**Mr.Sanjaya Bandara**

It is with great pleasure that I share this message for the 35th International Students Conference.

The professional community including Chartered Accountants are facing the test of time due to the COVID-19 global pandemic which comes at a time when the business landscape was already witnessing numerous other challenges.

For the accounting profession, apart from technological challenges such as Artificial Intelligence, Block Chain, Cybersecurity and Data, we now have one added challenge in our lives which is the pandemic, but it has been an important reminder to us why we should stop being complacent and move away from our comfort zones.

At the Institute level, we are increasingly focusing on developing our Chartered Accountants to be equipped with futuristic skills so that they can overcome any challenge, pandemic or otherwise successfully. To fulfil this vision, we have incorporated important elements ranging from technology to leadership and critical thinking components to the study programme for the benefit of our students, while also expanding their skills in relation to entrepreneurship and business acumen to help them have the right set of skills so they have the ability to steer future businesses successfully.

The role of the accountant will continue to evolve, and as present-day guardians of our profession, we will continue to have much expectations from the future guardians of the profession. Therefore, there is an essential requirement for you to understand how to convert challenges into opportunities and ensure both your professional standing and profession will continue to be at the top immaterial of the crisis.

In this regard, I am certain that the 35th International Students Conference will be an excellent platform which will give you a peek into what to expect as future members of the profession, and how you can play a catalyst role in leading organisations across the business landscape.

I extend my best wishes to the conference.

**Sanjaya Bandara**

**Vice President**

**CA Sri Lanka**