

1. My delegation welcomes the convening of the first informal consultation of the Open-ended Working Group on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas. This is an important opportunity for all stakeholders to continue to discuss the critical issues confronting peasants and other people working in rural areas.
2. My delegation carefully noted the documentation as well as the Working Group's emphasis on different areas that are critical to the well-being of peasants and people working in rural areas.
3. This issue is of great relevance to Sri Lanka where over 80% of its population lives in the rural areas. Therefore, Sri Lanka was among the countries that co-sponsored resolution 26/26 on the promotion of the human rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.
4. My delegation supports the adoption of a Declaration which would demonstrate the commitment and efforts of the international community for the promotion and protection of the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.
5. As stated by Sri Lanka in our intervention during the first session of the Working Group in July 2013, we reiterate the need for a new text that is streamlined to avoid duplication of existing provisions and human rights standards that are addressed in other international agreements or Covenants.
6. Sri Lanka believes that the new text for a draft United Nations declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas need to take into account the following factors:
 - a. There is a need to revisit and reconsider the definition of peasants. The profile or rural populations is different depending on the country context. Therefore, the definition should take into account such specificities.

- b. While there should be enough policy space for states to determine their priorities and programmes to promote the rights and well-being of peasants, give the increasing vulnerability of people working in rural areas, special emphasis should be given to the landless, small-scale farmers and women.
- c. This declaration should adequately recognize and reflect the contribution by the peasants and those working in rural areas towards sustainable agriculture and maintaining food security at the local and national levels. Such recognition would also highlight the need to protect and promote traditional agricultural knowledge and practices and preservation of such knowledge for future generations.
- d. Considering the effects of climate change on farming and agriculture, developments in the context of intergovernmental negotiations on sustainable development and climate change should be appropriately considered and reflected in this new declaration. There should be focus on striking a balance between maintaining environmental preservation, protecting biological diversity while allowing the peasants to do their activities in a sustainable manner.