

**Statement by Hon. Mohan Peiris, Attorney-General of Sri Lanka during the  
Interactive Dialogue on High Commissioner's annual report  
16<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council, 3 March 2011**

Mr. President

Madam High Commissioner

My delegation is pleased to join this interactive dialogue following the introduction of the annual report by the High Commissioner.

We have taken note of the activities conducted by the High Commissioner's Office during the last year in the framework of the thematic priorities identified in shaping the OHCHR's human rights agenda.

Mr. President,

My delegation concurs with the observation made by the High Commissioner that discrimination is singularly the inextricably interwoven impediment to the realization of human rights and the empowerment of the vulnerable, in the context of economic, social and cultural rights and right to development. Sri Lanka hopes that the forthcoming 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the adoption of the Dürban Declaration and Programme of Action, which will take place at the next session of the General Assembly, will be a useful platform to further discuss this issue in a practical and meaningful manner, and highlight it so as to ensure the sensitization of the international community. We welcome the UN General Assembly having proclaimed 2011 as the International Year for People of African Descent. However, we would earnestly hope that the lessons that would be learnt from this exercise would further enhance the existing human rights protection mechanisms that seek to guarantee the rights of vulnerable groups throughout the world. In this regard, yesterday's panel discussion was most relevant and useful. Sri Lanka, as you know, is currently on a rapid development phase, which is dependent upon the reconciliation process and to this end, we would draw on the very valuable lessons we have learnt during numerous thematic debates of this Council.

Mr. President,

We also concur with the view that there must be greater sensitization to human rights related issues on discriminatory practices, inter alia, related to persons with disabilities, migrants, older persons, leprosy, and HIV-AIDS. We must place on record our appreciation of this Council as well as the High Commissioner in making a noteworthy contribution by highlighting these issues for the consideration of the international community. We would therefore commend as being imperative that this Council continues its thematic focus on these important issues.

Mr. President

We also unreservedly concur with the observation of the High Commissioner when she aptly observed that poverty and disempowerment are often underlying causes of violence and instability, and that there is an urgent need to redouble our efforts for the early realization of the Millennium Development Goals the further promotion and protection of economic and social rights as well as right to development. It is a matter of record that our delegation observed to the Council in the past that economic security and development were <sup>an</sup> indispensable adjunct to the promotion and protection of human rights. The recent economic, financial and food crises have increased the vulnerability of many people in the world and remind us of the constant challenges governments all over the world face in ensuring economic prosperity and social stability. As most appropriately highlighted by the High Commissioner, this year's 25th anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development offers an opportunity to reflect on the journey forward in its implementation. In these challenging times, it is essential that we ensure development gains are distributed equitably without prejudice or discrimination.

Sri Lanka looks forward to working with the Council and with the High Commissioner on a wide range of subjects affecting the day to day lives of millions of people in attaining their economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights as well as the right to development so as to ensure that the human family will live in freedom and dignity.

Thank you