreta prior to release to the environment.

This is a cross section of a urinal found in the excavation at the “Abayagiri” monastery in Anuradhapura, Built by king “Watta Gamini Abaya” AKA “Walagamba” 2000 years back. Once passed through this filter it is said that urine becomes pure and the quality is as good as that of drinking water.

Our ancestors knew that human excreta, is an environmental pollutant and the importance of keeping the environment free of pollution.

This is the remainder of the Super-structure of a toilet at the Abayagiri monastery, Anuradhapura. It is said that there lived 5000 monks in this monastery which had individual toilets, and had water pools for other needs of the monks.

The attention shown towards the personal hygiene and sanitation and privacy is clearly demonstrated by this piece of ancient Sri Lankan History.
It was estimated that in the year 2000 there were 2.9 billion persons living in urban settings, which was more than three times the amount in 1950 (0.75 billion). During the second half of the century it was indicated that the urban population expanded at 2.67%. (de Silva, 2004). Compared to the developed world, the developing countries demonstrate a higher rate in the rise of the urban population. In addition, it is mentioned that in developing countries the percentage of the poor in the urban population is greater in the developing countries.

In Colombo, the 80,000 strong population at the time of the 1st census in 1871, has increased to nearly 686,875 in 2001, which is in accordance with the global trend. Although the trend of urbanization to in the Colombo city was reversed in the early part of the 1970s it had again reverted to its former pattern with the open market economy, practiced since 1977. The population in the city of Colombo is distributed as such where approximately 60% of the population reside in 1600 odd slum and shanty settlements, and the land ownership is less than 20%. Slum and shanty settlements are located more towards the northern part of the city, where the economical activities are centered. In addition to the resident population an additional half a million population passes through the city every day.

**Effects of Unplanned Urbanization in Colombo**

Unplanned urbanization, its unequal distribution has resulted in social, demographic, economical, health, psychological, environmental and political problems in the community. According to Prof. Indralal de Silva, several key elements can be identified in the urban population:

- A significant proportion of the population reside in the urban setting
- In urban areas a majority of lower income families can be identified
- Majority of whom are engaged in unskilled labor
- A large percentage of unemployed
- A large population engaged in illegal activities due to unemployment
- Health, Social and Behavioral problems due to overcrowding

Human civilization is dependent on the balance between the nature and the population. Due to unplanned urbanization, and its immediate and long term effects we are loosing this balance. Among the main problems faced are the decreasing land to person ratio, overcrowding and environmental problems, extreme poverty coupled with unplanned urbanization and health effects of urbanization. The main characteristic feature of unplanned urbanization is overcrowding, or the concentration of a large number of population in a geographically small area. This situation is much worsened in the urban slum and shanty settlement areas where an estimated 51% of the city population reside. Due to the scarcity of the municipal services such as water supply and sanitation, electricity, waste collection and scavenging services, people who are congested in an illegal temporary shelter neither care nor preserve the environment they live in.

Urban Planning at present is carried out by the UDA which has vested some powers in the Colombo Municipal Council. However, it should be noted noted that at present with the existing rules and regulations there is a trend towards mass high-rise constructions in the city. The land parcels are getting smaller and smaller with time. The rate of land consumption in any given ‘developing’ city
should be less than the population growth. This is not true with regard to the developments that take place in Colombo’s southern areas.

How do we limit the intensity of this type of mass development? Various methods or regulations should be used to in this exercise. A new population per hectare ratio or a Fraction of land in urban use and a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) are some ways we can control the intensity to lessen the environmental consequences of development in Colombo. In calculations one should consider the day time population and not only 700,000 persons who are permanently in the city. Other considerations are the setbacks of the buildings that are necessary for transport, light and ventilation purposes and imposing of a light plane of 63.5 degrees on high-rise buildings.

Broadly categorized, the problems encountered in unplanned urbanization in the city of Colombo are ill effects on the environment, effects on the health, effect on the lifestyles and behavioral and social effects.

Environmental Pollution

Pollution can be broadly defined as the presence in the environment of substances or energy in such quantities and for such duration, that is liable to cause harm to human, plant or animal life. Environmental pollution can be broadly classified in to a) Water pollution b) Air / Atmospheric pollution and c) Soil pollution.

Water pollution

Water pollution is any human caused contamination of water that reduces its usefulness to humans and other organisms in nature. Pollutants such as herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers, and hazardous chemicals can make their way into our water supply. With the increase in the human population and unplanned urbanization, particularly in urban areas like Colombo, we observe that almost all the waterways have been polluted by human excreta, solid waste, chemicals and toxins from near by industries and drainage lines. When our water supply is contaminated, it is a threat to human, animal, and plant health unless it goes through a costly purification procedure.

Effects of Water Pollution

Pollutants can contaminate our drinking water sources; which when consumed will result in Diarrhoeal diseases and diseases of the digestive tract, reduced oxygen levels, which can kill fish and other wildlife, accumulate in the tissue of fish we catch and eat from the lakes, produce an unbearable stench, and reduce the beauty of the water.

Air Pollution

Main source of air pollution in Colombo is from the transport sector. In 2005, total active vehicle fleet in Sri Lanka was estimated to be 2.5 million which was almost twice its size in 2000. It is estimated that nearly 60% of the vehicle fleet operate in the Colombo Metropolitan Region. Sri Lanka vehicle fleet is characterised by a large share of motorcycles and three-wheelers both of which have shown significant increase in the past few years. Vehicular emission has immense contribution for rising pollution in Colombo. In Sri Lanka diesel powered vehicles are popular and mostly used by the people, though vehicular emissions contribute more to air pollution. This vehicle fleet is expected to increase tremendously by the year 2010, and it has been predicted that the pollutant load will increase four fold by the year 2010 (MOFE, 1998; Anon, 1990)
More than 60 per cent of Sri Lanka’s industries operate in close proximity to Colombo (Ministry of Forestry and Environment, 2000). Although large scale industries are not common, there is a big number of small and medium scale industries. (NARESA, 1991) However, air pollution due to industries is considered low and localized but due to dearth of data some argues that actual levels should be much higher than envisaged at present. The major pollutant in industrial sector is SO$_2$ and Suspended particulate matter.

Sri Lanka has a relatively low rate of energy consumption of 1361kg of oil equivalent on per capita basis. The three principal sources of primary energy used in Sri Lanka constitute 57.1% from biomass, 11.4 % from hydropower and 31.5% from petroleum oil products. Power generation in Sri Lanka is mainly through hydropower before 1995, where in most years it accounted to 95%, which is suppose to be low in terms of pollution. This has reduced to 65% in the year 2000 (Perera, 2000). The forecast for annual power consumption during the period 1998-2017 indicates a heavy shortfall between demand and supply, which is expected to meet by thermal power. This has risen sharply in recent years and in the year 2001 it accountant to more than half of gross production. Therefore in the future this sector will be a major source of air pollution and with green house gases emissions will have significant effect on air pollution (Wijesinghe, 2001).

The domestic sector is the least polluting in the country except in very exceptional cases where some localized effects from firewood and kerosene may occur. The contribution for air pollution in this sector comes from cooking and lighting with wood, kerosene and liquid petroleum gases (LPG). In near future the cooking in main cities where 60% of the population is residing has changed to LPG use curtailing the pollutant load to air significantly.

Major air pollutants

Major air pollutants are oxides of sulphur, nitrogen and carbon, ozone (O$_3$), HC, Pb, and particulate matter etc. These air pollutants are emitted from vehicular emissions and well as from green house gas emissions. There are several of them, which are monitored in the country, namely, CO, NO$_x$, SO$_2$, SPM, Pb and HC including Benzene.

Adverse health effects due to air pollution

Senanayake et al. (1999) has indicated that there is a strong association between ambient air pollution with respect to SO$_2$ and oxides of nitrogen and acute childhood wheezing episodes in Colombo. Data from hospital admissions shows a definite increase in respiratory illnesses in the last decade. The number of bronchial asthma cases has increased from 62,574 in 1985 to 149,258 in 1996, which is an increase of 240%. In another study on ambient air levels of SO$_2$ and NO$_2$, and the admission of children < 12 years due to wheezing in 2001, Senanayake et.al, found a statistically significant relationship between the rates of emergency admissions and the levels of SO$_2$ and NO$_2$. Senavirathna, in 1999 found a statistically significant relationship between fire wood for cooking and respiratory symptoms following a study into 397 households involving 604 children less than 10 years and 130 women over 40 years.

A study by the National Building Research Organization and the University of Colombo, Faculty of Medicine found a significant association between ambient air pollution (with respect to SO$_2$ and NO$_x$) and acute childhood wheezing episodes in Colombo (Senanayake et al., 1999).

According to the WHO, the current level of PM$_{10}$ in Colombo, which is approximately 100 µg/m$^3$ is sufficient to cause a 7 per cent increase in daily mortality, 30–35 per cent in bronchitis and other respiratory diseases (WHO, 2000; The Island, 2003).
Effects of Soil Pollution on Health
Pollutants can contaminate our drinking water sources; which when consumed will result in diarrheal diseases. Collection of heaps of garbage causes unbearable stench and facilitates the breeding of flies, mosquitoes and rodents. This in turn facilitates the spread of various communicable diseases as observed in the case of dengue and spread of diarrheal diseases in Colombo. In addition usage of the land to dump garbage reduces the land availability for other developmental activities in Colombo.

Spread of Communicable diseases in Epidemic Proportions
The two main diseases that are prevalent in Colombo are Tuberculosis and Dengue fever. Tuberculosis is on the rise again even though free, effective treatment is available in almost all the medical institutions in the country. The spread of Tuberculosis is more prevalent in the low income groups occupying the overcrowded slum and shanty areas in the city. The fact that most of the residents of Colombo reside in this sort of settlement is a prelude to the magnitude of Tuberculosis problem in the future.

The Colombo city is plagued by dengue fever and since the latter part of the 1990s it has progressed to endemic proportions. We have identified clearly demonstrable epidemic period following the monsoon rains, and the epidemic of 2004, where more than 1000 cases were reported from the Colombo city is specially noteworthy. In the fight to overcome this disease we have identified that garbage disposal sites and bare lands in and around the city is associated with the spread of dengue fever.

Although not in epidemic proportions the drug addiction problem and the commercial sex trade, which foster the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, are to other health related problems directly linked to the unplanned urbanization in Colombo.

Urban heat Island Effect
The “Heat Island” effect refers to urban air and surface temperature that are higher than the nearby rural areas. Heat Islands form as the natural tree cover is replaced in the cities by pavements, buildings, and other structures. The concrete and tar absorb heat more readily than the trees and release it much slower than the trees. This results in a dramatic difference in the temperatures of the urban and rural areas during day and night times.

In addition to being hotter than the adjoining rural areas, more heat is produced by measures to control the hot temperature with air conditioners and cooling devices, and the hot environment trigger chemical reactions favoring formation of more ground level ozone, or smog.

Behavioral and Psychosocial Effects
The main characteristic feature of unplanned urbanization is overcrowding, or the concentration of a large number of population in a geographically small area. This situation is much worsened in the urban slum and shanty settlement areas where an estimated 51% of the city population reside. Due to the scarcity of the municipal services such as water supply and sanitation, electricity, waste collection and scavenging services, people who are congested in an illegal temporary shelter neither care nor preserve the environment they live in.

Coupled with overcrowding and the poverty situation in these areas many have resorted to illegal means of employment, in sale of narcotic and addictive items, stolen items and prostitution. With the gross disparity in land and resource distribution and in protection of the illegal trades within the
slum areas many have resorted to underground activities within the settlements. This has further separated the settlements from the scarce municipal services, which has further aggravated their problems. Most of the slum and shanty dwellers use their house as a place that they can rest in between their busy daily activities.

Competative life style, peer pressure, unhealthy living conditions, abundance of drugs and violence, connections with the underworld, distance from the municipal services and relative distance from the free public health services and welfare activities have created various social and behavioral problems among these community. Living in a surrounding full of violence has bred a community that does not fear the law, has no regard for their neighbours. A surrounding abundant in illicit narcotics have created more illegal traders and a community affected in its own trade, a community where social bariers are few and less has created a society that has normalized prostitution.

**Diminishing land / person ratio**

Unplanned nature of the city of Colombo and its overcrowding in the slum and shanty areas has resulted in diminishing land availability for future settlements, for recreation, sports, for social ameneties, etc. The diminishing availability of space for recreation and sport activities will invariably deprive the unprevilaged youth, opportunities for social interaction, recreation, sports and will invariably push them to activities of abundance in their own settlements, which are neither legal nor healthy.

This is the situation in the city of Colombo. According to the available statistics from other urban areas, it is evident that the situation is more or less the same in most of the cities, where rapid urbanization has occurred. The future is bleak, as more urbanization is predicted in the future and no concrete measures have been taken from the national administrators or the local governments to either control the rate of urbanization, develop the rural infrastructure or plan the cities in an effective and organized manner. It is high time to act, as tomorrow may be a day, too late.
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

1. Name in full : .................................................................

2. Address (a) Home : ..........................................................
   Tel:..................................Fax:.........................Email:.....................
   (b) Office : ...........................................................................
   (c) Position : ........................................................................
   Tel:..................................Fax:.........................Email:.....................

3. Date of Birth : ......................................................................

4. Higher Education
   (a) Degree (Name) : ............................................................
   (b) Year of departure : .............................................. Year of Graduation: ............... 
   (c) Year of arrival : ................................................................
   (d) University : ....................................................................
   (e) Country : ........................................................................
   (f) Speciality : ....................................................................... 

5. Other Education or Professional Qualifications (State, Year, Institution, Country)
   ...................................................................................................................

I do certify that the statements made by me in answer to foregoing questions are true, completed and accurate.
I also do hereby declare that, I undertake to abide by the Constitution of the Association of the Sri Lankan Graduates from Socialist Countries.

Date: ..............................................................

Signature of Applicant

Proposed by:.............................................................. Seconded by:..............................................................

Signature of Proposer

Signature of Seconder

Date:.............................................................. Date:..............................................................

For Office use

Decision of Committee of ..............................................200......

Enrolled / Rejected / Deferred

President

Secretary