



## FOMSO affiliate Visit Ceylon Association Kedah/Perlis (1965) 17-07-2011

After visiting the Persatuan Ceylon Taiping, we arrived at the Hotel Seri Malaysia Alor Setar at around 3.15 pm, just in time for our scheduled meeting at 3.30 pm with President Gunaratnam, his committee and members. All of them arrived on time and the meeting started as scheduled.

President Gunaratnam gave an opening speech and updated all of us on their status and activities of their association, which were truly remarkable, though they too have limited resources as most of their members are in the senior citizens category. They have carried out numerous activities,



which were eminent in keeping the community together. He also mentioned about their recognition scheme, which are rewarded to high scorers on government school exams at all levels. He also spoke about their activities in the religious front and how they are assisting a common temple, they frequent.

He highlighted the temples request, seeking for funds to build their own chariot, which is to be used for various processions throughout the year on auspicious events.



He also mentioned that our visit to them was long overdue and expressed the members disappointment as they were expecting FOMSO's visit at their last and previous AGMs. He added on to mention that he too finds it difficult to attend FOMSO's AGM due to the distance involved and the timing, but he makes his best attempt to attend he added.

He also touched on the issue of membership sighting the younger generations are not actively involved as most of them have left for greener pastures to bigger cities like Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and the like.

Having completed his speech, he invited President Dato Kulasegaran to say a few words.

President Dato Kula thanked all the members present, he added by saying though it was a working day in Kedah (Sunday is a working day, Friday and Saturday is considered to be their weekend), many members took the trouble to attend the meeting with some members coming from as far as Perlis which is more than an hour's drive to the venue.



He explained as to why the visit to the affiliate took such a long time to materialise. He started by explaining the various projects carried out by the various bureau chairpersons. He also mentioned that though he wanted to visit the Ceylon Association

Kedah/Perlis along with FOMSO members a long time ago, the pressing need to address the plight of refugees who arrive in large numbers in Kuala Lumpur was a task by itself. Soon after the war ended sometime in Mid 2009, we were wrong in assuming that the arrival will reduce or stop, as the numbers got even larger. He mentioned that every EXCO member is involved in assisting the needs of these refugees in one way or the other.

Besides finding them temporary shelter soon as they arrive, most of them are helpless as they either have been cheated by the agents who brought them here by parting away with their cash and valuables or they have paid whatever they had back home to the agents hence they are cashless even to feed themselves and their children most of whom are infants.

Besides addressing the plight of the refugees, he also highlighted on all the projects carried out in Sri Lanka. He mentioned how FOMSO managed to carry out 6 humanitarian trips to Sri Lanka and have completed projects worth close to RM 1.1 million.

Though, the project reports were sent out to all affiliates from time to time, most members senior members who are not computer savvy are not in the loop as they do not have access to computers nor have an email id to receive these e reports.

Having highlighted all this, President Kula invited all EXCO members present to say a few words about our role in FOMSO. When it came to my turn, I mentioned that I am the coordinator for all the projects carried out in Sri Lanka. Since President has already touched on the subject and not wanting to repeat

it, I requested members present to provide me with email id's of their children or grand children, so that in



future I can send these emails to them and they can extend it to the members, which some of them did. I spoke on the good work carried out by other FOMSO EXCO members who were not present namely, Mr Logarajah - Task Force Chairman for the refugees in Malaysia and Madam Sarojini - Women's Welfare Chairman. Mr Logarajah looks into the shelter and medical needs; Madam Sarojini looks into the food and groceries supply. I also mentioned about the school, which we started for the children of the refugee with the assistance of UNHCR.



Mr Satgunarajah, said a few words on how he as the President of JCS can assist the association, Dato Vijayananthan said a few words on how a land scheme was proposed to the community some years ago which did not take off, and the value of the land has appreciated tremendously in value now. He proposed that it could be revived if the support of the community is forthcoming. Mr Gnanarajah - President of PERMA said a few words on how FOMSO is trying to spearhead the business sector for the North and East of Sri Lanka. If it takes off, it will benefit the people living there by way of employment being created and other small business that could be started by the surrounding residents, such as restaurants and the like. Professor Rajeswaran who is the Education Bureau Chairman said a few words on how he is conducting the computer classes and briefly mentioned about other education related projects, which are being carried out by him and his team.

The President and members of the Ceylon Association Kedah/Perlis after having heard all that was mentioned briefly, they were taken back by the noble work carried out by all in FOMSO.

They then realised the magnitude of man-hours and dedication required to carry out these projects successfully assisting our brethrens from and in Sri Lanka.

They accepted the explanation in good faith and some members expressed their thoughtfulness by saying that they too will extend their assistance wherever possible in our projects in the future.

President Dato Kula ended the speech by handing over a cheque for RM 2700.00 to President Gunaratnam for the chariot as a gesture of goodwill, which was a collective contribution by all members in FOMSO.



With that, the formal part of the meeting was over. The President and members of The Ceylon Association Kedah/Perlis hosted all of us to tea at the hotel, it was not just tea which was served, but a wide variety of local delicatessen which were lip smacking good. We mingled about for about an hour and left Kedah at around 6.00 pm. It was a memorable trip for all of us more so feeling good that we have finally completed the long overdue visit and the members took good care of us while we were with them. We arrived in Kuala Lumpur close to midnight.