



**Statement by Sri Lanka
Human Rights Council 22nd Session
Annual Discussion on Human Rights and Persons with Disability**

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka is pleased to participate in the annual interactive debate on the rights of persons with disabilities with a special focus on the work and employment of persons with disabilities. My delegation is appreciative of the insights provided by the distinguished panellists.

Sri Lanka welcomes the “Thematic study on the work and employment of persons with disabilities” in the Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/22/25).

Employment is one of the most important goals for persons with disabilities. The right to work is also directly related to other essential human rights such the right to education, to vocational training, accessible ICT, as well as accessible transportation and reasonable accommodation at the work place, and the attitude of the employers.

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka has recognized the rights of Persons with Disabilities to work on an equal basis. The Government has taken significant steps to improve education, social development, social justice and equality. According to Article 12 (4) of our Constitution, "All persons are equal before the law and entitled to equal protection of the law. Nothing in this Article shall prevent special provision being made, by law, subordinate legislation or executive action, for the advancement of women, children or disabled persons."

The Government has continued to promote the Right to Work and Employment of Persons with Disabilities since 1988 by issuance and renewal of a Public Administration Circular allocating 3% of employment opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.

The Act of "The protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" (Act No. 28 of 1996) has provided for the establishment of a National Secretariat for Persons with Disabilities. In July 2003, the Government launched a National Policy on disability on Sri Lanka comprising 26 sectoral policy areas. The National Council for Persons with Disabilities is responsible for the mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of this policy in its totality. Some of the relevant areas identified are employment, vocational training and skills development, education and poverty alleviation. For each sectoral area, policy statements and broad strategies have been formulated.

For the removal of physical barriers, Regulations cited as the Disabled persons “Accessibility” Regulations No 1 of 2006 was gazetted incorporating more facilities to persons with disabilities. All line Ministries and local Authorities have been made aware of the necessity of implementing the provisions in the regulations and creating a barrier-free disabled friendly environment.

The Ministry of Labour & Labour Relations has recognized a right-based approach to ensure the rights of the Persons with Disabilities and to engage them in productive and decent employment. It has taken several initiatives to ensure employment opportunities for disabled persons available with the government, semi-government and private sector.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate our commitment to the progressive realization of rights of persons with disabilities.

Thank You.

