



Media Release

AIA Poson Safety among top 5 Best Sustainability Projects in the country



Suren Perera, Head of Marketing, receiving the award



AIA's Poson Safety Project Team

Colombo, 1st December, 2014: The Poson safety programme, conducted consecutively for 21 years in Anuradhapura by AIA Insurance was among the top 5 Best Sustainability Projects recognized by The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce at its 11th presentation of Best Corporate Citizen Sustainability Awards held recently.

The awards presentation had over 400 distinguished corporate guests participating in the gala event. Prof. Uditha Liyanage, Professor of Management at the Postgraduate Institute of Management was the Chairman of the Evaluators Panel while Palitha Fernando – Former Attorney General functioned as the Chairman of the Judges Panel.

AIA has been conducting the extensive safety programme since 1993 to reduce the number of deaths among Poson pilgrims to near zero. An estimated one million or more pilgrims throng the sacred city, making it among the most nationally important events in the country.

To ensure the safety of Poson pilgrims, AIA facilitates the presence of over 600 lifeguards and creates awareness of the dangers of using the reservoirs in the district for bathing. The Company displays warning signboards, hoardings, roadside banners and pennants across the Anuradhapura District. Mass media advertising, especially over TV and public address systems in the vicinity are also used to motivate bathers to be cautious. The creative TV commercial promoting safety awareness was awarded the Best TV Commercial of the Year – 2013 at Sumathi Awards held recently. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nq7YeBpJcl>)

In 2014, the lives of 9 pilgrims were saved by the lifeguards deployed by AIA with the support of the Lifesaving Association of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka Police and Navy, to watch over pilgrims bathing in reservoirs and lakes in and around Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Dambulla. Many deaths were reported during the season before the Company launched the Poson Safety Programme. An important aspect of the initiative is the voluntary participation of AIA Wealth Planners and employees in the area in making the programme a success.

Suren Perera, Head of Marketing collected the award on behalf of the Company and said: “The CSR initiative ‘Preserving Life during Poson’ combines the strength of great teamwork and project capability. We are constantly evaluating and adding value to the project. The free shuttle train service between Anuradhapura and Mihintale that we now provide for the convenience of devotees was introduced five years ago as a result of this evaluation. We take great pride in the important role we play in such a nationally relevant initiative.”