



**Statement by Sri Lanka
12th session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the
Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and
Programme of Action, 7 April 2014**

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, my delegation would like to congratulate you on your unanimous election as Chair-Rapporteur of the 12th session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA).

We commend the work of this Working Group and also welcome discussion in the current session on the elaboration of the programme of activities for the International Decade.

Sri Lanka welcomes the General Assembly proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent in its resolution 68/237 of 23 December 2013, commencing on 1 January 2015 and ending on 31 December 2024, with the theme “People of African descent: recognition, justice and development.” In this regard we take note with appreciation of the work undertaken by this Working Group in producing a draft programme as a broad framework for the programme of action for the International Decade. We believe that the International Decade provides an inclusive framework to

address the issues related to people of African Descent from a perspective of equality and non-discrimination in order to ensure that necessary initiatives and measures are adopted to realize all their rights and freedoms. We also believe that the International Decade has relevance to all countries in the world. International cooperation is key in achieving this goal. We also welcome in this regard GA resolution 67/155 of 20 December 2012 on Global efforts for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the DDPA.

Mr. Chair,

At a time when the incidence of contemporary manifestations of racial discrimination such as xenophobia and related intolerance are rising to unprecedented levels in many parts of the world, we recognize the need to address them at both national and global levels. We are also witnessing today new trends in racism and related intolerance which need discussion.

As a country which has recently emerged from a nearly 30-year protracted terrorist conflict, with a reconciliation process ongoing, Sri Lanka is acutely conscious of the manner in which racial, ethnic and other monolithic ideologies can be manipulated to their advantage by extremist elements and terrorist groups seeking to foster separatist agenda and engender hatred, discrimination and intolerance.

As a country that is home to several ethnic and religious communities, Sri Lanka is mindful of the need to eradicate discrimination and related intolerance in all its manifestations. We have well established laws and practices to ensure that no citizen shall be discriminated against on the grounds of race, religion language, caste, sex, political opinion or any such grounds. Sri Lanka has also taken steps to address the manifold challenges in line with the National Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Recommendations of the LLRC which seeks to promote inter-communal and inter-religious understanding in the reconciliation process, as well as to address grievances and grant redress to those who have been victims and whose rights have been violated on the grounds of ethnicity or religion.

Mr. Chair,

We note that all initiatives related to racism must be guided by the mechanisms in follow-up to Durban. Sri Lanka recalls the active role it played during the negotiations on the Outcome Document of the Durban Review Conference in 2009, and we look forward to engaging constructively in the current session.

Finally, we reiterate our strong commitment to the core principles of equality and non-discrimination embodied in the DDPA, and wish you well in ably steering the discussion of this Working Group.

Thank you.

