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**Ambassador Aryasinha says Sri Lanka looks toward an objective and
unbiased approach by High Commissioner Pillay**

Sri Lanka looks toward an objective and unbiased approach to Sri Lanka by High Commissioner Navanethem Pillay in fulfilment of her mandate, following her recent visit where she had unfettered access to asses first-hand the on-going reconciliation process in Sri Lanka. This would also enable her to be better placed to not give credence to unsubstantiated allegations of those with vested interests and agendas, largely driven by certain extreme elements in the Sri Lankan Diaspora.

Sri Lanka's Ambassador to the UN in Geneva and Leader of the Sri Lanka Delegation Ravinatha Aryasinha made this observation when he delivered the national statement at the 24th session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva which opened on Monday (9 September 2013)

Apraising the Human Rights Council of progress with regard to the reconciliation process in Sri Lanka since its last session in June 2013, Ambassador Aryasinha highlighted that in July the Government accepted an additional 53 recommendations of the LLRC to be implemented, while in August the inquiry into the case of the killing of 5 students in Trincomalee commenced, a three-member Commission was appointed to Investigate Missing Persons related to the conflict, and the Police was placed within a newly created Ministry of Law and Order. After a lapse of 23 years, train services to Killinochchi will resume shortly further consolidating connection between Colombo and the northern Vanni heartland, and for the first time since the introduction of the

Provincial Council system in 1987 elections to the Northern Provincial Council will be held on 21 September. Further a visit by the Special Rapporteur on IDPs has been scheduled for December, the Special Rapporteur on Education has been invited to visit in January 2014, and Sri Lanka will continue to process requests for visits by other special procedures mandate holders. The Ambassador said, these steps, once again prove those who doubted the will of the Government wrong.

Responding to the High Commissioner's 'immediate concern' for the protection of human rights defenders, journalists and communities she met in Sri Lanka, Ambassador Aryasinha said Sri Lanka has a vibrant civil society, a fact that was amply demonstrated through the wide range of meetings and events that were arranged independently by the UN team in Colombo with civil society groups and persons of all ethnic and religious denominations for her during her recent visit. The Government of Sri Lanka is fully committed to protecting human rights defenders, and in this regard had requested the High Commissioner and her office to provide specific information of such incidents, if any. However, he said, the Government does not wish to add credence to unsubstantiated allegations that are made for political purposes by certain groups with vested interests, who have also done so previously to embarrass the Government, which is in contravention of GA resolution 60/251.

(Full statement is attached)

Sri Lanka Permanent Mission
Geneva

9 September 2013.