

## icsusl 2021: Dawn of Another Day



As we are about to get past the Covid-19 pandemic, there are countless lessons to be learnt on the future of humanity, the way we shape our future, and the necessity to change the way we used to think about the world around us. We can no longer afford to think in terms of differentiation, isolationism and national borders. With the support of trans-global agencies, medical expertise, and scientific inventions, now we see the light at the end of the tunnel. Global collaborations in terms of knowledge sharing and technological exchanges are now needed more than ever before. We need a radically altered society, dynamic academia and versatile technical experts to run the affairs in the future.

Even countries should not rely on simplified political solutions for such deeper crises. The role of the media should be yet another aspect of our daily existence that we all must rethink. We should never forget how everything was shut down in a matter of a few days. Especially, education was continuously shut down for months. The image of every giant country was questioned from the very core. Asymmetric division of resources, expertise and knowledge were the root causes for the rapid spread of this virus and poverty and inequality had equally contributed to the fragilities of many societies.

Living through the pandemic and living through history has been deeply therapeutic. And researching through the apocalypse to the new normal can be an exciting phenomenon. Together with many victories, human anxieties, uncertainties and emotional deadlocks can reverberate in digital platforms. Ideas can be tested, quarantined and be under lockdown, while some ideas can be super-spreaders.

The International Conference of Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (ICSUSL 2021), organised by Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, can provide a platform to exchange ideas that may help humanity to restructure their societies under this new situation, improve solidarity and to minimize divisions. We all should move forward with a constant dialogue with all the stakeholders of our society. We now need to think of sustainable globalisation, start new connections, and establish new trust among everyone. ICSUSL comes at a time when everyone is waiting for new inspiration to embrace the dawn of another day.

ICSUSL has a proud history that has grabbed the attention of many onlookers. The maiden conference was held in 2006 under the theme 'Issues and Challenges of the 21st century'. The conference was held at Belihuloya University premises, to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the young University. Henceforth, ICSUSL has been one of the most anticipated Academic calendar events.

The year 2021 is a continuation of the proud legacy of Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, and the 8th ICSUSL is a true testament to that. As an extension of the year-long celebrations of the University's 25th anniversary, the 8th ICSUSL is scheduled to be held from December 1 to 3, 2021. 'Bridging Knowledge and Experience to Combat Global Challenges' is the theme of ICSUSL 2021, which aims to serve as a platform that brings together a vast array of stakeholders from a broad spectrum of disciplines. To ensure the health and safety of the conference participants, ICSUSL 2021 will be a virtual experience. This, along with many other exclusive features, will ensure that ICSUSL 2021 is a conference like no other.

The series of speeches lined up for the conference adds a tremendous value and sets it apart. Prof. Lian Pin Koh will grace the occasion as the keynote speaker of the 8th International Conference of Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka. He is a Professor of Conservation Science, Technology, and Policy in the Department of Biological Sciences at the National University of Singapore. Prof. Koh brings 20 years of international research experience in sustainability and environmental science, having worked in institutions across Europe, Australia, the United States and Singapore. He was formerly a Swiss National Science Foundation Professor at ETH Zurich, the Chair of Applied Ecology and Conservation at the University of Adelaide and Principal (Vice President) of Science Partnerships and Innovation at Conservation International USA.

Dilhan C. Fernando, the Chief Executive Officer of Dilmah Ceylon Tea Company PLC, will graciously attend the event as the guest of honour. His efforts have focused on bringing tea to a new generation with innovations like tea gastronomy, t-Lounges and enhancing knowledge in tea through the Dilmah School of Tea. Undoubtedly, his exuberant personality will add much colour and exhilarate event.

Alongside these indelible experiences, there will also be a plethora of plenary speeches representing the seven sub-themes of the conference that amalgamate varied disciplines. The sub-theme consists of a range of topics that cover various disciplines such as: ‘Conquer the Challenges in Agriculture for Global Food Demand, Applied Science Approaches for Combating Global Challenges, Global challenges, Geo-spatial Applications and Sustainable Solutions, Managing Global Challenges through Fostering Innovation and Creativity, Indigenous Knowledge and Sri Lankan Models to Address Global Health Challenges, Envisioning the Future of Social Sciences and Humanities, and Innovative Technologies for Sustainable Development’.

In line with these sub-themes, local and international Researchers were granted the opportunity to publish their innovative research findings during the abstract submission stage. The submitted abstracts have already been reviewed by a panel of experts in the relevant fields. Subsequently, the authors will be informed to provide the full paper depending on the suitability, content, and quality. All full papers received will be subjected to a double-blind reviewing process and selected papers will be published in the Special Volume of the Sabaragamuwa University Journal.

The Second China-Sri Lanka Communication and Cooperation Forum is scheduled to be held on December 1, 2021, parallel to the 8th ICSUSL. The forum was established under the MOU between Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka and Huanggang Normal University, China. The forum aims to establish an academic platform for Researchers in China and Sri Lanka to disseminate their innovative research findings, especially in the fields of languages, culture and economics, thereby strengthening bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

The organising team of ICSUSL 2021 realised the requirement to include multifarious learning opportunities for the participants, academics, and undergraduates. As a result, a series of workshops were arranged to broaden one’s horizons, such as “Managing Global Challenges through Fostering Innovation and Creativity, Training Workshop on Metrology, Workshop and Competition on Spatial Data Analysis and Mapping with SuperMap - Student Forum, and Webinar on Data Mining for Business Analytics: Concepts, Techniques & Applications’. Another two pre-conference workshops, sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka, will be conducted in November.

ICSUSL 2021 is currently being synthesized under the patronage of the Vice Chancellor Prof. R.M.U.S.K. Rathnayake. The organising committee of ICSUSL 2021 consists of a panel of exceptional individuals striving day and night to create a profound experience for the conference participants. The unvarying contribution of Prof. Chandrika Dissanayake (Director, CRKD) and the chair of the conference Dr. Enoka P. Kudavidanage is paramount in this regard. Working hand-in-hand with them are Dr. Sarath Munasinghe and Dr. Rohan Abeywickrama, the Co-Chairs of the conference whose support is unsurpassable.

Moreover, Prof. Chandramali Jayawardana, Prof. S. Vasanthapriyan, Dr. G.D. Kapila Kumara, Prof. M.S.M. Aslam are chairing the Scientific, Publicity and Web Management, Logistics, and Finance Committees, respectively. Dr. Pubudu Jayasena and Dr. Sugeeswari Lekamge are the

Joint Secretaries of the conference. At the same time, the Faculty coordinators and the committee members are extending their ardent support in making ICSUSL 2021 a success.

In this time and day where preconceptions are challenged and fallen apart, ICSUSL 2021 appears promising as it will address the dire necessities of our time. It will not be yet another conference, as it is designed to shed light on the pressing issues in these trying times. ICSUSL 2021 materialises as a shimmering beacon of hope that will serve as a platform for bringing together researchers from various disciplines to disseminate scientific findings, exchange knowledge and find practical solutions to global challenges. In a context where each of us is conscious of the ecological footprint we will leave behind, ICSUSL 2021 will grant the unsurpassable opportunity for Researchers to leave their perpetual academic imprint for times to come.

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