



Surveyors' Day – 21st March
Message from
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Surveyor General

The proposal was made by the Minister of Lands and Parliamentary Reforms, to declare 21st of March every year as the Surveyors' Day and it was approved by the Cabinet in 2018. The Surveyors' Day in Sri Lanka is parallel with Global Surveyors' Day. The Global Surveyors' Day aims to improve Surveying education and competence globally, upkeep the standards of professional surveyors and surveying technologists practiced around the world and dismantle the borders of surveying professionals of different places, thereby enhancing mobility of surveying professionals and ensuring a high standard of professional practice.

In an advanced technological world, surveyors play a critical and pivotal role in turning ideas into reality, developing solutions to big technical issues. The wide range of disciplines that fall under the surveying title means that the surveying portfolio knows no bound. Land surveying was used by man an early time and is still being used. It shows how important land surveying is for our survival. Most people never know about land surveying until they needed it at some point. Many of us hear about land surveying all the time but never really give it much thought. It means surveyors are unobserved and invisible to the public. So making the invisible experts into visible experts, through observing the Global Surveyors' Day contributes to enhance the role of the Surveyor in Sri Lanka

Many historians refer to Land Surveying as the second-oldest profession. The first examples in the history of land surveying date back to the ancient Egyptians during the building of the Great Pyramid at Giza in 2700 BC. There is evidence of the Egyptians using basic geometry to redraw boundary lines when the Nile overflowed its banks. Also, an Egyptian Land register existed as early as 3000 BC. Historical evidence shows that the Roman Empire was the first civilization to employ an official land surveyor within their Empire.

In the period of Dutch occupation of Ceylon, they had a system of Registration of Land which included the preparation of a survey plan of the land. The registrations were noted in volumes called 'tombos' and they specified the bounds of the land as determined by the Surveyor.

21st March is the Global Surveyors Day (GSD) that will be celebrated in various countries of the world every year. The Day recognizes the work of surveying, mapping and geospatial professionals. This is a worldwide event initiated by the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) based in Denmark, the Council of European Geodetic Surveyors (CLGE), and the National Society of Professional Surveyors (NSPS) in the USA. FIG has initiated to celebrate the Day by the country association around the world.

Surveyors' Day will highlight the importance of a Surveyor, their job and the field work to the society all over the world. Role of the Surveyors is important for the nation. Private and public sector Surveyors must have good co-operation and co-ordination to collect accurate geo spatial data and prepare scientific maps and accurate data, needed for the implementation of various projects for the benefit of the people.

FIG is international organization representing the interests of surveyors worldwide. It covers the whole range of professional fields within the global surveying, geomatics, geodesy and geo-information community. It provides an international forum for discussion and development aiming to promote professional practice and standards. It is a UN-recognized non-government organization (NGO), representing more than 120 countries throughout the world.

By the initiative of the Council of European Geodetic Surveyors and the National Society of Professional Surveyors with the endorsement of FIG the Premiere celebration of Global Surveyors' Day 2018 was held at World Bank Headquarters in Washington, DC., exactly in the middle of the Land and Poverty Conference at the World Bank headquarters. As part of the celebrations initiated by FIG, a Round Table was placed to enable surveying professionals to discuss important topics in today's world, followed by an evening reception in Washington DC. At the same time Global Surveyors' Day - website was launched. Several other countries, regions and organizations also held events and celebrations. We are unfortunate to celebrate the premiere event as the COVID 19 Pandemic situation in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka as country which had traditions and established systems for measurement of land and demarcation of boundaries was not behind the rest of the world at any time of the history. Our ancient chronicles refer to instances when the King himself performed the duty of the Surveyor. Some parts of an ancient system of irrigation, consisting of a well-knit pattern of irrigation tanks, feeding canals and distributor channels, are still in constant use indicate that surveying in some form was practiced as an earth science, contributing to the economic development of the country, Sri Lanka, in pre-colonial days.

Surveyors in Sri Lanka have contributed greatly to Sri Lanka's phenomenal development over the years using innovation, creativity, a wealth of knowledge and expertise. Holding a license as a professional land surveyor is truly a privilege and an honour. However such a distinction also carries with its obligation to practice professionally and ethically.

I wish all survey professionals in Sri Lanka to move as global leaders in par with Global Surveyors' day.