



**Statement by the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
43rd Session of the Human Rights Council
Item 7: General Debate
15 June 2020**

Madam President,

Sri Lanka takes this opportunity to re-iterate its consistent and principled position that the people of Palestine have a legitimate and inalienable right to statehood and to the natural resources in their territory.

In this respect, we take note of the reports presented by the High Commissioner for Human Rights regarding the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories under Agenda Item 7 and express deep concern on, among other matters, the issue pertaining to settlement expansion, particularly the recent decision by the Government of Israel to proceed with the annexation of significant parts of the occupied West Bank. I. We echo the alarm expressed by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967 and the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process in this connection, and join international calls to urge the Government of Israel to halt any annexation activities, which would have far reaching and devastating repercussions. As stated in the Communique of the NAM Coordinating Bureau, of 15 May 2020, we note that this would constitute a grave breach of international law, including the UN Charter, relevant conventions as well as Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

While recognizing the legitimate and sensitive security concerns of both the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples, Sri Lanka observes that indiscriminate actions and disproportionate reactions against unarmed civilians will only make realizing an enduring peace a distant reality.

Sri Lanka reiterates the importance of the early implementation of the UN General Assembly resolutions regarding the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to statehood and the attainment of a two State solution on the basis of the 1967 borders. Two states living side by side in harmony with one another within secure borders, is key to achieving long term security, peace and prosperity.

We align ourselves with the NAM statement made earlier today, that respect for the UN Charter, international humanitarian and human rights law and UN resolutions are the cornerstone for a just and peaceful solution to this issue and for regional and global peace and security.

Thank you.