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Mr. President,

My delegation thanks the Special Rapporteur on Right to Health Mr. Anand Grover for his detailed report and recommendations to address diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The fact that Non Communicable diseases are one of the leading causes of death globally than all other causes combined, of which 80% of deaths occur in low and middle income countries, is a matter of serious concern.

We agree with the Special Rapporteur that a multi-sectoral approach should be used to address diet-related NCDs and to increase availability of healthier food alternatives through the policy formulation. While providing information about the ill effects of unhealthy foods and raising awareness of the benefits of balanced diets and healthy foods States should take steps to implement health education programmes to promote healthy food options in such institutional settings such as schools.

The prevention and control of chronic NCDs is a priority issue in Sri Lanka's national health agenda and the National Health Master Plan 2007-2016 as these diseases lower the quality of life, impair the economic growth of the country and place a heavy and rising demand on families and national budgets. It is recognized that a significant proportion of the NCD burden is preventable with evidence-based policies in place and relevant programmes are implemented.

Sri Lanka recognizes that a national policy and strategic framework is essential to give chronic NCDs an appropriate priority and to organise resources efficiently. With that view the National Policy formulated on Chronic NCD prevention is implemented through the existing health network with the support of both government and nongovernment organizations in the country. The National NCD policy focuses on ensuring the coherence with National Nutritional Policy and WHO Global Strategy on Diet and Physical Activity, and the close collaboration with other sectors involved in nutrition related activities, strengthening the existing Food Act and its

effective implementation with the focus on NCD prevention and control measures including proper labelling, ethical advertisement, provision of correct information to consumers, legitimate health claims and responsible marketing, incorporating national strategies on promoting a healthy diet into national agriculture, education and trade policies and taking steps to facilitate, promote and enhance availability of healthy food. Since its independence, Sri Lanka has focused on developing a multi-sectoral approach to food and nutrition policies by involving the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health.

We believe that in order to combat the NCD epidemic a comprehensive approach that targets a population as a whole and includes both prevention and treatment interventions, is required.

In addition to increasing awareness of the public on healthier food and diet options, the Department of Health Services has taken various steps with the aim of controlling diet-related NCDs. For instance, the food industry has been approached for voluntary reduction of sugar and salt, as a result of which low or free of sugar products are now available to the consumer and are increasingly becoming popular. A healthy canteen policy is being initiated in schools. According to the Guidelines that are being developed under this policy, unhealthy foods rich in trans-fat and carbonated and sweetened drinks will not be available in the school cafeteria. Furthermore, the colour labelling of food on the basis of nutritional value is also under consideration.

Thank You.