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**23rd Session of the Human Rights Council**

**Right of Reply by Sri Lanka**

**- Agenda Item 4 – General Debate**

Mr. President,

My delegation wishes to exercise its right of reply with regard to references made to Sri Lanka by Canada and the US under Agenda Item 4 - General Debate.

We are surprised by Canada's claim of "ongoing violations of human rights and lack of reconciliation in Sri Lanka" when the Government's progress with regard to addressing human rights concerns and reconciliation is being amply demonstrated on the ground, acknowledged by many in the international community, and elaborated comprehensively and in detail at successive Council sessions by our delegation, including during the current Council session. The significant progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations of the LLRC through the time bound National Plan of Action is well documented in the public domain in a transparent and easily accessible manner, including via its latest Progress Report released in April 2013. The many facets of reconciliation including resettlement of IDPs, demining, rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants including child soldiers, resolution of land issues, infrastructure development, housing, implementation of the language policy, as well accountability issues are being addressed in a comprehensive manner taking into consideration the aspirations of the affected communities.

We also reiterate that as a founding member of the Commonwealth, Sri Lanka is firmly committed to its values and principles. Sri Lanka’s longstanding engagement and commitment to the Commonwealth is known and demonstrated by the undertaking to host the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in November this year, for which preparations are underway. The reference to the Commonwealth by Canada in this forum is rather puzzling, considering its membership not being universal.

In response to the US, we wish to note that every effort is being made by the Government to investigate incidents relating to alleged attacks on the media and to prosecute perpetrators of such crimes in instances where they are identified and sufficient evidence is available.

Further, our continued and constructive engagement with special procedures is itself evidence of our serious commitment to engagement with the Council and its mechanisms.

Thank you.