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**The statement of the delegation of Sri Lanka during the general debate on agenda
Item 7 of the Human Rights Council: Human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab
territories, 17th Session of the HRC, 14 June 2011**

Mr. President,

At the outset, my delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Sri Lanka shares the deep concern expressed on the current humanitarian situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories. It is our firm belief that only meaningful negotiations would achieve a two-State settlement envisaged by all, putting an end to the occupation of the Palestinian and other Arab territories, culminating in the establishment of a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine, for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

There is an urgent need to put an end to all unlawful settlement activities, including a continued campaign of colonization, resulting in the fragmentation of the Palestinian territories. This has also led to the displacement of thousands of Palestinians from their homes, destroying the economic, social and cultural fabric of that society.

Mr. President,

My delegation welcomes the opening of the Rafah crossing by Egypt last month, which would assist in ameliorating the conditions of the population of Gaza. Sri Lanka supports the efforts of the international community to address the humanitarian situation in the occupied territories in order to alleviate the sufferings of the Palestinian people. The continued Gaza blockade has made the situation of the civilian population to be of concern, as it perpetuates to negatively impact on their economic and social rights, and the rights to work, food and health. Intensified concerted action is required to end this blockade.

Sri Lanka emphasises Mr. President the urgent need for the re-launch of direct peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine, addressing the major impediments, which have prevented the parties from continuing such negotiations. In this regard, a freeze on settlement expansion, which continues

to be the single most important obstacle in resuming the peace talks, needs to be addressed with a sense of urgency.

There is no substitute for genuine discussion and engagement in seeking a solution acceptable to all related parties.

Therefore, my delegation calls upon all parties to intensify their efforts in forging an early solution based on the two-State settlement envisaged by all, to establish a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine, and bring about security to the greater Middle Eastern region.