

TRAINING AND PRACTICE IN URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING – SRI LANKAN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

“The Empires of the Future are the Empires of the Mind,” said, Sir Winston Churchill in 1943, addressing a group of fresh Harvard graduates. Although this message was given over 60 years ago, it holds well even today, probably with greater meaning than ever before. Today we talk about knowledge-based workers in a knowledge based economy, which is merely a tactical interpretation of a powerful thought first mooted by Sir Winston Churchill.

In the World Conference on Cultural Policies held in Mexico and organised by the Cultural Sector of UNESCO, it was agreed that, ‘.... the overall development of society calls for complimentary policies in the fields of culture, education, science and communication with a view to the establishment of a harmonious balance between technological progress and the intellectual and moral advancement of mankind....’

Good Morning, Distinguished Planners, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have gathered here to discuss application and development of these ‘Empires of the Mind’ in the planning of our environment built and un-built as laid out in the ‘Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies’ of 1982.

We, in the Asian Region have had a unique history and tradition of planning our environment going back to the Vedic times. The zoning as we call it today was practised in a very sophisticated state and is obvious to a student of Vedic Village Planning. Mohenjodaro and Harappa gives ample evidence of the planning prowess of the region in the days gone by. We are indeed fortunate to be discussing today the subject of Planning from the very country where there is evidence of such masterful planning as displayed by our forefathers. It is my great pleasure to be here, to share a few ideas with you in what promises to be an exciting and fruitful day of deliberations. We have already had an inspired beginning. For me it is a part of the ‘Continuous Professional Development’ that is so essential for a professional in practice. For the students who are here today, participating in this seminar is another step towards achieving the ‘Empire of Mind’ that Sir Winston Churchill endorsed. I thank the organisers of this seminar for giving me this opportunity to be with you today and to discuss Sri Lanka’s experience in Urban and Regional Planning.