

# **Sri Lanka's advertising agencies withdraw from SLIM Awards 2006**

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The Accredited Advertising Agencies Association (4A's) and the International Advertising Association (IAA) have decided not to participate in the forthcoming SLIM Awards, after their discussions on reforms required for the Awards were not accepted by the Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing (SLIM). Member agencies of the two associations were advised of the decision and each agency was allowed to exercise their own prerogative.

The boards of the 4A's and IAA met on several occasions to discuss reforms that would raise the standards of Sri Lankan advertising. These deliberations were documented in a proposal with the intention of presenting it to SLIM. Presidents of both associations wrote to SLIM seeking a meeting. Subsequently SLIM advised the 4A's that there was no MoU between SLIM and IAA, so SLIM was only willing to meet with 4A's. At the meeting in December, SLIM was most receptive of the proposals.

However, the advertising industry was surprised to receive invitations to the Awards' agency briefing because it was considered premature, since the reforms needed a committee to discuss and prepare a revised outline for the 2006 Awards program. The 4A's was disappointed when SLIM informed them, a day before the agency briefing, that they will be unable to incorporate a majority of the reforms until the 2007 Awards. In light of the MoU entered three years ago by 4A's and SLIM, this was a disappointment.

It was collectively concluded that the two apex associations would not participate in the SLIM Awards 2006. The industry was left with no other option and was compelled to institute such measures that would convey in no uncertain terms to SLIM, the strength of conviction the industry had in the suggested reforms to the 18 year old awards program.