

Step forward

IIESL UAE Branch held 1st Annual General Meeting

Introduction

It was 22nd June 2005. I was invited to participate at a meeting chaired by Engr. D S Senarath regarding the conducting of Professional Review Examination in United Arab Emirates (UAE). Eng Sisira Walaliyadde, a Fellow Member of IIESL who was on vacation in Sri Lanka, and a few others participated in this discussion. As a result a very successful PRE in UAE concluded in April 2006 opening gates to establish the first overseas branch of IIESL in UAE. It was a remarkable milestone in the IIESL history.

Background

A group of enterprising diplomats in UAE proposed to organize a NDT get-together in April 2005. They have initiated a few emails and circulated among prospective participants. Initially they have collected a list of 78 names of NDT/JTO holders in the UAE.

Subsequently they wanted to form an association for the JTO/ NDT holders in UAE. Sisira Walaliyadde has intervened and laid down basic aims and objectives for this worthy cause and invited other to make their suggestions.

The main objectives identified were,

- To meet and get to know each other who followed Engineering Diplomas and live away from the motherland for many years.
- To meet together and have family gatherings and outings
- To form a platform for them to share knowledge and experience gained by individuals
- To arrange seminars, lectures and work shops as Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities, for the members to enhance their knowledge and skills

The ultimate objective was to build a strong link with **Institution of Incorporated Engineers, Sri Lanka (IIESL)** to open up avenues for their members to obtain professional qualifications and designations such as I. Eng. , FIIESL, MIIESL and AMIIESL.

I like to quote their objective with the same spirit as they have circulated among themselves;

“To join hands with the mother organization in Sri Lanka (IIESL) as a united front to support their continuous effort to enhance the academic and social status of members and the recognition by increasing the professionalism as engineering body.”

The next few steps....

After a number of subsequent meetings and discussions they have organized a very successful PRE in April 2006. As a result we were able to enroll about 30 members and 13 Associate Members into our membership and established the first overseas branch of IIESL.

Then in the later part of the 2006 we again started same procedure and made all necessary arrangements to conduct the next serious of PREs in UAE. With the able guidance and assistance of Mr. Sisira Walaliyadde and his team we were able to make arrangements to hold PREs in Qatar for the first time. I must appreciate the services of Mr. Parakrama Munaweera who has delivered presentations, conducted report writing workshops and lead discussions on behalf of the membership committee of IIESL. However, it was a result of untiring efforts of a group of members from UAE branch.

First Annual General Meeting of UAE Branch

The first AGM of UAE branch was held at Traders Hotel Dubai, Mr. M N Junaid, Ambassador of Sri Lanka for UAE as the Chief Guest.

With the lighting of traditional oil lamp and the National Anthem the ceremony was commenced in a grand style. During his speech Chief Guest commended the initiatives taken by them in launching higher educational courses and continuous professional development programmes.

Also, Mr. P D Fernando, Consul General of Sri Lanka for Dubai and Northern Emirates grace the occasion. He paid tribute to the members of IIESL UAE branch for the steps taken to enhance the professional status of members and extending a hand to professionals of other disciplines to gain higher educational qualifications by bringing in distant learning courses like BIT and MBA from Sri Lankan Universities. He also mentioned that these proactive efforts would certainly provide the engineers and technologists a path to gain sustainable development in their careers.

Dr. Indrawansa Samarathunge participated as the Guest of Honour. Prof Gunapala Nanayakkara, Director, Post Graduate Institute of Management, University of Sri Jayawardenapura and many other distinguish personnel were among the guests.

The AGM was well attended by the members of IIESL UAE Branch. Mr. Sisira Walaliyadde, Chairman of IIESL UAE branch delivered the welcome address and appreciated the work done by the members of UAE branch in achieving this success. Also, he commended the IIESL council and all the panel members who devoted their time and energy to make their dream a reality. President IIESL delivered a speech and explained the responsibilities of the branch association in fulfilling the overall objectives of IIESL. Mr. Dhammika Gamage, Vice Chairman of UAE branch gave the vote of thanks.

Presentation of One Million Rupees worth of Building Fund Cheque to the IIESL President by Mr. Hemantha Jayasree, Treasurer of UAE Branch was a remarkable moment during this event.

Mr. Parakrama Munaweera, Secretary of UAE Branch explained their achievements and future plans to the gathering with a great enthusiasm.

Mr. Chandran Martin address the gathering representing Qatar Association. It should be noted here that the diploma holders in Qatar has given their fullest cooperation to the UAE branch in organizing PREs in Qatar.

After the AGM the awarding of membership certificate was done at the same venue followed by a grand dinner and a family get-together.

UAE - Membership Drive

Membership drive at UAE was conducted from 17th January to 19th January 2007 for the candidates who applied/eligible for various classes of membership at Dubai. A PRE in Qatar was conducted from 19th to 20th January 2007 under the leadership of two past presidents, Mr. D S Senarath and Mr. J K Lankathilake with the participation of dedicated members of UAE branch. (the details of the PREs held will be submitted to the council at its next meeting)

Soon after the successful completion of all the activities we had a rap-up meeting with the committee members of UAE branch. It was a very fruitful discussion and both parties agreed to fulfill certain requirements to achieve the goal of IIESL - UAE branch and the overall objectives of IIESL.

I am happy to inform that it was a very successful programme, although compacted and hectic. We had to work round the clock to complete the tasks. The candidates were well aware of the procedures, requirements etc. Undoubtedly, this must have been the result of the awareness programmes conducted. It should be noted here that the members of the IIESL branch has done all the preparatory work as stipulated during our discussions. They have looked in to the details of all aspects in a highly professional manner.

Candidates have performed very well at the PREs. Most of the candidates possessed very sound technical knowledge holding important positions at various state and leading private sector organizations. Most of them showed keen interest in their career development, which is a positive sign for them to become eminent Incorporated Engineers in the near future.

Workshop on BIT/MBA programmes

In addition to the events described above they have organized a workshop for the prospective candidates on BIT/MBA programmes and Prof Gunapala Nanayakkara has made the presentations. It was attended by many Sri Lankans working in Emirates belong to various disciplines and holding different posts.

We should be thankful to them for the hospitality shown by all of them from the time of our arrival to UAE, to the time of departure. It is my duty to note our gratitude for the entire organizing committee for their hard work, dedication and hospitality. We appreciate very much the way they have assisted us to maintain the professional standards that we very much cherish.

I hope that the **IIESL UAE BRANCH** will be the hub for entire Engineering community living/working in Middle-East in very near future.

Namalie Siyambalapitiya
Senior Vice President/Chairperson Membership
IIESL