



Insight

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Millennium Development Goals



"Looking ahead to 2015 and beyond, there is no question that we can achieve the overarching goal: we can put an end to poverty. In almost all instances, experience has demonstrated the validity of earlier agreements on the way forward; in other words, we know what to do. But it requires an unswerving, collective, long-term effort." United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon.



The MDGs represent a global partnership that has grown from the commitments and targets established at the world summits of the 1990s. Responding to the world's main development challenges and to the calls of civil society, the MDGs promote poverty reduction, education, maternal health, gender equality, and aim at combating child mortality, AIDS and other diseases.

Set for the year 2015, the MDGs are an agreed set of goals that can be achieved if all actors work together and do their part. Poor countries have pledged to govern better, and invest in their people through health care and education. Rich countries have pledged to support them, through aid, debt relief, and fairer trade.



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A Saga of Yoemen Service

By Mohammed Rasooldeen



Ambassador Ahmed Afel Jawad, right, opens the new premises of the free medical clinic run by the SLES



Dr. Mohamed Shaheed, Paediatrician at the Security Forces Hospital (SFH) treats a child patient at the clinic.

Free medical clinic conducted by the Sri Lankan Expatriates Society (SLES) in Riyadh is an example to be emulated by other organizations since its yeoman services have benefited a large section of its community in the capital, observed the island's Ambassador Ahmed Afel Jawad.

Opening the newly built premises of the clinic at the Sri Lankan International School in Riyadh, the envoy said that the clinic is a success story of a 'collective endeavor' of all members of the Sri Lankan community which includes Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims living in the Kingdom.

Two years after the inception of the SLES in the capital, the Free Medical Clinic was set up in June 1994 to serve the Sri Lankan community members who needed medical attention when they are in ill-health..

Jawad, who came as Ambassador to the Kingdom a month ago, pointed out that the SLES has been successful in carrying out meaningful activities since it believes in giving opportunities for the new generation to run the organization with experienced people serving as its advisors.

The history of the clinic goes back to the good old days when Dr. Mohamed Shaheed, pediatrician at the Security Forces Hospital (SFH) was treating some of the needy Sri Lankan patients at his private residence in Riyadh.. Realizing the dire need for a formal medical clinic for the deserving Sri Lankans, Dr. Saheed approached the then SLES President Saifudeen Thassim with a suggestion to form a clinic which could not only serve the people who do not have medical facilities from their respective establishments but also to assist others who wanted a second opinion from a Sri Lankan doctor. Thassim who has been a veteran social worker since his childhood, readily agreed to proceed with Dr. Shaheed's plan and thus paved way

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A Saga of...

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for the formation of the present free medical clinic- the pride of all Sri Lankans in the Kingdom. After a few months, Dr. V. Sivasubramaniam, Consultant Physician at the SFH readily joined the medical clinic in the SLES's efforts to serve the members of its community.

Today, the clinic is a rendezvous for a large number of Sri Lankans who come for medical consultations on Fridays at the premises of the Sri Lankan International School in Riyadh. Young and old, as well as parents with their infants confidently walk into the clinic for treatment. ECG, Blood pressure, glucose level and other preliminary tests are conducted at the clinic by the doctors who are ably supported by a team of paramedical staff and officials of the SLES.

The doctors who serve the clinic include Dr. Shaheed, Qutinus Silva, Mohammed Altaf and Mohamed Haaris.

They all work on a voluntary basis with a sense of devotion and dedication. It is fitting to record the services of Markandayan, Shameel Hameed and B.M.R.Preena, who assist the medical men at the clinic. The clinic has witnessed an increase in the number of patients due to recent improvement in its medical services. Its services include medical consultation, ECG, blood tests

and prescription of medicines. Medicines, mostly donated by kind-hearted Sri Lankans, are also given to some needy patients. It has an average intake of 60 patients, half of them are children, seeking medical services per week.

"Emergency patients are always accepted in preference to regular outdoor patients," Dr. Shaheed said, adding that parents come with their children since their little ones feel comfortable with Sri Lankan doctors. The other patients include, house-drivers, housemaids and Sri Lankans who want to take a second opinion, he noted.

There were instances where the clinic procured medicines from Colombo to treat Sri Lanka patients in the Kingdom. On the advice of Dr. Sivasubramaniam, SLES brought in a substantial quantity of tablets such as Primaquine and Hetrazan to treat Malaria and Filariasis among Sri Lankan patients. These tablets were not available in the Kingdom since these diseases were indigenous to the Lankans. It is run with funds generated from activities conducted by the SLES in aid of the medical clinic and philanthropists from the community offer donations in kind whenever it needs. The ECG machine was a donation from the SpeedCash Unit of the SAMBA Financial Group and its corresponding Seylan Bank of Sri Lanka.

Democracy ... fm p2

Since being elected in November 2008, President Mohamed Nasheed has been an outspoken and pragmatic voice speaking on behalf of his and other small island states, grouped under the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). Recently, the global news magazine TIME named him a Hero of the Environment for his climate advocacy.

In March 2009, President Nasheed announced that the Maldives would become the world's first fully carbon-neutral nation within a decade. To accomplish this, they would vigorously pursue renewable energies and green energy sources to replace current dependence on fossil fuels.

Small Islands, Big Impact was filmed by a Maldivian crew comprising Ibrahim Yasir and Hussein Makzoom.

It was directed by Nalaka Gunawardene, and edited at TVE Asia Pacific's studios in Sri Lanka.

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UNDP is working with a wide range of partners to help create coalitions for change to support the goals at global, regional and national levels, to benchmark progress towards them, and to help countries to build the institutional capacity, policies and programmes needed to achieve the MDGs.

Guided by the UN Core Strategy, UNDP's work on the MDGs focuses on coordinating global and local efforts that:

- Campaign and mobilize for the MDGs through **advocacy**;
- Share the **best strategies** for meeting the MDGs in terms of innovative practices, policy and institutional reforms, means of policy implementation, and evaluation of financing options;
- Monitor and **report progress** towards the MDGs; and
- Support governments in tailoring the MDGs to local circumstances and challenges.

THE EIGHT GOALS

Goal 1: **Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**

Goal 2: **Achieve universal primary education**

Goal 3: **Promote gender equality and empower women**

Goal 4: **Reduce child mortality**

Goal 5: **Improve maternal health**

Goal 6: **Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**

Goal 7: **Ensure environmental sustainability**

Goal 8: **Develop a Global Partnership for Development**

Democracy & Good Governance Vital in Fighting Climate Change



Democracy and good governance are vital elements in humanity's struggle against climate change, says the leader of the Maldives, one of the world's most vulnerable countries to sea level rise.

"When climate changes, and when you start feeling the actual impacts...you will be wasting all the resources without a proper governance system," cautions **President Mohamed Nasheed**, the first democratically elected head of state of the Indian Ocean archipelago nation.

He further explains: "Traditionally, we've always thought that adaptation (living with climate change) represents physical structures -- revetments, embankments and breakwaters, etc. But we feel that the most important adaptation issue is good governance and, therefore, consolidating democracy is very important for adaptation."

In a short new film released online for the International Day of Climate Action (24 October 2009), President Nasheed calls climate change both a global human rights issue and a security threat to small, low-lying island nations such as the Maldives.

The film, titled *Small Islands – Big Impact* (6 mins), was produced by the non-profit foundation TVE Asia Pacific (TVEAP) in collaboration with COM+ Alliance of Communicators for Sustainable Development. It is based on an exclusive interview President Nasheed recorded recently with TVEAP's Director **Nalaka Gunawardene**.

"If you run any of the scenarios of sea level rise, you will...realise that within no time, we would be under water. This is a very real threat to us," President Nasheed says on the film. "We will die if this goes on!"

He adds: "We have a fundamental right for life. If that is challenged, we have to link it to be a human rights issue, and not just an environmental issue."

The film ends with President Nasheed's message to the climate summit in Copenhagen in December: "In a nutshell, I'd like to say what has already been said - Don't be stupid! Going on and on about who did it is not going to save us. This is the time to realise that the deed is done!"

He appeals to the world: "So let's see how we may be able to proceed from here. If you have some money, please give it to someone who doesn't have. If you have technology, please give it to someone who doesn't have that technology."

Small Islands – Big Impact was shot on location in the Maldives, the smallest country in Asia by area and population: it packs 325,000 people into a land area just under 300 square kilometres spread over 1,192 islands and islets. Around two hundred are inhabited.

With an average ground level of 1.5 metres (5 feet) above sea level, the Maldives is also the lowest country on the planet. As the polar ice melts and sea levels rise, these and other low-lying islands would become gradually submerged. Coastal erosion, salt intrusion and extreme weather events can make some islands uninhabitable sooner.

Climate induced pressures are already affecting fisheries and tourism – the two most important sectors of the Maldivian economy, President Nasheed says He adds: "Even now, some islanders are having to move homes from where they lived to elsewhere. There are serious coastal erosion problems. So that's all very real -- and it's happening now!"

ANURADHAPURA



The city of Anuradha was founded in the 5th century BCE and remained the capital of Sri Lanka for 1400 years. The city is surrounded by four large reservoirs the largest of which is the Nuvaravava. The Tissavava now provides the modern city of Anuradhapura with its drinking water. All the reservoirs are fed by a channel constructed in the 4th century CE which leads water from the Kalavapi River about 50 miles from the city. Like Lhasa, Kyoto, Xian and several other ancient Buddhist capitals, Anuradhapura was a city surrounded by and to some degree dwarfed by a number of huge monasteries and several other smaller ones. The history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka up to the 13th century is to a very large extent the history of Anuradhapura's three great monasteries: the Mahavihara, the Abhayagiri and the Jetavana. The Mahavihara or Great Monastery was founded by Venerable Mahinda himself and Theravadins in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia even today subscribe to the Mahavihara's interpretation of the Pali Tipitaka.

The ruins of the Mahavihara consist of a collection of 13 complexes covering a wide area. Unfortunately in the 19th century the town of Anuradhapura was built mainly over these ruins and many of them were damaged. In about the year 249 a new teaching from India called the Vetullavada was being enthusiastically advocated at the Abhayagiri. Some 300 of its monks disagreed so strongly with certain of the principles of this new teaching that they broke away and formed themselves into

a new sect called the Sagalikas after their leader Sagala, a renowned scholar. King Mahasena appropriated some land owned by the Mahavihara and built these monks a monastery which was named Jetavana after the famous monastery in Savatthi where the Buddha used to live. The Jetavana stupa was the biggest ever built anywhere and their image house was the most impressive ever built in Sri Lanka. It seems that the Sagalikas were more liberal than the Mahaviharans but not as radical as the Abhayagiri.

By the 9th century continual pressure from south India meant that Anuradhapura was no longer safe as a capital and political power gradually shifted to Polonnaruwa. But the city continued to be religiously important for at least another 200 years but eventually it died and was buried by the jungle.

Although Anuradhapura was abandoned for a thousand years its sacred shrines were never forgotten. A few lone monks lived among the ruins and looked after the continual trickle of pilgrims who came.

With the advent of the British and the general improvement in roads and the construction of bridges pilgrimage became much easier and for the first time in centuries, large numbers of people started coming again. In 1834, Lt. Skinner who accompanied the governor on his inspection tour to Anuradhapura wrote. "The road from Kandy through Matale and Dambulla was crowded with pilgrims on their way to the Sacred Bodhi Tree". When he reached the ruins of the old city it was perfectly alive with people'. The Thuparama was a jumble of pillars and stones while the Great Stupa was little more than a steep-sided mound covered with thick jungle.

Many places could not be identified at all. In the 1800s Anuradhapura was made a district capital and in 1904 the railway arrived. The sheer size and splendor of the structures that were uncovered began to awaken in Sri Lankans a pride in their past. The inspiration of Anuradhapura played a significant role in the independence movement and a renewed confidence in their religion.

Arugam Bay



Arugam Bay is in the remote South East corner of the Island of Sri Lanka, close to the town of Pottuvil - an area few tourists visit. Inland is a band of jungle 70km wide. Wild elephants roam the coastal plain and the small but delightful Lahugala National Park about 10 miles inland, and an astonishing range of birdlife migrates to the wetlands and the huge Yala National Park which starts about 20 miles to the south.

The Arugambay area offers world-class surfing, deserted beaches, a 2,000 year old ruined temple, wild elephants, monkeys, an astonishing range of flora and birdlife in the jungles and wetlands and the Yala and Lahugala National Parks nearby.

The Bay hosts a large fleet of fishing boats which operate off the beach. Many organizations donated boats after the 2004 tsunami, and, as a result there are far more fishing boats than ever before. Nearby beaches are more esthetically pleasing and also have excellent waves.

Arugam Surf Point has a very long, consistent, sectional right hand break.

Many organizations have come forward to carry out much needed rehabilitation work in the area, US 'Mercy Corps' has been the most active organization, funded by Oprah Winfrey's 'Angel Network', following a huge fund-raising TV series in the US.

Arugam Bay is approximately a good seven hours drive from Colombo. It can also be accessed by air through Amparai.