



While We Mark Engineers' Day

Abdulla Naushad, President, ACE Maldives

As we celebrate Engineers' Day, it would have been easy to focus on individual achievements—on the patents filed, confer awards, make speeches. Yet the true story lies deeper, in the steady hum of machinery, the glowing lines of code behind our apps, and the invisible frameworks that keep our cities alive. Engineering is the silent force propelling humanity forward, the fabric connecting progress to practical reality. This day is our reminder to look beyond the visible marvels and honor the discipline that makes modern life possible.

Every facet of our world relies on engineering sciences. Civil engineers design the roads we travel and the buildings we inhabit. Electrical engineers light our homes and power our industries. Mechanical engineers ensure that cars, turbines, and medical devices operate seamlessly. Software engineers stitch together the digital ecosystem that links billions of people. Without this spectrum of expertise, none of our basic infrastructures—transportation, energy, healthcare, communication—would function. Society's development, sustenance, and evolution depend on these interwoven disciplines.

Yet engineering remains largely a background profession. When bridges stand strong, we rarely ponder the years of analysis and testing behind their spans. When our smartphones connect without a glitch, few ask why data transmission happens so reliably. The better engineers perform, the more invisible their work becomes. This paradox means that the public often overlooks the complexity and creativity inherent in engineering solutions, assuming instead that things simply “work.”

If engineering is the backbone of prosperity, we must elevate its status accordingly. Beyond name recognition or occasional media spotlights, engineers deserve cultural and institutional respect that reflects their impact. We should celebrate engineering milestones publicly, showcase the human stories behind the technical challenges, and integrate engineering history into mainstream education. A society that truly values functionality and innovation will honor the fields behind every bridge, power plant, and piece of software.

Maintaining a robust engineering workforce requires attention to both numbers and quality. We must inspire more students to pursue STEM pathways and support them through scholarships, mentorship, and hands-on learning. Retaining top talent calls for continual professional development, research funding, and collaboration opportunities across academia and industry. By nurturing curiosity and competence at every career stage, we ensure that the next generation of engineers is equipped to tackle global challenges—from climate change to smart cities.



National education policies must reflect engineering's strategic importance. Curricula need regular updates to incorporate emerging fields like renewable energy, robotics, and AI ethics. Funding formulas should allocate resources to both foundational engineering programs and interdisciplinary research. More importantly, compensation and professional categorization must align with the societal value engineers' deliver. Higher pay scales, clearer career ladders, and formal recognition systems will attract and retain the brightest minds in engineering disciplines.

Above all, engineers must have a direct voice in policymaking, regulation, and standardization. Their technical insights are critical when drafting safety codes, environmental standards, and technology roadmaps. Embedding engineers in decision-making bodies will bridge the gap between abstract policy goals and concrete implementation. When engineers lead discussions on infrastructure, digital transformation, and sustainability, policies become both visionary and grounded in real-world feasibility.

As we mark Engineers' Day this year, let our tribute extend beyond plaques and speeches. Let it be a commitment—to broaden public awareness, to strengthen educational pipelines, to reform national policies, and to empower engineers as full partners in shaping our collective future. In doing so, we not only honor their invisible labor but also lay the foundation for a more dynamic, resilient, and prosperous society.

As we mark Engineers Day, it is fitting to pause and reflect on a profession that, though critical to the functioning of every modern society, often operates in the background—largely unseen, frequently underappreciated. From the roads we travel and the water we drink, to the power that lights our homes and the technology that connects our world, engineering sciences are the silent engines of progress.

Every branch of engineering—civil, electrical, mechanical, environmental, software, and beyond—plays a vital role in the development, sustenance, and daily operation of society. Without engineers, cities would grind to a halt, infrastructure would collapse, and industries would stall. Yet, when systems work seamlessly, few stop to consider the layers of design, testing, and problem-solving that went into making them functional, safe, and efficient. Success, in engineering, is often invisible. Only failure is noticed.

This disconnect between contribution and recognition must be addressed. We cannot build a prosperous, resilient, or sustainable society without acknowledging the centrality of engineering to our national development. The work of engineers must be brought out of the shadows and into the public conscience—not merely on one day of the year, but through consistent and meaningful recognition.



To do this, we must first commit ourselves to developing and maintaining both the *quantity* and *quality* of engineers in the country. This involves more than just increasing the number of engineering graduates. It demands a commitment to rigorous education, strong professional ethics, and a culture that values continual learning and innovation. In this regard, engineering must be treated as a national priority, and not just a technical vocation.

At the national level, this requires a shift in policy. Our educational strategies must place greater emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields, ensuring that engineering is accessible, respected, and appealing to the best and brightest minds. Moreover, the profession must be rewarded accordingly. Pay scales and public sector categorizations must reflect the responsibility, complexity, and societal value of engineering work.

Equally important is the role engineers play in governance. Engineers must be granted direct involvement in shaping the policies, regulations, and standards that govern their professions. Too often, these decisions are made without adequate technical insight, leading to inefficiencies, delays, or even disasters. Including engineers at the policymaking table ensures that practical realities are considered alongside political or economic objectives.

Engineers are not just implementers—they are thinkers, problem-solvers, and innovators. Their voices must be heard not only in boardrooms and project sites, but also in parliaments, ministries, and regulatory bodies.

As we celebrate Engineers Day, let us go beyond ceremony. Let us reaffirm our commitment to a profession that builds the very backbone of our society. Let us ensure that engineering is not just respected in rhetoric, but empowered in practice. Only then can we truly build a future worthy of the foundations engineers so tirelessly lay.