Courtaulds donates auditorium

A fully equipped auditorium built at a cost of 3 million and at the request of Slimline (Pvt) Limited's Managing Director Dian Gomes, was donated recently to the Pannala Maha Vidyalaya by Courtaulds Textiles Plc – UK's largest producer of lingerie and underwear.

Flying down to Lanka for the ceremonial handing over of the building's deed to two students of this 3,200-student strong mixed school, was Colin Dyre, Chief Executive Officer of Courtaulds, Slimline's joint partner in the UK and Sir Richard Greenbury, Chairman Marks and Spencer.

Delivering the welcome speech at a very impressive and touching ceremony graced by the British High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, David Tatham, Deputy Minister of Higher Education Prof. Wiswa Warnapala, Members of Parliment, and other VIPs from Colombo, Gomes said how thankful he was to Courtauld's former CEO Noel Jarvis to whom he had made a request for such a facility for this school, which was used as a helipad for Slimline's foreign visitors a couple of years ago and how Jarvis had readily agreed to his suggestion, having himself been moved by the paucity of facilities in this school which catered to many talented children. He also thanked Dyre, Jarvis' successor for having willingly helped in the successful and speedy implementation of this project.

He referred to Courtauld's Magnanimous gesture as a "gift of love to the children of Pannala."

"The school's one of its kind in the whole of the North Western Province and it is also the first time that a foreign investor in the apparel industry has made such a gift to the local community in which his investment project is located", said Gomes.

According to Gomes, 95 percent of Slimline's workforce of 1,200 have been educated at the Pannala Maha Vidyalaya. And Slimline is Sri Lanka's largest single clothing manufacturing plant in Pannala with an annual turnover of Rs 2 billion.

"We have a social responsibility towards the people in areas where our factories are located and this building located today is an expression of that responsibility", said Gomes.[redacted]