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Statement by Sri Lanka- Item 3
Clustered ID with IE on International Solidarity and
SR on Trafficking in persons, especially women and children
12 June 2014

Mr. President,

My delegation thanks the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children for her report (A/HRC/26/37). While taking note of the several challenges in developing rights-based responses to trafficking highlighted in her report, we encourage her to continue to work with the relevant stakeholders to strengthen international and regional and national mechanisms to combat trafficking in persons.

The Government of Sri Lanka acknowledges the gravity of human trafficking and has adopted a zero tolerance policy against any form of human trafficking. In this context, the Government has been continuously emphasizing the importance of eradicating of all forms of human trafficking.

Having ratified the UN Convention against the Transnational Organized Crime and signed the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Sri Lanka has enacted legislation to make trafficking a very serious offence under the Penal Code, which embodies a broad definition on human trafficking. The Penal Code (Amendment) Act No 16 of 2006, which introduced legislation in line with these instruments, applies to multiple offences committed in whole or partly in Sri Lanka .

In October 2010, with technical assistance from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Government has established a National Anti-Trafficking Task Force led by the Ministry of Justice and consisting of representatives of all relevant government institutions responsible for combating human trafficking. The Task Force is currently developing the National Plan of Action on Anti-Human Trafficking for the year 2014 including an evaluation on its implementation, in order to accelerate the government's efforts in combating human trafficking and address any gaps. The Task Force is also looking into conducting a survey with the cooperation of Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs and the Centre for Women's Research to assess the vulnerability to human trafficking in rural areas with the technical assistance of IOM.

The first Government run shelter for women victims of human trafficking established by the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs in collaboration with IOM will soon be fully functional. The Ministry has assigned an officer to Divisional Secretariats to serve as a counselling officer and continues to provide assistance to victims.

With the assistance of IOM, a 'standard operation procedure' (SOP) has been developed to increase identification, referral and protection of victims of human trafficking to ensure that victims are provided with timely assistance and protection. The National Task Force is in the process of obtaining Cabinet approval for the SOP.

A comprehensive and central data collection system has been established by Police Criminal Records Division of Sri Lanka with the assistance from IOM which collects relevant data on cases of human trafficking in order to assist law enforcement officers to track and follow up on cases.

Mr President,

My delegation thanks the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity for the report (A/HRC/26/34) which contains an elaboration of her mandate and work towards the formulation of the draft declaration on the rights of peoples and individuals to international solidarity.

We believe that the general objective of the draft declaration on the rights of peoples and individuals to international solidarity should be focused on creating an enabling environment in which all human rights, including the right to development can be progressively realized for all peoples and individuals through international cooperation and preventive solidarity measures undertaken by States, international organizations, civil society and all other stakeholders who constitute the international society.

Sri Lanka encourages the Special Rapporteur to continue consultations with States and to consider holding regional consultations in accordance with her mandate with a view to further continue the work to develop guidelines, standards norms and principles with regard to the right to international solidarity with a view to promoting and protecting this right by addressing, inter alia, existing and emerging obstacles to its realization.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, Sri Lanka wishes both Special Rapporteurs success in the carrying out of their respective mandates.

Thank you.