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Statement by A.H.M.D.Nawaz Deputy Solicitor General, Sri Lanka during the interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on Human Rights and Extreme Poverty, 1st June 2011

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Mr President,

May I first of all congratulate the Independent Expert for her comprehensive and soul searching report on the burning question of human rights and extreme poverty. At the 16th Session of the Human Rights Council you will recall that Sri Lanka made the observation that economic freedom was an indispensable adjunct to the effective implementation of human rights. One can never subsist without the other. It is an especially significant symbiotic relationship. It is therefore our considered view that the right to live in dignity, not necessarily with riches, needs to be given top priority and addressed earnestly.

Mr President,

We speak of globalisation; some others call it a global village which expression would be a dead letter if we in this Council,

as members of the human family, fail to give true meaning to those values. I throw open a challenge to the global community that we resolve as one of urgency to work together towards the elimination of poverty which we painfully witness day in and day out in the media. I address this call to those member nations of the Council, who are endowed with resources, both material and financial to be generous in the distribution of those resources which perhaps, far surpass the national requirements of those nations. Sri Lanka is confident that if poverty stricken nations in the world enjoy a semblance of economic freedom, there will be no time or room for conflict or regression. It is therefore a common obligation of Member States of this Council to contribute in every way in a substantial manner to maximising resources within the human rights framework to ensure minimum economic level of self-containment. As the Independent Expert has observed, in order to avoid deliberate retrogressive measures to ensure non-discrimination and equality the principle of most favoured

nations which is a catch word in world trade must be assured to every member without compromise. In order to ensure transparency and accountability in every level of our administration we agree that there is an urgent need to address the need of the vulnerable and the downtrodden. We also agree that reducing poverty and social inclusion need not only comprehensive national strategies but also international collective action that would ensure equitable regulatory measures and international assistance.

Mr President,

I am pleased to inform you that we in Sri Lanka have taken cognisance of these recommendations and have put in place a plethora of social distributive resources with a view to eradicating poverty which has also been given its rightful prominence in the directive principles of state policy as enshrined in the constitution of the republic. Our poverty alleviation measures have been effectively implemented with education, housing, medical care, transportation being made

easily available with the large subsidies which the government provides being a welfare state. The resettlement of the internally displaced persons has been carried out successfully with the government continuing to support the resettled in their new homes with basic amenities. We assure you that Sri Lanka is well on its way to recovery and the enhancement of living standards is one of the highest priorities and to this end would draw in aid the observations of the Independent Expert in the accomplishment of these objectives. On our part we stand ready, to share our experience and best practices we have adopted in our quest to eliminate poverty and promote human rights.

Thank you, Mr President