



Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide

Media Release

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Lions Celebrate Golden Jubilee

Lionism was introduced to Sri Lanka in 1958 with the formation of the Lions Club of Colombo. The Movement has grown in the last 50 years and today there are around 415 clubs with some 11,700 members distributed all over Sri Lanka.

The Lions of Sri Lanka celebrated their Golden Jubilee with a series of events on 6th October 2007. Mahendra Amarasuriya, Lions International President, commented on the occasion, "Completing 50 years of service to the people of Sri Lanka can be considered a very significant achievement for any service organisation. During these 50 years, Lions of Sri Lanka has grown from 1 Club to 429 Clubs with nearly 12,000 members, as a result of which service to the community has been greatly enhanced."

The celebrations were started off with a parade from Green Path to Sathutu Uyana, in which Lions from across the country participated. The spectators comprised of International Lion dignitaries, including the Immediate Past President, the 2nd Vice President and some Past Presidents, and other members of the Board of Directors of the Lions Clubs International. Prizes were awarded to various categories of participants of the parade.

Marking the end of the parade was the donation of six wheel chairs to the six District Governors, which was a part of the consignment of 500 wheel chairs donated to disabled people at a ceremony afterwards.

A public meeting held at the Convention Centre at Maccalum Road in the same day saw the participation of over thousand guests. The meeting was followed by a Banquet at the Colombo Hilton.

Among other significant celebrations by the Lions, was World Sight Day, which fell on October 7th 2007. The line up of events to mark the day included a walk from Frances Road Wellawatte, to Bambalapitiya Station along the Galle Road, with Lions, students and other people involved in sight conservation participating.

Following the walk, visiting dignitaries participated in a foundation laying ceremony for the extension of the Lions Gift of Sight Hospital funded by the Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF). The event also presented the dignitaries the opportunity to witness ongoing cataract surgeries, a part of a project to carry out a total of 1500 Cataract Surgeries in Sri Lanka funded again by the Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF).

Further activities of the day included a visit to the Homagama Government Hospital, where the Lions have built facilities and provided equipment for a Sight Centre with funding from the Lions Clubs International Foundation. Local and Foreign Dignitaries

also visited the Sight First Hospital in Hendala- run by the Lions, to witness more cataract surgeries being carried out.

A press conference and the launch of a Seminar on Childhood Blindness in Sri Lanka were other key events that took place on the same day at Colombo Hilton.

At both Hilton and Hendala, spectacles were distributed, as a part of the exercise to distribute 30,000 spectacles with lenses to needy people, whose sight had been previously tested to ascertain their requirements.

Mr. Amarasuriya added that, "I consider it a special privilege to be the elected President of the world's largest service organisation during the Golden Anniversary year. 3500 Lions participating in the Golden Anniversary parade gave an indication of their dedication to the movement. It is an indication of the potential of the movement to serve the people of Sri Lanka even more effectively in the future."

Upcoming events in the Lions calendar include the India, South Asia, Africa and Middle East (ISAAME) Constitutional Area Forum to be held at the Colombo Hilton in the first week of December 2007 with participation from over a 1,000 Lions. 15th-25th March 2008 will see the meeting of the Board of Directors of Lions Clubs International at Vienna, Austria and from June 23rd-30th 2008, the International Convention in Bangkok, Thailand will take place.