



## **45<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council**

### **Item 5: Interactive dialogue with the Assistant Secretary General for Human Rights on the report of the Secretary-General on co-operation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights**

**30 September 2020**

#### **Statement by Sri Lanka**

Madam President,

The Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) wishes to make the following observations with regard to the reference contained in the Annual Report of the Secretary-General on "Cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights", presented to this Council:

- With regard to alleged “intimidating visits”, “surveillance”, complaints of harassment” and “reprisals” referred to in the Report, the GoSL wishes to make an invitation to the parties concerned to make formal complaints to law enforcement authorities or to independent national institutions such as the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka or the National Police Commission, so that action can be taken to investigate the alleged incidents.
- The Government has already publicly refuted these allegations, and is committed to protecting and promoting freedom of expression and civil society space, and ensure that complaints received on alleged attacks against journalists, human rights defenders and civil society are investigated and prosecuted.
- It is also reiterated that, apart from operating routine security networks in the interest of national security, particularly after the devastating Easter Sunday terrorist attacks, the Security Forces and intelligence agencies are not engaged in monitoring any specific group of people in the country.
- We believe that, for any country compromising its national security interests amidst looming sophistication of strategies of radical and extreme elements world around, is bound to face regrettable consequences. Hence, the GoSL requests all parties to be mindful of that ground reality in this context.

Thank you, Madam President.