The need for NGO Accountability

Friday, 12 June 2009
Last Updated Friday, 12 June 2009

Response of Prof Rajiva Wijesinha, Secretary to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights, in responding to an intervention by United Nations Watch in the General Debate on the Universal Periodic Review Process. Mr President, the intervention of United Nations Watch raises some issues which this Council would do well to address. In a rather sad effort at sarcasm, it was endeavouring to denigrate the UPR process, and suggested that countries it loathes are incapable of making judgments except on the grounds of self interest.

Mr President, the structure of the United Nations recognizes that countries do work in terms of self interest, but we endeavour to seek ways of promoting our common ideals. We all understand where different countries are coming from, and if we see some of our friends not being as principled as we would like, and employing what we see as double standards, there may be good reasons for this that have to do with political compulsions. Unfortunately, Mr President, we do not know where some NGOs come from, where they get their funds, and what their particular predilections are. It is therefore sad that they should be allowed to denigrate countries and the work of this Council, without the accountability and transparency that can alone justify such interventions. I would urge Mr President that you look into this matter carefully, and take suitable action to ensure that the work of this Council can move forward with dignity. Thank you.