



Statement by Sri Lanka

The Nineteenth Session of the Working Group on the Right to Development

23 - 27 April 2018

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, we congratulate you on your re-election as the Chair-Rapporteur of the 19th Session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right to Development and express our sincere appreciation for your stewardship for the progress achieved in the work of this Working Group.

Mr. Chairman,

The Right to Development provides a firm foundation to achieve development for all. However, even after thirty years since the adoption of the Declaration of the Right to Development, and despite the substantive work done by this Working Group, we are yet to operationalize this mandate due to the absence of a comprehensive and coherent set of standards for assessing development.

While individual States have the primary responsibility for national development, the need for further collective efforts and collaboration, between States and between numerous stakeholders, in addressing poverty, disasters, conflicts and health hazards are imperative today. Despite the achievements made over the decades, progress in making development a reality has been uneven, notably in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and Small Island Developing States. Therefore regional and international efforts are needed to complement national efforts.

Mr. Chairman,

With a view to ensuring the holistic realization of human rights while implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the Government of Sri Lanka, through its “Vision 2025 : A Country Enriched” policy document has now launched a comprehensive framework to alleviate poverty, address regional disparities within the country, and promote prosperity to all its peoples. In addition, the ‘Sri Lanka Sustainable Development Act’ which was passed by Parliament in October 2017 is a key step forward in upholding our commitment to the realization of the UN’s Sustainable Development Agenda. The Act makes provisions for Sri Lanka to

prepare its national policies and strategies guided by the 17 SDGs, working towards the provision of basic needs of the people, progressive alleviation of poverty, elimination of all forms of discrimination and inequalities, and establishing a society based on social justice and human security.

Sri Lanka looks forward to submit its National Voluntary Review to the UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) this year. Sri Lanka asserts that the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda reaffirms the key principles of the Declaration on the Right to Development. In this context, we welcome the Interactive Dialogue with Experts on the implementation and realization of the right to development, including the implications of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We note that the 2018 HLPF focuses on the “Transformation towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies” which could help engender consensus on this critical issue.

Mr. Chairman,

There have been several progressive international instruments in addition to the 2030 Development Agenda that provide a framework for international cooperation and to address key international challenges recent years. These include the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Climate Change Agreement. All these have reaffirmed the Right to Development, and the momentum generated by these instruments should now be used to create an understanding among the various parties, thereby minimizing divergences, on the set of standards as well as criteria and operational sub-criteria while also avoiding duplication.

Mr. Chairman,

While taking note of the progress made so far by this Working Group, we take this opportunity today to reiterate our call for the finalization of the set of standards as a matter of urgency and emphasize the importance of finalizing the criteria and the operational sub-criteria which are under negotiation since 2010. In this context, we take note of the proposal by the Non-Aligned Movement, on a set of standards regarding the implementation of the Right to Development and a non-paper aimed at finalizing the consideration of the criteria and sub-criteria with a view, to facilitating the process.

We also welcome the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development, Mr. Saad Alfarargi today. We take note of the report submitted by the Special Rapporteur to the 36th Session of the Human Rights Council which notes the challenges to the realization of the Right to Development including adverse global trends. We encourage the Special Rapporteur to continue his engagement and ongoing dialogue with the Working Group, while providing inputs towards the

finalization of the criteria and sub-criteria and the elaboration of a comprehensive and coherent set of standards for the implementation of the Right to Development.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we wish the Working Group success in its deliberations and assure Sri Lanka's support and constructive engagement throughout this session.

Thank you.