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Media Release

Sri Lanka vote highlights increasing divide within Human Rights Council

With 13 countries opposing the resolution, 8 countries abstaining, and 1 country absenting itself, 22 out of a total of 47 members of the Human Rights Council, refused to support the U.S. sponsored resolution on Sri Lanka which was taken up for debate and vote at the 22nd Session of the UNHRC in Geneva on Thursday (21 March 2013). This cross regional group included Congo, Ecuador, Indonesia, Kuwait, Maldives, Mauritania, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Thailand, UAE, Uganda, Venezuela (which opposed) and Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, and Malaysia (which abstained) and Gabon (which absented itself).

The resolution was supported by 25 countries, which included the US, 13 EU and EU aspirant member countries which vote as a block (Austria, Czech Rep., Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Montenegro, Poland, Spain, Rep. Moldova, Romania, Switzerland and USA), as well as by Argentina, Benin, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, India, Ivory Coast, Libya Peru, Rep of Korea, Sierra Leone supported the resolution.

Commenting on the vote, Minister of Plantation Industries and Special Envoy of the President on Human Rights Mahinda Samarasinghe said, by this vote, it becomes evident that the Council is divided over the issue of Sri Lanka. The countries who have voted for Sri Lanka were conscious about the progress that Sri Lanka has made over the years and has expressed its serious opposition to this highly selective and arbitrary process, which contravenes the founding principles of the Human Rights Council. They also voiced that the resolution 19/2 is ill conceived and unwarranted, the Minister added.

Permanent Representation of Sri Lanka to the UN
Geneva

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