



Statement by Sri Lanka
33rd Session of the Human Rights Council
Item 3 – Report of the IGWG on the Right to Development

Mr. President,

My delegation thanks the Chair-Rapporteur for presenting the Report of the 17th Session of the Working Group on the Right to Development held from 25 April – 3 May 2016 and commend his stewardship in moving forward the agenda of the Working Group towards realizing the Right to Development.

Thirty years ago, by the adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Development, the UN General Assembly recognized the Right to Development as “an inalienable human right.” It emphasized a holistic approach to fully realize all human rights, civil, political as well as social, economic and cultural rights alike which ensure fundamental freedoms for everyone. It provided an alternative vision for development policy and global partnership, to advance the three pillars of the UN system; Human Rights, Development, and Peace and Security.

Last year, the historical adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, being informed by the Declaration on the Right to Development, and the commitments made in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development (AAAA) and the Paris Climate Agreement, provided a new impetus for realizing the Right to Development through a comprehensive framework for development.

In this context, we also welcome the Panel discussion held during the 32nd Session of the Human Rights Council, which commemorated the 30th Anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Right to Development. Also it provided an opportunity for Member States to reflect on ways and means to ensure the effective operationalization of the Right to Development.

Mr. President,

As the Declaration provided the guiding framework for realizing development as a human right, the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right to Development played a pivotal role, as mandated. The Working Group was responsible in monitoring and reviewing progress made in the promotion and implementation of the Right to Development as envisaged in the Declaration, both at the national and international levels. We hope that the progress achieved in the work of this Working Group, in particular during its previous sessions in formulating a set of standards will galvanize the current endeavors.

In our view, this Working Group should focus on achieving its full mandate while finalizing

the criteria and the set of standards for realizing the Right to Development as expeditiously as possible during its upcoming Sessions. Further, this Working Group should redouble its efforts to demonstrate and reiterate the political commitment towards the Right to Development and look for the possibility of contributing to the discussions on realizing 2030 Agenda for Development.

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka as the current Chair of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, is committed to see expedited transformation into sustainable development. In our own country, a National Sustainable Development Act¹ in conformity with the SDGs is scheduled to be tabled in the Parliament soon. The objective of this new Act is to formulate a National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development and to provide the necessary legal and institutional framework for developing and implementing it.

Owing to Sri Lanka's consistent policy of public investments in health, education and poverty alleviation programmes, the country has succeeded in realizing some of the targets in relation to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), ahead of schedule.² Since January 2015, the national unity Government has envisaged a sound economic strategy for the country orienting towards a knowledge based economy, which will set the environment for sustainable development.³

We believe that the international cooperation is indispensable for addressing challenges to development that are beyond the national capacity of States, such as alleviating extreme poverty induced by adverse effects of climate change, financial crises and unequal trade relations. In this regard, revitalizing global partnerships for sustainable development could play a significant role in creating an environment conducive for realizing the Right to Development.

In conclusion Mr. President,

We are of the view that the momentum gathered at the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the Right to Development by bringing the issue to the fore burner of international discourse including in this Council should be sustained and built up on to develop a stronger political will and consensus at all levels as an effective way forward to translate commitments towards concrete action in realizing his intrinsic right. Thank You.

¹ National Statement of Sri Lanka at the General Debate of the High-level Segment of ECOSOC by Hon. Gamini Jayawickrama Perera, Minister of Sustainable Development and Wildlife, 18 July 2016,

<http://www.slmission.com/index.php/news/91-latest/896-minister-of-sustainable-development-and-wildlife-addresses-the-2016-high-level-political-forum-on-sustainable-development>

² <http://www.ips.lk/index.php/8-news/1202-launch-of-the-mdg-country-report-2014-sports-ministry-auditorium-march-23-2015>

³ Economic Policy Statement by Hon. Prime Minister in Parliament, 5 November 2015,

<http://www.news.lk/features/item/10674-economic-policy-statement-made-by-prime-minister-ranil-wickremesinghe-in-parliament>