



MINDNET

the Newsletter of the

COLOMBO MBA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

First Choice in Business Governance

Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo, 94 Kumaratunga Munidasa Mawatha, Colombo 3
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The 6th AGM

The 6th annual General meeting of the CMBAAA followed by cocktails was held on 4th of July 2003 at the Hotel Ceylon Continental with the highest ever member participation.

The new office bearers and the EXCO for the year 2003/2004 were elected at the AGM. Neil De Mel the incoming president was handed over his duties by outgoing president Chris Corea on this occasion. The chief guest was Colombo MBA Alumnus CEO of MAS Branding and Retailing Ravi Fernando, who delivered the guest speech on "Regaining Sri Lanka-The Challenge of Being Globally Competitive in the Sri Lankan Context". The members renewed old friendships and enjoyed themselves at the cocktails which followed the AGM.

CMBAAA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR 2003/2004



Seated (from left): Ranjula Nilaweera (Asst Treasurer), Rohan Seneviratne (Asst Secretary), Lalith Perera (Secretary), Kalyani Rodrigo (Vice President), Niel De Mel (President), Prasad Jayasuriya (Vice President), Suresh Kumar (Treasurer), Gayathri Padmasekera

Standing (from left): Mahinda Gamege, Mohamed Hassan, Mano Navaratnerajah, Darshan Perera, Shirantha Perera, Gehan Wanigasekera, Ranjith Jayawardena, Nishan Mahanama.

Absent

Chris Corea (Immediate Past President)

CMBAAA Annual Dinner

31st October 2003 @ Taj Samudra From 19:30

Regaining Sri Lanka – The Challenge of being Globally competitive in the Sri Lankan Context

By Ravi Fernando

Dear Fellow Alumni of the University of Colombo MBA programme. It is indeed an honor to have been invited to the 6th Annual General meeting as the Chief Guest. At the very outset I want to take this opportunity to remember Prof. Jayaratne who was the father of the Colombo MBA & course co-coordinator during my time. His vision, commitment & tireless efforts will be remembered by many.

Today I have chosen a topic of great interest, relevance ... "Regaining Sri Lanka-The challenge of being Globally competitive in the Sri Lankan context!" ... I want to remind each of you that if Sri Lanka is to regain itself ... it will have to do so from many competing economies, which have positioned themselves to access the "Limited Resources available" for investment in development projects around the World.

If I were to look at the region.... India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam etc are some of the Nations we have to compete with for the development of the power of US\$. However it is my view having returned to Sri Lanka after a 10-12 year stint. Internationally with SmithKline Beecham & Sterling Health International in three key regions –Africa, Middle East, South & East Asia & also being in Global Brand teams that I see a major need for some fundamental attitudinal changes that must take place as a pre-requisite to Regaining Sri Lanka. In 1999 Sri Lanka was ranked 44th in the Global competitive rankings... in 2001/2 we fell to 62nd position! Why are we not Globally competitive.... over the past 2-3 years I have made some observations.... I must state these are my personal views.... but passionately believe we need to address if we are to have even a remote chance of success... so let me share these observations,

1. Short term vs. Strategic approach

As a Nation it is my view that we need to be much more Strategic in our approach. In all areas of strategic importance to Regaining Sri Lanka... Peace negotiations, Geopolitics & our Key income generating sectors: Tea... Tourism... Garments etc.

As a people we need to "Move away from... lets survive today. Tomorrow will look after its self ... or as long as I am okay... it does not matter attitude to doing things together today to make tomorrow possible!

Let me share examples of Asian nations who have adopted a Strategic approach:

-*Singapore* is what it is today ... the most Globally competitive nation because its leadership adopted a

strategic approach... in terms of developing the skills, Focus sector investments etc.

-*Malaysia* with its Cyberjaya project positioned itself in to the 21st century as an IT hub... attracted Bill Gates to invest!

-*Japans* MITI orchestrated its strategic investment strategies to take Market after market for its focus Automotive & Electronics sectors to be the Global leader today!

Do we have a Strategic approach how to leverage & dominate our focus sectors in the Global arena?

2. General attitude vs. Attention to detail

As a people we need to "Develop sensitivity to the need for attention to detail"... It is a need across the board... in every sector!

Again I have to mention the example of Singapore.... where attention to detail is a National obsession!

3. "Local vs. Global Thinking"

It is said that the term "Island mentality" is a truism for Island Nations!

For us to be Strategic in approach we have to be exposed, sensitive & aware of the ever-changing Global realities, which impact our Nation & its focus, sectors almost daily! We have to be obsessed of being proactively aware & most of all develop a Strategic approach with an evolving stream of tactics to manage change!

As a Nation we seem to be ill informed or most often ignorant of these realities... even World news.... not many seem to want to know!

"E Sri Lanka ... is a glimmer of hope & a strategic approach lets hope we have more such initiatives.

4. Lets do it next week attitude!

Sense of urgency... speed ... turnaround time.... pace... productivity. Are entry tickets to compete in the Global economy, especially in our focus industries of Garments & tea!

As a Nation ... doing things next week... tomorrow are on the tips of our tongues with every task! We need to instill a new sense of urgency starting with children in schools & then at every level... because without it we will never Regain Sri Lanka!

5. Content society & people. 75% is excellent!

The way we define excellence will determine how much we need to strive to achieve it & what

standards we attain! It also defines whom we benchmark & compete against. From our O’L to A’L to almost every exam an A or distinction is 75%.... all over the world in the developed & Globally competitive nations they have 3-4 differentiators between 75 to 100%.

6.Lack of confidence & aggressive nature

As a Nation we need to give greater exposure to the talented to understand the competition out there! If this is coupled with programs to develop skill & fill in the gaps with world-class professionals. We will have more ...Olympic medals & Susanthikas.... more Global brands like Dilmah...& World Cricket titles!

7.Commitment =100%

Another area we must focus & improve on is to do with building a nation of people with a new definition of what commitment entails...

Commitment is focused on the deliverables & demands 100% application to achieve 100% results:

With or without rewards

With or without encouragement...medals

It must be instilled as the personal standard of every Sri Lankan!

8 “Pits of Hell” syndrome

When I was a Management trainee at Unilever my British Marketing Director once mentioned to me ...the story of the pits of hell as we live & work in Sri Lanka.... this was in the early 1980s & how true it is!

As a people from the times of our Kandyan kings to today...disunity & betrayal seem to be the attitudes deeply entrenched in our society.

-If I can’t have it,then no one must have it!

-If someone’s doing well,lets bring him down by our words & deeds!

Lets be united ...be proud of those Sri Lankans who have achieved in the Global arena in Sri Lanka...we need to focus our attention on the Global competition & not inwardly. ...Then we can begin to Regain Sri Lanka!

**Budget Seminar
14 Nov 2003**

FOR BRAINSTORMING



On 26th and 27th of July CMBA EXCO members held the traditional “Brain Storming” weekend at the Riverina Hotel. All EXCO members attended this programme. This session served to build team spirit and generate enthusiasm amongst the committee members. The session started on 26th evening and continued the following day until late in the evening and plans for the year were prepared by the five subcommittees viz “ Management Development”, “Membership Development”, “Communications”, “University Liaison” and “Finance”. In addition to official work, EXCO enjoyed themselves too and built a strong team spirit. Thilina, made the hotel arrangements and participated on the First day evening session as well.



MBA Course Inauguration Ceremony 2003



2003 MBA Course inauguration ceremony was held at the BMICH on 7TH August . The chief Guest was Professor G.L.Peiris, Minister of enterprise development, investment promotion and industrial policy. The guest of honour was Professor W.M.Jayarathne. Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo ,Professor Thilak Hettiarachchi, Dr.D.P.Wickramasinghe, Mr.Pradeep Randivela, Dean Faculty of Management and Finance, Course Coordinator Dr.Fazeela Ahasan, also participated. Mr.Neil DeMel, President CMBAAA.also addressed the ceremony where he stressed the important role played by CMBAAA in the conduct of the MBA programme.

This event was attended by over 150 participants who included the academic staff of the University of Colombo, Executive Members of the Colombo MBA Alumni Association. And the MBA students.

MBA Student Orientation Workshop



CMBAAA in collaboration with the Faculty of Management and Finance organized an interactive workshop conducted by Mr.Dian Gomes on 25th September at the conference room of the faculty. Over 100 MBA students and Members participated at this event. Our Association will arrange similar workshops on a monthly basis by inviting prominent personalities from the business and academic world. This workshop also served as part of the CMT module of the MBA course currently conducted by the faculty.

Dian is a group Director of MAS Holdings and is the Managing Director of Sara Lee

Courtaulds/MAS Holdings (Pvt) Ltd. Joint Venture, which comprises Slimline (Pvt) Ltd., Unichela (Pvt) Ltd., Leisureline (Pvt Ltd. and Casualline (Pvt) Ltd.

. President CIMA – Sri Lanka Division (2001/2002) and Vice President of the Sri Lanka Amateur Boxing Association.

Advisor to the Rana Viru Seva Authority, Government of Sri Lanka. Dian serves on the Boards of many Private &

Government organizations which includes, the NIBM, the Mahaweli Authority, The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, PDL Enterprises (Pvt) Limited and also as a member of the Regional Development Monitoring Committee – Ministry of Policy Development & Implementatio and has been recently appointed by the Hon. Prime Minister as a member of the Steering Committee on Human Resources Development in the implementation of “Regaining Sri Lanka”.



An Orientation Workshop for the 2003 batches of the MBA students was held at the Faculty on 16th August 2003. CMBAAA was invited to participate in this event. Mr.Chris Corea past president made a presentation with regards to the activities of CMBAAA and the important role played by the association to enhance the MBA program in close collaboration with the Faculty. He invited the students to make the best use of facilities provided by the association.



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