



## Media Release

### AIA INSPIRES ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE FOR TWO DECADES



**Colombo 5th November 2014:** “Education makes people easy to lead, easy to govern but impossible to enslave” was the gem of wisdom given by Chief Guest Emeritus Professor Kusuma Karunaratne in her Keynote Address at the presentation of the 14th AIA Higher Education Scholarship Awards presentation held recently. She was speaking to the students who topped the batch in each of the 25 districts in the 2007 Year 5 government scholarship examination. The students who were just 11 years old then entered Advanced Level class this year and are now eligible to benefit from the Higher Education Scholarships granted by AIA Insurance.

Prof. Karunaratna has the distinction of being the first female Professor in Sinhala and is an icon in the literary world in Sri Lanka. She was Vice Chancellor of the University of Moratuwa. When she retired from the University of Colombo, she was the Senior Professor in Sinhala and was awarded Professor Emeritus status. She has a host of prestigious achievements to her credit including the ‘Order of the Rising Sun’ which is the highest award given to a civilian by the Emperor of Japan.

The Year 5 students who emerged first in each district receive a monthly bursary when they enter Advanced Level right up to the completion of their university degree. If they opt not to enter university, AIA gives them a lump sum of Rs. 50,000 to kick start their life.

AIA Insurance has been granting Higher Education Scholarships since 1994 to encourage academic excellence among the nation's most promising children who shine in the Year 5 Scholarship examination. This Higher Education Scholarship is unique because AIA unconditionally recognizes academic excellence on merit alone without requiring to meet any other criteria.

When the students in the audience were invited to present their views, two students stepped forward to address the gathering. "There are many outstanding students from different backgrounds who need a helping hand and this endeavour by AIA is most helpful to us" said the student from Anuradhapura, Prawardhi Bandara. Kavinda Kularatna from Ratnapura thanked the Company and said: "This scholarship helps the students to achieve their goals and aspirations and is a great initiative carried out by AIA as the real life company."

The number of scholarships offered has grown to 500 over the span of 20 years. Those who have received the scholarship benefits number 350. The fund of Rs.10 million set aside for this purpose in 1994 has now grown six-fold through prudent investment.

"The AIA Higher Education Scholarship is one of our most vital Corporate Responsibility endeavours that inspires and motivates the nation's most promising children" said Suren Perera, Head of Marketing. "We take pride in encouraging our children to achieve academic excellence and building future leaders who will take the country to greater heights."