

**24th October 2013:** The much anticipated 34th National Conference of Chartered Accountants was inaugurated on Thursday evening at the Water's Edge, Battaramulla by Chairman of Maruti Suzuki India Limited, Mr. R C Bhargava in the presence of the country's corporate glitterati including top business leaders, government officials, accounting leaders and foreign panelists.

The conference organized by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka (CA Sri Lanka), was further boosted with a high profile keynote speech delivered by Hon. Ruth Richardson, former finance minister of New Zealand.

The conference which explores an inspiring and relevant theme 'Innovate to Grow' will conclude on October 26th 2013 following two days of technical sessions which will be conducted by a versatile team of foreign and local panelists who will delve in detail on the importance of bringing in innovation to ensure sustainable growth.

Over the years, the conference has attracted an unprecedented number of participants, and this year too will see some 1200 participants during the technical sessions which will also be held at the Water's Edge, while the live webcast feed of the conference proceedings has also attracted over 100 registrations from accountants both in Sri Lanka and abroad.

For the first time in the 34 year old conference history, participants of the national conference will also be issued with a Near Field Communication (NFC) card, a smart card.

The card offers ease of access to participants and members, significantly reducing their waiting time in long queues, while also tracking the attendance of members for various programmes including the conference organized by CA Sri Lanka.

CA Sri Lanka introduced the concept of national conference to Sri Lanka in 1979. The conference, over the last three decades has built a reputation, as a business summit that provokes thoughts and spurs insights into broad economic and business issues; apart from its core emphasis on finance related topics, while making it one of the most attended corporate events in the country.

In the light of the challenges facing the world today, innovation has become a crucial factor in deciding the global competitiveness of nations and organisations across boards. The capability to innovate and bring innovations successfully to markets therefore has become a common challenge ahead of organisations and professionals.

Focusing on this important topic, the two days of technical sessions scheduled to be held on 25th and 26th October will feature an eminent panel of experts who will delve in detail on the timely theme 'Innovate to Grow'.

The six technical session will be steered by an impressive line-up of prominent business leaders and foreign experts, with the inaugural session on 25th October focusing on 'Innovation in Action', which will be presented by Mr. Rohan Pallewatte – Executive Chairman of Lanka Harness Co (Pvt) Ltd., while the panelists for the inaugural session would be Mr. B R L Fernando – Chairman of CIC Holdings and Prof. Ajith De Alwis – Project Director of the Coordinating Secretariat for Science Technology and Innovation (COSTI) Sri Lanka.

The second session will delve on 'Leading Innovation' presented by Dr. Young-Tzung Shih – Senior Manager of 3M Corporate Research Laboratory, Singapore, while the panelists for the session will be Mr. Jayantha De Silva – Vice President of IFS South Asia and Managing Director of IFS Sri Lanka together with Mr. Deepal Sooriyaarachchi – Commissioner of Sri Lanka Inventors Commission.

The third session on 'Conquering New Markets' will be presented by Mr. Samantha Kumarasinghe – Chairman/Managing Director of Natures Beauty Creations Ltd., while the panelists of the session will be Ms. Sheamalee Wickramasingha – Group Managing Director of Ceylon Biscuits Limited and Mr. Dinesh Saparamadu – Chief Executive Officer of hSenid Software International (Pvt) Ltd.

The fourth session will focuses on 'Creative Social Networking', which will be presented by Dr. David R Hardoon – Associate Director (Advisory Services Advanced Analytics) of Ernst & Young (Pvt) Ltd., Singapore, while the panelists for the session will be Mr. Rohan Jayaweera – Sri Lanka Country Consultant for Google Asia Pacific and Mr. Earl Bumotad – Digital Consultant of Momentus (Pvt) Ltd.

The fifth session on 26th October will be on 'Manage Risks in Innovation' presented by Mr. Adrian D Perera – Chief Executive Officer of RAM Ratings (Lanka) Ltd., while the panelists for the session will comprise of Mr. Krishan Balendra – President (Retail) of John Keells Holdings (JKH) and Ms. Deepthie Wickramasuriya – Head of Business Systems & Services of AHL Business Solutions (Pvt) Ltd., and Goodhope Asia Holdings Ltd.

The conference will conclude with the sixth and final session which will focus on 'Service Innovation' where a team of panelists will offer their insights on the importance of service innovation.

The panelists for the final session will comprise of Mr. Asite Talwatte – Managing Partner of Ernst & Young, Dr. Parakrama Dissanayake – Chairman/CEO of Aitken Spence Maritime Logistics & Cargo, Mr. Hiran Cooray – Chairman of Jetwing Hotels, Mr. Dushan Soza – Managing Director of WNS Global Services (Pvt) Ltd., Mr. Reeza Zarook – Chief Executive Officer of Anything.lk and Ms. Manohari Abeyesekera – Head (Strategic Business Development Unit) of Hayleys Group.