

# Quantity Surveying Education in Sri Lankan State Universities

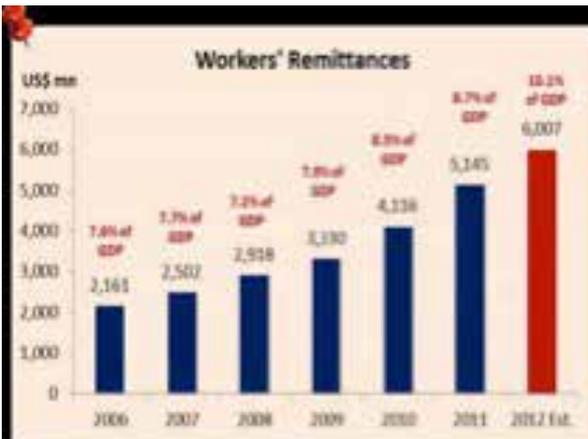
With the elimination of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) the world's ruthless terrorist organization, Sri Lanka emerged once again as a country free from the curse of war. With the glorious victory on 19th May 2009, Sri Lanka has yet to face a number of post war issues.

Our motherland Sri Lanka aspires to achieve the goal of doubling of per capita income to USD 4,000 by 2016 from USD 3,194 in 2013. It experienced a big decline in poverty between 2002 and 2012 – from 23 per cent to below 5 per-cent of the population<sup>1</sup> which is even lesser than unemployment in many developed countries as shown in graphs below.

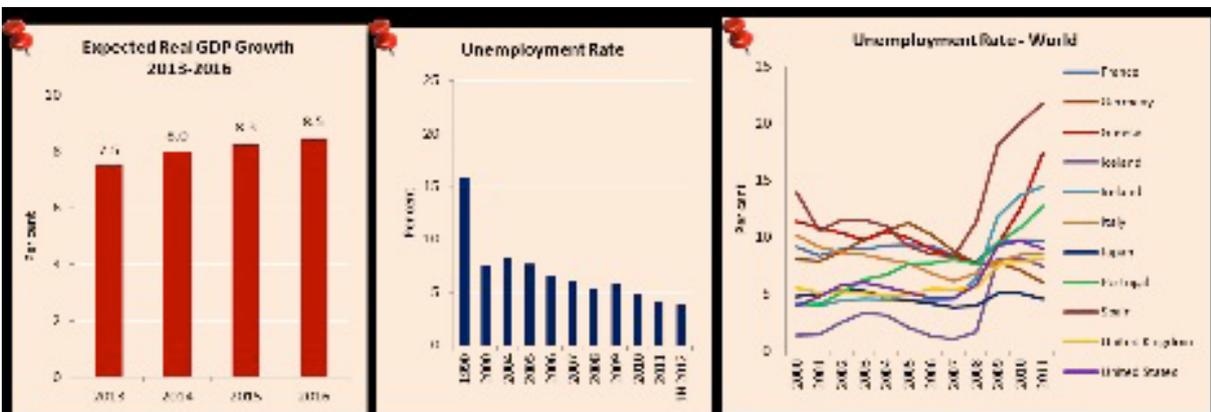
We, the worldwide Sri Lankan expats (“Rataviru”); contributes towards the development of our motherland through our remittances which have become the highest source of much needed foreign exchange earning to the country. Over 1.7 Million Sri Lankans remitted over USD 6.4 Billion (LKR 828 Billion) in 2012<sup>2</sup>. This remittance income is by far the highest foreign exchange earner for Sri Lanka, providing 33% of her foreign exchange and it amounts to 8% of Sri Lanka's GDP. It has exceeded the income received from traditional exports like Tea, Coconut, Rubber, Gem and Garments.

The current Sri Lankan policy for the development of foreign employment sector is to promote skilled and professional categories with a higher earning capacity and less employment related problems, and diversify them to new labour markets in the “Blue Ocean”<sup>5</sup>.

Hats off to Sri Lankan Quantity Surveying pioneers those who came to the Middle East as diploma/certificate holders three decades ago, and established the SLQS brand value with their loyalty, dedication, and professionalism. Such brand value paved a way for the next generation to flourish in the labour market.



Source: Road Map 2013<sup>3</sup>



Source: Road Map 2013<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cbsl.gov.lk>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cbsl.gov.lk/roadmap/RM2013.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.foreignemploymin.gov.lk>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.dailynews.lk/?q=local/migrant-worker-remittances-top-us-7-billion>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cbsl.gov.lk/roadmap/RM2013.pdf>

Today, Sri Lankan Quantity surveyors in the Middle Eastern mega construction projects remit a large some of foreign currencies to Sri Lankan economy. This was emphasized by the Institute of Quantity Surveyors – Sri Lanka (IQSSL) President Mr. Hemantha Aponso while addressing the Daily News Business (Tuesday, 2 July 2013) that:

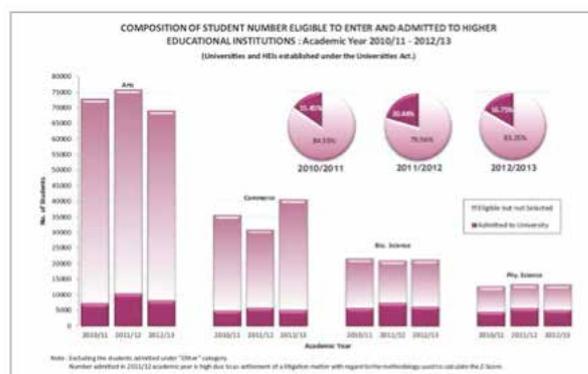
“There is a huge demand for high calibre Sri Lankan quantity surveyors from all over the world, especially from countries such as Qatar, Oman and Dubai.... QS is the highest foreign currency earner in the country when compared to other professions.”

During the last three decades, many Sri Lankan Quantity Surveyors have improved their calibre through further educations and degrees, postgraduate diplomas, masters, and doctorates from various leading universities including the University of Moratuwa<sup>6</sup>, University of Sri Jayewardenepura<sup>7</sup>, the University of Reading<sup>8</sup>, Heriot-Watt University<sup>9</sup>, Sheffield Hallam University<sup>10</sup>, the University of Salford<sup>11</sup>, Northumbria University<sup>12</sup>, Robert Gordon University<sup>13</sup> etc.. However, the statutory requirement to consider the degree as the basic qualification to recruit/deploy as a quantity surveyor may impose threats to non-graduate SLQS members who are a considerable portion of the total SLQS membership, and also to the national economy of Sri Lanka.

Prof. A V Suraweera, Chairman of National Education Commission discussed critical issues in university admissions while submitting the National Policy Framework on Higher Education and Technical & Technical & Vocational Education (2010) and admitted that;

“There is a significant demand for higher education by those who qualify for university admission at the GCE (A/L) examination each year. About 85% of those who qualified or 58% of those who applied for admission did not get an opportunity to enrol for a degree program in a State University”.

This is demonstrated by the following graphical presentation issued by the University Grant Commission (UGC).



Source: University Grant Commission

To date the percentage of university intake has not been sufficiently increased. Such gaps in university entrance not only hinder the national income but also make a large drain of human (brain drain) and monetary resources to foreign countries. The available option of obtaining foreign degrees will draw our hard earned foreign currencies to overseas. In order to meet the market demand and to overcome hurdles imposed by immigration authorities and clients, there should be a reasonable opportunity to enhance the career of each and every Sri Lankan quantity surveyor. No one can deny someone else right to be educated.

SLQS-UAE was intelligent enough to forecast such threats and advise the requirement to enhance the Sri Lankan state education in Quantity Surveying by the Policy Paper presented to President Mahinda Rajapaksha in 2007. Since then the Sri Lankan state universities have enhanced both quality and quantity in quantity surveying education. Therefore, the intention of this paper is to note some progress made by Sri Lankan state universities following submission of the Policy Paper.



<sup>6</sup> Webometrics ranking # LK3 Worldwide 2497

<sup>8</sup> Webometrics ranking # UK28 Worldwide 444

<sup>10</sup> Webometrics ranking # UK53 Worldwide 820

<sup>12</sup> Webometrics ranking # UK65 Worldwide 1022

<sup>7</sup> Webometrics ranking # LK4 Worldwide 3091

<sup>9</sup> Webometrics ranking # UK39 Worldwide 611

<sup>11</sup> Webometrics ranking # UK50 Worldwide 767

<sup>13</sup> Webometrics ranking # UK83 Worldwide 1479

### Honours Degree of Bachelor of Science in Quantity Surveying awarded by the University of Moratuwa (UoM)

Today the University of Moratuwa (UoM) is considered as “the country’s leading technological higher education institute excelling both locally and globally”<sup>15</sup> and also as “the pioneer Sri Lankan institute to offer undergraduate degree programmes in Quantity Surveying”.<sup>16</sup>

The Department of Building Economics commenced the four-year full time Bachelor of Science (Honours) degree in Quantity Surveying commenced in 1985 . It is the first ever South Asian university degree in quantity surveying which was accredited by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). It has also been accredited by the Institute of Quantity Surveyors Sri Lanka and Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors.

However, the intake for this course was not more than 50 undergraduates until the SLQS Policy paper was submitted in 2007. It has been gradually increased to 100 and subsequently 150 undergraduates as proposed by the Policy Paper. Students are enrolled by the University Grants Commission based on merit of their Z-Score obtained in the General Certificate of Examinations (Advanced Level); (GCE A/L) examination and government admission policies<sup>17</sup>. Under the new admission policies 5% of Sri Lankans who have studied abroad will also be eligible to enter Sri Lankan state Universities<sup>18</sup>.

There is no evidence of any effort made by Sri Lankan quantity surveying academics and institutions to expand similar quantity surveying degree course to any other state university, until the Policy Paper was submitted in 2007, despite the large demand for Sri Lankan graduate quantity surveyors.

The UoM trains its graduates to become “job creators” and not necessarily “job seekers”. A survey (2009) reported that 95% of all graduates were employed within three (03) months after their final examination<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, other state universities can produce quantity surveyors needed to be recruited during the remaining nine months of the year.

### Honours Degree of Bachelor of Science in Quantity Surveying awarded by the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU)

Sir John Kotelawala Defense University (KDU)<sup>20</sup> offers degree courses at both undergraduate and post graduate levels<sup>21</sup> and enrolls civilian students on payment basis for ‘Fee Levying Non Military’ degree programmes. It is currently ranked as No. 12310 among international Universities by Webomaerics (2014).



KDU main campus is located in a 48-acre (190,000 m<sup>2</sup>) estate donated by the late General Sir John Kotelawala, CH, KBE, LLD, a former Prime Minister of Ceylon

The new four (04) years full time ‘Fee Levying Non Military’ Quantity Surveying (Honours) degree course will be delivered by the Built Environment & Spatial Sciences Faculty in the new Sooriyawewa Southern Campus which is scheduled to be completed sooner.

17-24 years Sri Lankans can apply for admission based on General Certificate of Examinations (Advanced Level) (GCE A/L)<sup>22</sup> results for the new Quantity Surveying (Honours) degree course<sup>23</sup> .

Parents of Sri Lankan students in the Middle East and international schools in Sri Lanka will be delighted to know that their children with an equivalent qualification at London A/L (Cambridge or Edexcel) or in any other equivalent foreign examination will also be eligible to apply<sup>24</sup>. This also will pave a reasonable pathway for mass students in international and private schools in

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.becon.mrt.ac.lk/index.php/programmes/undergraduate-studies/b-sc-in-quantity-surveying>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.mrt.ac.lk/web/#>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.becon.mrt.ac.lk/>

<sup>17</sup> “Admission to Undergraduate Courses of the Universities in Sri Lanka, Academic Year 2012/2013”

<sup>18</sup> “Admission to Undergraduate Courses of the Universities in Sri Lanka, Academic Year 2012/2013” – Pg. 56

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.mrt.ac.lk/web/history#6>

current Sri Lankan education system. The selection will be based on composite results of a common general test and a formal Interview.

The Head of newly formed QS Department Ms. Samantha Manike (widow of late SLQS member Sudath Jayathilaka ) who was the first lady Committee Member of SLQS-UAE , is planning to commence the course by Early next year (2015). A wide range of core and management subjects will be offered through lecturers and practices. The four year programme consists with seven 20 weeks semesters and three 12 weeks terms. Students' performance will be continuously monitored and evaluated by various assessments. On successful completion of the academic components of the degree programmes, the students will be awarded Honours degree of Bachelor of Science (BSc), in Quantity Surveying. The SLQS-UAE members closely work with the KDU while developing the QS course programme.

It will be worthy to acknowledge the dedication of the Vice Chancellor Major General Milinda Peiris RWP RSP USP ndc psc to establish this QS degree course. We congratulate him for recently receiving the "award for Outstanding Contribution to Education" by the World Chancellors and Vice Chancellors Congress in recognition of "the strategic and iconic position occupied by him in the fraternity of Vice Chancellors as an agent of change in global education"!

**National Diploma in Quantity Surveying (NDQS) and Bachelor of Technology in Quantity Surveying awarded by the University of Vocational Technology (UNIVOTEC)**



The University of Vocational Technology (UNIVOTEC)<sup>25</sup> was established with the aims to be the leading university in the fields of technical and vocational education, under the purview of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development. The University is currently ranked as No.17677 among international Universities by Webometrics (2014)<sup>26</sup>.

As Quantity Surveying profession was ranked as the fourth most demanded overseas profession<sup>27</sup>, the National Diploma in Quantity Surveying (NDQS) course was started with the collaboration of the Association of Practicing Quantity Surveyors and Estimators, by the National Institute of Technical Education of Sri Lanka (NITESL)<sup>28</sup>.

In 2007 the NDQS course was expanded to distance learning mode and started delivering Dubai. Many eminent SLQS-UAE members supported to deliver this very first Sri Lankan Quantity Surveying course delivered in the Middle East.

In 2010 SLQS-UAE invited the founder Vice Chancellor of the UNIVOTEC Professor Kapila Goonasekara<sup>29</sup> to Dubai as the Gusset of Honour of the 26th SLQS-UAE Get-together. As a result of subsequent discussions with SLQS-UAE members the UNIVOTEC agreed to develop the NDQS course up to a Bachelor of Technology (BTech) in Quantity Surveying. UNIVOTEC invited a few senior quantity surveying professionals in the UAE and Qatar to serve them as Advisory Committee Members (QS).

Several SLQS-UAE and SLQS-Qatar members supported the UNIVOTEC to introduce the CBT Curriculum For NVQ Level 5 and 6 in QS<sup>30</sup> which has been endorsed as a national standard by the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC)<sup>31</sup> in 2013. Accordingly quantity surveyors can obtain NVQ Level 6 after studying compulsory (core) modules and employability (skills) modules of NDQS (120 Credit) course in four semesters during 3,000 Notional Hours (2 years and 3 months). Obtain recognized NVQ certification will pave the way for a large number of quantity surveyors to seek foreign

<sup>20</sup> founded as a Defence Academy under the Sir John Kotelawala Defence Academy Act No. 68  
<sup>21</sup> amendment bill passed in Parliament on 18 March 2007  
<sup>22</sup> [http://www.kdu.ac.lk/images/documents/UnderGraduates/2014/dayscholars/November/degree04-11/Details\\_Payment-Basis-Degree-Programmes-for-Southern-Campus\\_-\\_Suriyawewa.pdf](http://www.kdu.ac.lk/images/documents/UnderGraduates/2014/dayscholars/November/degree04-11/Details_Payment-Basis-Degree-Programmes-for-Southern-Campus_-_Suriyawewa.pdf)  
<sup>23</sup> <http://www.kdu.ac.lk/images/documents/UnderGraduates/2014/dayscholars/November/degree04-11/Intake32-dayScholars-English.pdf>  
<sup>24</sup> [www.kdu.ac.lk](http://www.kdu.ac.lk)  
<sup>25</sup> established by the parliamentary Act No. 31 of 2008, in 2009  
<sup>26</sup> <http://webometrics.info/en/Asia/Sri%20Lanka%20>

employment and also make them eligible for higher salaries.

Quantity Surveyors with NVQ 4 or following qualifications may apply for the NDQS course (which is equivalent to a SLQS 4 - Higher Diploma in a Sri Lankan Qualification Framework (refer to the Sri Lankan Qualification Framework shown in the chart below);

- National Certificate in Technology (NCT) QS – 3 years part time/1 year full time.
- Relevant Engineering Diploma with two years' experience in Quantity Surveying

Last year 45 students out of over 300 candidates were selected by a competitive examination followed by an interview, to follow the NDQS course.

At the very first time in the history a large group of practicing Sri Lankan Quantity Surveyors will be fortunate to accomplish one of their lifetime dreams to be graduated from a Sri Lankan state university. Early 2015 the UNIVOTEC will commence Bachelor in Technology (BTech) in Quantity Surveying course.

### Sri Lankan Qualification Framework

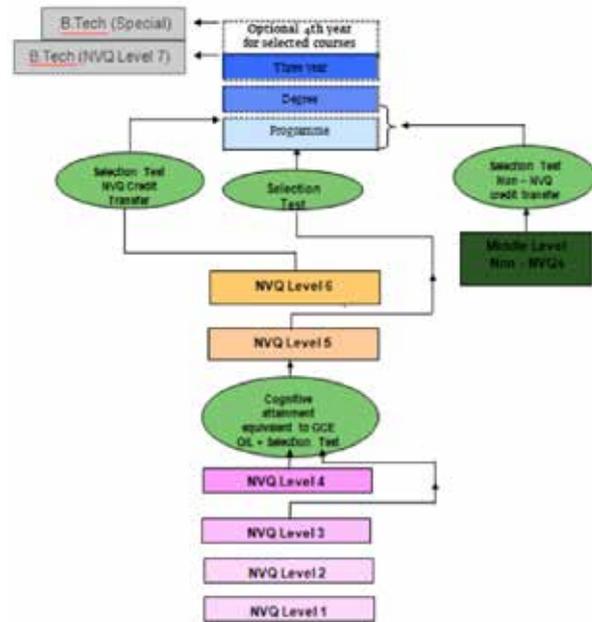


Source: University Grant Commission<sup>34</sup>

The UNIVOTEC is planning to facilitate NDQS and other NVQ level 5 and 6 standard diploma holders to proceed with their further education through the Sri Lankan Qualification Framework<sup>32</sup>. This will pave a pathway for NVQ6 qualified quantity surveyors to obtain degrees in quantity surveying in in just two more years while obtaining experience in the industry as shown in the Na-

tional Vocational Qualification framework shown below<sup>33</sup>;

### National Vocational Qualification Framework



Source: TVEC

Students will be awarded degree of Bachelor of Technology (BTech), in Quantity Surveying after successfully completing required credits as below;

- 60 credits during three years after SLQL 3 (Diploma NVQL 5) or
- 30 credits during two years after SLQL 4 (NDQS NVQL 6)

The UNIVOTEC has planned to extend facilities for students to continue up to SLQL6 and SLQS7 (Masters) subsequently.

Many SLQS-UAE and SLQS-Qatar members supported developing the degree course. M/s. H.D. Chandrasena, Upali Fernando, Senerath Weththasinghe and Ms. Samantha Manike also contributed as industry professionals and academics in Sri Lanka.

<sup>27</sup> Labour Market Information Bulletin(2006), the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC)  
<sup>28</sup> established under the Parliamentary Act No. 59 of 1998  
<sup>29</sup> Former Vice Chancellor of the University of Peradeniya  
<sup>30</sup> CBT Curriculum Ref#F45T008  
<sup>31</sup> TVE (Amendment) Act. No 50 of 1999  
<sup>32</sup> <http://studentlanka.com/2012/09/26/how-to-get-nvq/>  
<sup>33</sup> <http://www.tvec.gov.lk/nvq/index.htm>  
<sup>34</sup> <http://www.ugc.ac.lk/en/all-notices/1156-sri-lanka-qualifications-framework.html>

Former SLQS-UAE member Thilaka Paranawithana (Ms.) voluntarily serves as the Course Coordinator (QS) of the UNIVOTEC since 2011.

### Honours Degree of Bachelor of Science in Quantity Surveying awarded by the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL)

The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL)<sup>35</sup> provides higher educational opportunities to working adult Sri Lankans. Students can pursue their studies through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) methodologies ensuring their educational and professional qualifications. The degrees awarded by The OUSL are treated as equivalent to degrees awarded by any other university under the purview of the University Grants Commission<sup>36</sup>. The OUSL is currently ranked as No.7 among Sri Lankan universities and No. 5989 among international universities.<sup>37</sup> The OUSL is the country's premier Open and Distance Learning (ODL) hub.



While considering existing facilities and resources in the OUSL, SLQS started a dialog to establish a quantity surveying degree early as 2004. It was further proposed by the Policy Paper. After several discussions and lengthy discussions, now the OUSL is planning to commence an honours degree of Bachelor of Science in Quantity Surveying.

This degree course will be delivered in distance learning methods and especially focus on quantity surveyors who (will) need a basic degree to sustain in the Middle East labour market.

Quantity surveyors with previous education qualification in quantity surveying will be eligible for exemptions up to a maximum of two years in this four years honours degree. On successful completion of the academic components of the degree programmes, the students will be awarded honours degree of Bachelor of Science (BSc), in Quantity Surveying.

It will be worthy to acknowledge the dedication of Dr. Vijitha Nanayakkara, Vice Chancellor and Dr. Janaka Liyanagama, Deputy Vice Chancellor to establish this QS degree course. Senior professional quantity surveyors in Sri Lanka and in the Middle East are closely working with them to develop the course.

### Other Quantity Surveying courses

There is some more quantity surveying courses provided by many government institute including followings;<sup>38</sup>

- National Certificate in Technology (QS)– Sri Lankan Technical Colleges<sup>39</sup>
- Higher National Diploma in QS – Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technical Education<sup>40</sup>,
- QS Technician Diploma – Advanced Construction and Training Academy (ACTA)<sup>41</sup>
- QS & Estimating – Lalith Athulathmudali Vocational Training Centre<sup>42</sup>

The Institute of Quantity Surveyors of Sri Lanka and many private education institutes also contribute to the quantity surveying education considerably.

### Conclusion

As we discussed above, there is a considerable growth in QS education made by state/national universities after submitting the SLQS-UAE Policy Paper on QS education in Sri Lanka.

All these universities can stop foreign currency drain for higher education in foreign countries. They also support the economy by producing more graduate quantity surveyors who can contribute to the national income. Therefore, state universities who have open door for more quantity surveyors shall be highly appreciated.

It will be worthy to conclude this with the quotation from the IQSSL President's statement in the same newspaper;<sup>43</sup>

<sup>35</sup> established in 1980, under the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 and OUSL Ordinance No. 1 of 1990

<sup>36</sup> Public Administration Circular No. 16/92, dated 13.03.92, issued by the Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils & Home Affairs

<sup>37</sup> <http://webometrics.info/en/Asia/Sri%20Lanka%20>

“...Today, several institutions which do not have formal educational accreditation are currently engaged in training quantity surveyors and therefore, IQSSL will initiate an accreditation system to regulate the Quantity Surveying qualifications being offered by various institutions in the country.”

Currently, IQSSL has accredited only the degree course delivered by the UoM (and probably a few private education institutes). On the other hand IQSSL has repeatedly failed to response its own members and international education providers on accreditation procedures. IQSSL would have produced such accreditation system during the past one year period from the statement. The IQSSL accreditation system will help state universities to more focus on national standards/requirement while designing new QS course which have been designed in accordance with international professional standards. It will also help students and their parents to choose a more valuable/standard course despite the label/title given. It will enable IQSSL itself to grow their membership further to par with other constructions professionals like engineers and architects in the near future.

State universities which are not financially motivated will be the best place to deliver quantity surveying courses to the required quality standards.

SLQS-UAE further identified the University of Ruhuna and the University of Peradeniya as feasible universities to commence quantity surveying courses using existing facilities.

Therefore, I believe that we, Sri Lankan quantity surveyors can contribute to the national growth by supporting state universities to deliver high standard QS degree courses to produce more graduate Sri Lankan quantity surveyors who will remit trillions of needy foreign currencies to our motherland. High SLQS brand value which was the secret behind the three decades of SLQS-UAE success, to be maintained enabling our future SLQS generation to sustain and thrive in foreign labour markets and support further growth of our Mother Lanka to be the “Wisdom of Asia”.



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<sup>38</sup> [http://www.qsonline.info/2009\\_04\\_01\\_archive.html](http://www.qsonline.info/2009_04_01_archive.html)  
<sup>39</sup> [www.techedu.gov.lk](http://www.techedu.gov.lk)  
<sup>40</sup> [www.sliate.net](http://www.sliate.net)

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.acta.edu.lk/courses.html>  
<sup>42</sup> <http://www.lavtc.lk>  
<sup>43</sup> Daily News Business (Tuesday, 2 July 2013)