



**SRI LANKAN
PROFESSIONALS
ASSOCIATION**
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The Report from the Formation to the First AGM.



Association Management Company: MCI Middle East LLC



SLQS-UAE



IQSSL-UAE



PIMA-UAE



IIESL-UAE



QSUM-UAE

After years of efforts the Sri Lankan Professionals Association (SLPA-UAE), was formally established on 28th May 2019, with four Member Associations, under the patronage of the Hon. Consul General of Sri Lanka to Dubai and Northern Emirates, Mr. Charitha Yattogoda. The Memorandum of Understanding between the founder Member Associations was signed at the premises of the Consulate General in the presence of Mr. Yattogoda.



In Picture – L to R: Mr. Lionel Gunathilaka , Mr.Dhammika Gamage ,Mr.Anura Jagodage, His Excellency Charitha Yattogoda, Mr. Kusal Nanayakkara and Mr. Ajantha Premarathna cutting the SLPA cake celebrating historical achievement of forming SLPA in Dubai, UAE.



In Picture –L to R: Mr. Lionel Gunathilaka ,Mr. Kusal Nanayakkara, Mr. Ajantha Premarathna, His Excellency Charitha Yattogoda, Mr.Dhammika Gamage and Mr.Anura Jagodage with the signed memorandum of understanding between the member associations of SLPA-UAE

It is highly appreciated the great guidance, encouragement and assistance provided by Mr. Yattogoda, during the formation process of the SLPA.

The founder Membership Associations of the SLPA were:

- Institution of Incorporated Engineers, Sri Lanka (IIESL-UAE)
- Institute of Quantity Surveyors of Sri Lanka – UAE Chapter (IQSSL-UAE)
- Sri Lanka Quantity Surveyors (SLQS-UAE)
- Postgraduate Institute of Management Alumni (PIMA-UAE)

Prior to the inception of the SLPA, the Member Associations explored available options and finally decided to have the new organization to be managed by the MCI Middle East LLC (MCI), which is an institute authorized to manage associations in Dubai. The collaboration with MCI is meant to fulfill the compliance requirements of the local authorities.

The SLPA has signed an agreement with MCI on 18th June 2019, at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Dubai Deira Creek, with the presence of diplomats and other invitees.



Pictures -Signing of the association management services agreement between SLPA-UAE and MCI Middle East LLC on 18 June 2019 at Radisson Blu Hotel,Dubai,UAE

As per the MOU among the parties, the SLPA is to be administered by an Executive Board, consisting of three members from each Member Association. The office bearers elected by the SLPA, for a tenure of two years, are as follows:

- Chairman – Mr. Ajantha Premarathna – PIMA-UAE
- Vice Chairman – Mr. Dhammika Gamage – IQSSL-UAE
- Secretary – Mr. Lalith Gallage – SLQS-UAE
- Assistant Secretary – Mr. Deepal Rajaguru – PIMA-UAE
- Treasurer – Mr. Nalaka Kanthiarachchi – IIESL-UAE
- Assistant Treasurer – Mr. Lionel Gunathilake – SLQS-UAE
- Media Coordinator – Mr. Channa Kasthurirathna – IQSSL-UAE
- Editor – Mr. Kusal Nanayakkara – PIMA-UAE
- Internal Auditor - Mr. Anura Jagodage – IIESL-UAE

Following are the other Executive Board Members:

- Mr. Sisira Walaliyadde – IIESL-UAE
- Mr. S P Keerthirathna – IQSSL-UAE
- Mr. Nalinga Handapangoda – SLQS-UAE

Mr. Anura Jagodage, Mr. Dhammika Gamage, Mr. Lionel Gunathilake and Mr. Kusal Nanayakkara were appointed as the Lead Members to represent their respective Member Associations.

On 5th February 2020, The Association of Quantity Surveyors of the University of Moratuwa-UAE (QSUM-UAE) has joined as the fifth Member Association of the SLPA.



In picture - Secretary of QSUM Mr. Lahiru Paranamana receives the signed MOU copy from the Chairman of SLPA-UAE Mr. Ajantha Premarathna

Mr. Chamil Rajapaksa as the Lead Member along with Mr. Lahiru Paranamana and Mr. Dilanka Wickramasinghe were nominated to the SLPA Executive Board from the QSUM-UAE.

The SLPA is in conversation with several other professional associations of Sri Lankans in the UAE, expecting to have more associations join the SLPA in the future.

Mr. Sisira Walaliyadde of IIESL-UAE, resigned from the SLPA as he left the UAE, and was replaced by Mr. Aruna Uduwerella. Incidentally, Mr. Uduwerella also stepped down from the SLPA and left the UAE recently; the vacancy is yet to be filled. Mr. Deepal Rajaguru of PIMA-UAE, the Assistant Secretary, too left the SLPA and the UAE, and he has been replaced by Mr. Damith

Fonseka. The Assistant Secretary role has been assigned to Mr. Dilanka Wickramasinghe of QSUM-UAE.

As it stands, the current office bearers and the Executive Board are as follows:

- Chairman - Mr. Ajantha Premarathna – PIMA-UAE
- Vice Chairman - Mr. Dhammika Gamage – IQSSL-UAE
- Secretary - Mr. Lalith Gallage – SLQS-UAE
- Assistant Secretary - Mr. Dilanka Wickramasinghe – QSUM-UAE
- Treasurer - Mr. Nalaka Kanthiarachchi – IIESL-UAE
- Assistant Treasurer - Mr. Lionel Gunathilake – SLQS-UAE
- Media coordinator - Mr. Channa Kasthurirathna – IQSSL-UAE
- Editor - Mr. Kusal Nanayakkara – PIMA-UAE
- Internal Auditor - Mr. Anura Jagodage – IIESL-UAE
- Mr. S P Keerthirathna – IQSSL-UAE
- Mr. Nalinga Handapangoda – SLQS-UAE
- Mr. Chamil Rakapakse – QSUM-UAE
- Mr. Lahiru Paranamana – QSUM-UAE
- Mr. Damith Fonseka – PIMA-UAE

The SLPA has drafted and ratified its Constitution on 9th December 2019, and the first amendment to the Constitution in September 2020, which could be found on the SLPA website. In addition to the Constitution, the Working Procedure is prepared to cover the areas which are not defined in the Constitution.



In picture – L to R standing: Mr. Kusal Nanayakkara, Mr. Aruna Uduwerella, Mr. Channa Kasthurirathna, Mr. Lionel Gunathilake and Mr. Deepal Rajaguru. L to R seated: Mr. Anura Jagodage, Mrs. Yattogoda, Hon. Consul General Mr. Charitha Yattogoda, Mr. Ajantha Premarathna and Mr. Lalith Gallage



In picture – L to R: Mr. Channa Kasthurirathna, Mr. Ajantha Premarathna, His Excellency Majintha Jayasinghe, Mr. Kusal Nanayakkara, Mr. Deepal Rajaguru, Mr. Lionel Gunathilake and Mr. Lalith Gallage.

We as SLPA are pleased with the recognition we received from the Sri Lankan Diplomatic Mission in the UAE, and to have always been invited to their events.

From the beginning we introduced a tradition to visit the Sri Lankan diplomats in the UAE; we have visited all the newly appointed Ambassadors and Consul Generals upon them joining the mission, introduced SLPA and assured our support.

The disruptions of the Covid-19 pandemic were immense to the young SLPA; many events planned by us could not be held or were cancelled. This AGM also was to be held in May, the Executive Board had a resolution to postpone it, and finally we decided to have it in this virtual manner. We somehow adapted to the situation and conducted the following events:

- Webinar on "Covid-19 Challenges and Dealing with your Family" by Prof. Ajantha Dharmasiri
- Webinar on "Covid-19 Opportunities and Beyond" by Mr. Deepal Sooriyaarachchi
- Webinar on "Covid-19 Tests, Treatments and Vaccines" by Prof. Sir Sabaratnam Arulkumaran, jointly organized with The Association of Professional Sri Lankans in the UK (APSL UK).



The SLPA assisted the Sri Lanka's forward defense line against Covid-19; in the very early stage we donated a stock of Personal Protective Gowns to several hospitals, police and the armed services. Further, SLPA is involved in liaising with the Sri Lankan Diplomatic mission in the UAE on the repatriation of the members of the SLPA's Member Associations.

SLPA managed to facilitate the events of the Member Associations, which was one objective of formation of the

SLPA. The member associations have successfully conducted 53 events of the following categories.

- 38 of Educational and Professional events
- 6 of CSR events
- 3 of Entertainment events
- 2 Sports events
- 4 other events

Due to the prevailing health and safety concerns, all the Member Associations have cancelled many of their events; however, they are also conducting their educational & professional development events on virtual platforms. In addition, the Member Associations also generously contributed to the welfare of less fortunate fellow Sri Lankans.



Picture - 75 PPE kits handed over to District Medical Officer Alawwa through Dr. Susantha Wanniarachchi on 20th May 2020.

"Thank you to all you warm-hearted members, I think the pandemic has shown us how weak we are as individuals, but how better we can do when we complement each other."

I shall make a note on MCI, with minor adjustments both the SLPA and MCI have established a harmonious working relationship to date. Considering the difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic, both parties re-negotiated the financial terms of the agreement at end of the first year, and amicably agreed on a very reasonable fee for the year 2020/2021.

- During this period the SLPA has established the following:
- Branding and Website
- Payment gate to enable online payments – activation of this is prolonged due to low number of events
- Internal audit
- Sponsorship prospectus

The accounts and financial status of the SLPA will be presented by our Treasurer separately.

Though the SLPA was not immune from the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have re-aligned ourselves with the 'new normal' and look forward to continuing our journey.

Thank you,
Lalith Gallage
The Secretary

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