



## Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN, Geneva

Tel : (+41) 022 919 12 50, Fax : (+41) 022 734 90 84

E-mail: [mission@lankamission.org](mailto:mission@lankamission.org) Web: [www.lankamission.org](http://www.lankamission.org)

### **Media Release**

#### **Minister Samarasinghe says Sri Lanka's Opposition to the Resolution was a fight on a matter of Principle**

Minister of Plantation Industries and Special Envoy of the President on Human Rights, Hon. Mahinda Samarasinghe has said Sri Lanka's opposition to the Resolution being moved by the US, UK and a few other countries against Sri Lanka was a fight on a matter of principle and that Sri Lanka would not compromise on it. Noting that what is happening to Sri Lanka today, could happen to any other NAM country tomorrow, Minister Samarasinghe called upon all Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) member states to continue to show solidarity with Sri Lanka.

Minister Samarasinghe made these observations when he addressed the Permanent Representatives and delegates of the cross regional Non-Aligned Group in Geneva, on the sidelines of the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council today (13<sup>th</sup> March 2014). Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, Ravinatha Aryasinha was also associated with the Minister at this briefing.

The Minister who had earlier this week addressed the Asia –Pacific Regional Group of Member and Observer States and the Latin American Group of Countries at the Palais de Nations in Geneva, said Sri Lanka over the years was a country that had continued to engage with the international community and needed no Resolutions encouraging it to do so. He said on this occasion too Sri Lanka was briefing that various groups and has been proactive and shared information in a transparent manner.

Recalling the challenges faced by the country in the aftermath of the conflict, Minister Samarasinghe pointed out that Sri Lanka looked after the internally displaced persons of around 300,000 taking care of their every need, leading to their resettlement after the completion of de-mining in their native habitats. The Minister also said that Sri Lanka has rehabilitated around 12,000 ex-combatants and former child soldiers have been reunited with their families while others have been provided with tertiary education, all within the space of under five years.

Briefing the cross regional Non-Aligned Group, Minister Samarasinghe also said that the Government of Sri Lanka had undertaken massive reconstruction of the former war ravaged areas and has invested heavily in its economic and infrastructure development. Having done all this, the Minister said, the Government was looking at also accounting to

its own population. He said a Commission of Inquiry on Missing Persons had been appointed and census was in the process of being carried out to ascertain the number of people killed during the conflict.

He underlined the commitment of the Government of Sri Lanka to achieve comprehensive reconciliation. It was in order to achieve this objective, the Minister said, that Sri Lanka was requesting the cooperation of the international community, especially the western nations which have a large number of Sri Lankans domiciled in their countries, for their cooperation.

He also recalled the visit of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Sri Lanka in August 2013 and the subsequent visit of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of the Internally Displaced Persons in December 2013. The Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants is due to visit Sri Lanka in May 2014 while the Special Rapporteur on Education has also been invited.

The Minister said that while Sri Lanka has continued to demonstrate its cooperation with the UN and the international community through its bilateral and multilateral engagements, it was disappointing to note that the country had been singled out through this Resolution. The Minister added that the country has its own domestic mechanisms to reach reconciliation and has continued to show progress and constructive engagement.

Minister Samarasinghe, together with Hon. Nimal Siripala de Silva, the Leader of the House and Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources Management, is due to address the African Group as well as the Group of Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) next week.

Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka  
Geneva

13 March 2014