



Editor
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OPA NEWS

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25th Annual Sessions of the OPA. “Maximizing National Productivity for Sustainable Growth.”



Dr. Rajitha Senaratne delivering his address President Arct/Plr. Kiringoda presenting a plaque to Dr. Senaratne.

25th Annual Sessions of the OPA were held on the 08th and 09th October 2012, at the Hotel Galadari, the theme of the Sessions being “Maximizing National Productivity for sustainable Growth.”

The Sessions were inaugurated on Monday, 08th October 2012 at 4.45 p.m, by Dr. Rajitha Senarathna, Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development.

Mr. Patali Champika Ranawaka, Minister of Power and Energy was the Guest of Honour, and Mr. Ajith Nivard Cabraal, Governor of the Central Bank delivered the Keynote Address on “Towards Positive Productivity.”

Dr. Senaratne in his address spoke about the years he was associated with the OPA. He said that he was an Ex-Co member for 8 years, during which time he had the good fortune of working with many of the stalwarts of the OPA. He recalled how he had to disagree with senior professionals on many occasions; but the opposing views were appreciated. Dr. Senaratne valued the services rendered by the organization not only on professional matters, but at national level too.

The diplomatic missions were well represented by Mr. Louis. W.M. Piet Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands, who addressed the gathering, Mr. John Rankin High Commissioner of United Kingdom, and Ms. Robyn Mudie High Commissioner of Australia.

Arct. Plnr. LT Kiringoda, the incumbent President delivered the Welcome Address, while President-Elect, Mr. Benedict Ulluwishewa introduced the theme of the Technical Sessions.

The General Secretary, Eng. Tudor Munasinghe proposed the Vote of thanks.

Press Release

Resolution by the General Forum of the OPA

Repeal of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution

The General Forum of the Organization of Professional Associations of Sri Lanka (OPA) at its meeting held on 27th July 2012 decided unanimously to call upon His Excellency the President, Parliament and the Cabinet of Ministers to repeal the 18th Amendment to the Constitution and call upon all political parties to support such repeal.

It will be recalled that the OPA in September 2010 when this Constitutional Amendment was proposed expressed its objections stating that it is not in the interest of Good Governance or in the National Interest. After two years in operation we are now beginning to observe and witness the disastrous consequences of this ill conceived Constitutional Amendment. This Constitutional Amendment has undermined the principle of separation of powers and the independence of the Public Service, Police and the Judiciary. All these and other key institutions of Government have been brought under the control of the Executive Presidency.

In this connection the OPA wishes to state that the repeal of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution and the implementation of the 17th Amendment will satisfy many of the recommendations of the LLRC Report as well which calls for the appointment of Independent Commissions, and strengthening of the independence of the Judiciary among other recommendations. This will also have a salutary effect on the Government's strategy to counter criticism and vastly improve the image of our country among the International Community.

It must be emphasized that the OPA is an apolitical body and this recommendation to repeal the 18th Amendment to the Constitution is made solely in the Public Interest.

Archt. Plnr. L.T.Kiringoda

President OPA

Welcome Address by President OPA.

Archt. Plnr. LT Kiringoda, President OPA delivered the Welcome address, at the Inauguration of the 25th Annual Sessions.

The OPA was established in 1975 to work with the government and non-governmental organizations on national, regional and professional issues.

Working with the government does not mean rubber stamping everything the government does. The OPA is not a government organization to do so.

Where it mattered the OPA had opined with solutions or cautioned about the pitfalls the country would fall into. During this year the OPA,

- Held a discussion on now well-known "Z Score"
- Held discussion with FUTA on their demands requested them to participate in preparation of a White Paper on education,
- Issued press releases requesting repeal of 13th and 18th Amendments to the Constitution,
- Issued a press release on LLRC Recommendations,
- Issued a press release on interference with the judiciary,

- Participated in the discussions for preparation of National Human Rights Action Plan,
- Submitted a draft code of ethics for parliamentarians to the Parliament Committee entrusted with the task of preparing the same,
- Successfully voiced our protest against liberalizing the Services Sector under Comprehensive Economic Partnership (CEPA) with India and SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services (SATIS),
- Submitted over 20 proposals for 2013 National Budget.

.Following the tradition of the OPA, we will be focusing on a nationally important issue under the theme “Maximizing National Productivity for Sustainable Growth”.

This issue is nationally important because the resurgent Sri Lanka needs national reawakening in many fronts and national productivity is among them.

Annual Sessions is the most important event in the OPA calendar. The President-elect is traditionally responsible for organising it. He and his Committee spent sleepless nights to organize the event and you are here to give the team encouragement by ceremonially launching the Annual Sessions.

I wish to look at national productivity from three viewpoints. First from the viewpoint of performance of individuals.

In here I wish to quote Comedian Andrew Tarvin’s 5-tips for increasing productivity;

“1. Write Everything Down, 2. Break Projects into Smaller Tasks, 3. Do Your Time, 4. Get Feedback , 5. Plan to Improve.

He goes on to say that, “Daily action builds habits. It gives you practice and will make you an expert in a short time. If you don't break the chain, you'll start to spot opportunities you otherwise wouldn't. Small improvements accumulate into large improvements rapidly because daily action provides "compounding interest."

“Skipping one day makes it easier to skip the next.”As individuals we appear to have failed because our population growth rate has fallen to 1.0%.

Secondly I wish to dwell on performance as groups.In here I would like to quote the true story that prompted author James Clavell to write the novel “The King Rat”.

“During World War II, thousands of allied POW's were held captive in Changi Prison in Singapore. There was little shelter in the prison and less food.

Hundreds of the prisoners held there died of disease and starvation. To make matters even worse, POW's fought with each other. Gangs formed. They would steal weaker prisoners' food and use it to feed the rats they raised in hidden, underground cages.

The rats became a source of wealth and power over others in the prison's vicious internal warfare. Starving men would give up everything; even commit murder, if it meant access to the rat meat that the gangs hoarded. But, in the end, the rats taught these warring gangs a powerful lesson that became the key to prison survival. The rats' meat saved the men from starvation; the rats' lesson saved them from each other.

The gang members were gambling men. To make a wager they would throw a rat into a deep pool in the prison yard and bet on how long the rat could tread water before drowning. The men learned that the rats were as tough as they were.

A single rat, thrown into a pool, could tread water for twenty-four hours before drowning. The gang members came to respect these rats for their strength and endurance.

But the real lesson came when they threw two rats into the pool together. Both rats were drowned within an hour. Each tried to claw its way on top of the other. Instead of working together, they undercut and pulled each other under.

The gang members came to see that they were like these fighting, drowning rats. They'd all been thrown into the prison together, and now they were pulling each other under. Through the rats they learned that strength without teamwork was nothing.

The positive side of this story is that the gang members *did* learn from the rats. They helped other prisoners become rat farmers. By the end of the war, the prisoners were eating better than the guards." Unfortunately the different groups in Sri Lanka have failed to unite after 30-year war. They still fight as ethnic groups. And it is affecting our national productivity badly.

Finally I wish to focus on the two main streams of production in our country. They are Mass production and Production by masses.

Mass production is technology driven and Production by masses is people and technique driven.

So far we have been measuring the productivity of both sectors based on the cost of output without valuing the people who are toiling.

With our aged population increasing, people with skills migrating, private sector lamenting over unavailability of skilled labour, public sector expanding beyond sustainable limits and with unwanted elections for electing representatives to unproductive provincial councils wasting valuable time and resources, we have decided to discuss "Maximizing National Productivity for Sustainable Growth".

Welcome to Ceremonial Inauguration of 2012 Annual Sessions of the OPA.

Introduction of the theme by President –Elect.

Mr. Benedict Ulluwishewa, President-Elect introduced the theme of the Sessions, 'Maximising National Productivity for Sustainable Growth'.

As the president-elect of the OPA, it is my duty to introduce our 25th Annual Session, the flagship event of our organization. Let me take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude towards Your Excellences the High Commissioner of United Kingdom, High Commissioner of Australia & Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands for all the generous supports and cooperation that their countries have so far extended towards our Organization since its very inception. We also gratefully acknowledge the generous support offered by the Commonwealth Foundation of Great Britain to establish our Organization the OPA in 1974.

The OPA's first annual session was held in 1988 under the theme 'Sri Lanka in 2015', as our first step towards building our nation. Since then, we have held 24 annual sessions on various themes relevant to the needs of Sri Lanka.

Today, we are inaugurating our silver jubilee annual sessions under the theme of '**Maximising National Productivity for Sustainable Growth**'.

Let me explain this theme from my perspective:

Growth means the process of growing or progressive increase, and growth in the national economy will result in an increased availability of goods and services as well as employment which will eventually alleviate poverty and solve many other problems our nation faces today. Therefore, economic growth is the highest priority of the government. After thirty years of devastating terror and armed-conflict, our nation is now beginning to raise its head, and the government has launched a multi-faceted development drive throughout the country, with the intention of promoting economic growth. The government's policy is to extend infrastructure facilities necessary for economic growth into rural areas in order to stimulate economic growth there. This policy will reduce the existing rural-urban income gap and allow rural populations to enjoy the fruits of economic growth. This will also reduce the current rural-urban migration which creates heavy pressure on existing urban infrastructure.

However, a growing economy also requires more natural resources, which includes not only the products of nature (such as minerals, forest, and water), but also nature's capacity to assimilate waste and recycle it into usable items, and its life-support services that regulate the composition of the atmosphere, climatic zones and weather patterns. Given the limited availability of natural resources, if we are to sustain economic growth over the long-run, we have to maximise the productivity of natural resources available to us. In our effort to maximize productivity, we must pay attention to ensure both environmental and economic sustainability. While the former requires preserving nature's capacity to regenerate natural resources, the latter requires preserving the capacity of the economy to maintain production over the long-run. We should not maximize productivity at the expense of sustainability. As the nation's professionals, it is our duty to use our expertise to balance productivity and sustainability.

Our past experiences have shown that we have failed to meet this balance in some occasions, and attempted to raise productivity at the expense of sustainability.

Let me take an example

In 1950s and 60s, as an effort to maximise the productivity of our existing rice fields, the government introduced high-yielding rice varieties, chemical fertilizers, chemical pesticides and weed-killers, and farm machines. This is what we call green revolution. The green-revolution technologies required increased water supply and better water management. So, the government developed irrigation facilities, and as a result of these advanced technologies and irrigation water, our rice production substantially increased. Today we hear from various sources that our nation is just about to be self-sufficient in rice. All this is good.

However, the question is, have we increased the productivity of rice fields in a sustainable way? Recent studies suggest that though the use of modern technologies increased rice fields' productivity, it has reduced both environmental and economic sustainability. For instance, chemical fertilizers reduce the soils' capacity to regenerate its natural fertility, and polluted the water which has resulted in the reduction of fish and other aquatic organisms which contribute to natural productivity. Further, due to the escalating price of modern inputs that farmers have to purchase rice cultivation is starting to become economically unsustainable. After each harvest, farmers have to spend a substantial portion of their income to repay the loans they borrowed to pay for the technology. Though the national rice production has substantially increased, our rice producers remain poor.

As today's professionals, what lesson can we learn from this past experience? Before the package of green revolution technology was introduced to our farmers, the professionals of that time should have carried out an impact assessment to ascertain the possible long-term negative impacts on our environment and the economy. Why did they fail to do so? I believe the root-cause of this issue lies in the colonial history of our country.

It was the colonial rulers who first laid down the foundation for the professional class in Sri Lanka. To support the colonial administration, they wanted to recruit civil servants and professionals locally; and to achieve this purpose they established an education system which planted a mindset within the first generations of professionals that Western technology and knowledge was greater than their own. Therefore, not surprisingly, early generations of professionals welcomed all technologies, knowledge and skills introduced from the West while ignoring our home-grown knowledge, technologies and skills. In my view, it is still this mindset that is keeping us away from ordinary people. We, the professionals, tend to perceive ourselves as a superior social class above the ordinary people.

Even after sixty four years of independence, we are still biased towards foreign knowledge, technologies and skills. We know very little about our home-grown alternatives. This is a fault of the education

system. Even today, home grown knowledge is not being in our schools or higher educational institutions. Even though studies have revealed the value of indigenous knowledge for sustainable growth, no systematic attempt has been made so far to uncover potentials of our home-grown knowledge, and integrate it into our education system. Indigenous knowledge is based on local people's experience, their informal research and experimentation. Indigenous technologies are compatible with local environment and cultures. They are also time-tested. Historical evidence proves that our ancestors utilized locally available natural resources over centuries without impairing the ability to support them and their successive generations. However, the capacity of our natural resources to provide for today's market is limited. But this could be improved by blending indigenous knowledge with modern-science. There are many examples of where this has been successful.

It is my personal view that as professionals who are committed to maximize national productivity for sustainable growth, we must make use of every opportunity to familiarize ourselves with our nation's home-grown indigenous knowledge. Perhaps, we can use western scientific knowledge to maximise the capacity of indigenous knowledge to increase national productivity and use it in projects that we undertake for sustainable growth. Such an effort will definitely bring us closer to ordinary people, and eventually bridge the gap between professionals and the ordinary people.

Let us learn from our past experiences and move forward. Let us be determined to use our expertise to maximize national productivity for sustainable growth. This is the issue we will focus on in this annual session. We are fortunate that we were able to bring together experts from various areas that are relevant to the issue. Among them, there are academics, business entrepreneurs, managers, bankers, planners and policy makers. In view of their qualifications and experience, I am sure the OPA annual session 2012 will be a great success.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank the Annual Sessions subcommittee, our sponsors and the staff of the OPA for their tireless efforts and cooperation in organising our flagship event.

Press Release

Implementation of Recommendation of LLRC

- 1.0 The Organisation of professional Associations of Sri Lanka (OPA) has studied the Report of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) and the OPA finds that the Report contains many good recommendations that the OPA is in agreement with and consider to be measures that would promote Good Governance and Measures to promote Reconciliation to which the OPA has a strong commitment. The LLRC also had time to examine and deliberate on the issues that they took up for their consideration and therefore we could accept them as adequately studied proposals that would address, many of the issues that have been highlighted we- find that the LLRC recommendations can be broadly divided into two groups viz. those that can be implemented without delay and those that would require further consultation and deliberation and may take time to implement. The OPA considers that the implementation of the first group of recommendations could be initiated without delay. The OPA also considers that the Government should make a strong and determined effort to give effect to the LLRC recommendations.
- 2.0 The OPA has identified several issues that had been examined by the LLRC and made their recommendations. The OPA having studied and reviewed them considers that the government should give priority to the following recommendations in the formulation of its policies and strategies in implementing the LLRC Proposals

- 1 Judicial Review of Legislation;
- 2 Enact constitutional measures to strengthen and ensure the Independence of the Judiciary;
- 3 Establish independent Commissions particularly the Public Service Commission, Police Commission, Elections Commission, Judicial Service Commission, the Human Rights Commission and the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery & Corruption;
- 4 Fast track the Implementation of the constitutional Provisions on Official Languages;
- 5 Ensure Citizens' right to information and enact a Right to Information Act;
- 6 Provision of information regarding those in custody to their immediate relatives'
- 7 Disarm all illegal Armed Groups and
- 8 Provision of legal ownership of land to those who are re-settled on land allotments;

3.0 The OPA also wishes to state that the implementation of the above recommendations will go a long way to counter the adverse publicity that had been carried out abroad, and the acts of the detractors who had Government of lack of commitment and delaying tactics.

4.0 The OPA is committed to provide any assistance required in the implementation of these Recommendations.

Archt. Plnr. L T Kiringoda

Press Release on the Mannar Incident

The Organisation of Professional Associations of Sri Lanka (OPA) wishes to express deep concern and condemnation of the reported action by Minister Rishard Bathurdeen to threaten and intimidate the Mannar Judge, and the later action by his supporters to damage the Court premises.

The OPA is committed to safeguarding the independence of the Judiciary and this attempt at political interference with and intimidation of the Judiciary is to be deplored in the strongest terms and as the apex body of Professionals in the country the OPA calls upon the authorities to take immediate and stringent action against this Minister.

The OPA considers any attack on a Judge as an attack on every citizen of this country and wishes to express unequivocal support for our Judiciary.

News from the Restaurant and Bar Committee

The R & B Committee of the OPA is now pleased to offer you a total package of Hospitality to all our members both Life and Annual. The Restaurant, Bar and Lounge has been completely re-done and raised to Star Class standards in keeping with the dignity of our members and our Organisation. A fully equipped and pleasant Open Air Beer Garden too is now back in place for the use of our members.

The Liquor Bar

Most of our Members are no doubt familiar with the Bar. The Bar has now been redesigned and extended to fulfill the needs of Members more fully and with much better service. All sales at the Bar are at a discounted rate for Members (the cheapest in town) as the Bar is run more as a service and a facility to members.

The Lounge which is air conditioned has been fully carpeted comfortably furnished and converted to a **Family Lounge** very specially to accommodate our families and Special Guests to enjoy themselves in comfort and privacy. A nominal entry charge of Rs.20/- for the time being is levied from all Male Members and Male Guests. While entrance for Ladies and Children would be free at all times. The Lounge would normally be opened for Members

during Bar hours which is from 11.a.m.-2.00 p.m. and 5.00 p.m. -11.00 p.m. Members requiring the Lounge for their families at other times could contact the Office for the Lounge to be opened. This Lounge could also be reserved by Members on any day for their family functions not exceeding 30 persons for a nominal charge of Rs.1000/-only (for three hours). The Family Lounge is also equipped with a private dining area for the convenience of those reserving the Lounge. Reservation of the Lounge however would not be allowed on days the Restaurant is booked as on such days entry to the Lounge is free to all Members and Guests not attending Restaurant functions.

The Restaurant has also been given a complete facelift to make it more hygienic eye catching and appetizing. The kitchen too has been completely remodeled refurbished and hygienically equipped to a very high standard. The quality of food has improved greatly and is being run by experienced Hoteliers. The food provided to members would be at a discounted price. The Restaurant too could be booked and reserved by members for their private functions other than on days the Restaurant is required for OPA functions, reservation charges being Rs.3,200/- (for three hours).

On days the Restaurant is so booked special arrangements have been made for the convenience of members where members would be accommodated in the Lounge free of any charge, and their dining in comfort arranged at the extreme end of the Bar concealed fully from the Bar with curtains for their privacy. Entrance to the dining area is from the Lounge itself and need not be through the Bar unless one desires to visit the Bar.

Members may also reserve tables in advance according to availability with prior notice to the Restaurant indicating the number of tables and the period during which such reservation would be required. Members could also order their catering necessities for any of their functions outside with reasonable notice to the Restaurant Management.

The Beer Garden –Quite exquisite, is now in place in the garden at the back of the Restaurant complete with tents, assorted and Corona umbrellas, adjustable comfortable chairs, tables etc along with a well equipped stall to meet your requirements. It would also be ideal for outdoor dining if you so wish to enjoy your meals. It would be open for Beer only during Bar hours, but otherwise shall be open for Members meals/food requirements throughout Restaurant hours. The Beer Garden could be reserved by the Members for their functions at a charge of Rs.1500/- (for three hours)

Marquee Tents

The Beer Garden is also equipped with five marquee tents, three of which are of 20 x10 ft. and two of 10x10 ft. which could also be hired by Members for their Restaurant functions of large gatherings.

Members could also reserve the Beer Garden with the tents for their private functions. The hire for the Beer Garden and the two small tents would be Rs.2,500/-. The hire of large tents would vary depending on the requirement. Hire of one tent would be Rs. 4,000/- hire of two tents would be Rs. 7,500/- and all three tents would be Rs.10,000/-, in addition to the Beer Garden hire of Rs.1,500/-The two small tents are also available for hire strictly to **Members Only** for any of their domestic functions at a nominal charge of Rs.1,000/- per tent, The transport of which would be the Members responsibility.

The facilities available together with rules pertaining to them are laid on the tables of both the Restaurant and the Lounge for your further guidance, and your observations on them would be

deeply appreciated. Any further inquiries or clarifications and your observations and suggestions could be directed to the Centre Director Tel. 011-2580268 or 011-5844901 and to the Chairman Restaurant and Bar Committee. Tel: 077-5483156 or 071-2638589. For your Restaurant, Bar and Lounge requirements you may in addition contact the Restaurant on 011-3158532 or 077-8956435 (Suranga). There are also telephone extensions from the two General Lines to the Restaurant -Ext.211. Bar- Ext. 209. Family Lounge-Ext. 210. The Beer Garden can be contacted either from the Restaurant or from the Bar.

We also presume that you are already aware of the facilities with regard to the Auditorium which could be booked for your official functions such as Seminars, Launches etc at the rate of Rs.5,500/- for (3 hours) and along with the Restaurant for further Rs.3,200/-. However, further inquiries with regard to the Auditorium and the facilities available should be addressed to the Centre Director at the above telephone numbers.

The Restaurant and Bar Committee invite you to make use of these facilities and feel and enjoy an **All New Experience** and earnestly hope that you together with your families and special guests would make use of these facilities to the fullest.

Nihal Serasinha
Chairman, The Restaurant and Bar Committee

A Soft Ball Cricket Tournament was held at the Bloomfield Grounds on the 11th Aug. 2012. The SLMA emerged as the Champions, while ICSB were the Runners up.



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Arrival of Guests at Annual Sessions Inauguration. Presenting a plaque to Mr. Ajith Cabraal by Mr. B. Ulluwishewa, President-Elect

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275/75, Prof. Stanley Wijesundera Mawatha,
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* The easiest way to make your old car run better, is to check the prices of new car.

* Q: What is the difference between men and pigs?

A: Pigs don't turn into men when they drink.

* Q: Why dogs don't marry?

A: Because they are already leading a dog's life!

Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible.

[Dalai Lama](#)

When I was young I thought that money was the most important thing in life; now that I am old I know that it is.

[Oscar Wilde](#)

You can't just ask customers what they want and then try to give that to them. By the time you get it built, they'll want something new.

[Steve Jobs](#)

I suppose leadership at one time meant muscles; but today it means getting along with people.

[Mahatma Gandhi](#)

10 years ago the USA had Steve Jobs, Bob Hope and Johnny Cash

Now they have no Jobs, no Hope and no Cash.