
Sri Lanka: Report on the UPR of Sri Lanka successfully adopted in Geneva

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The Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Sri Lanka was unanimously adopted on Monday (19) at the Human Rights Council in Geneva. The presentation of Sri Lanka's national report and the interactive dialogue with UN member states took place last Tuesday (13 May). Sri Lanka's national report was presented to the Working Group by Disaster Management and Human Rights Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe, who led the delegation to the UPR. In presenting the report Minister Samarasinghe outlined Sri Lanka's willingness to constructively engage with global human rights mechanisms such as the UPR of the UN Human Rights Council and pledged to work with other nations to further strengthen and develop the Council.

The Minister said that the national report presents a descriptive and accurate picture of the prevailing human rights situation and identifies national priorities and capacity-building needs. He said that the national report highlights strengths and identifies challenges Sri Lanka faces as a nation in its efforts to promote and protect human rights. Sri Lanka's report was welcomed by all member states of the Council as being a comprehensive and detailed document that was forthright and candid about the situation facing Sri Lanka. Several representatives of countries commended Sri Lanka for the detailed presentation and for providing answers to queries that had been submitted in advance by some members of the Human Rights Council. Nearly 80 recommendations were made by states during the interactive dialogue that followed the presentation of the report. Sri Lanka responded positively to the interest shown and supported 45 of the recommendations for inclusion in the Report of the Working Group. Sri Lanka also indicated its willingness to further examine 10 more recommendations to which it would respond in the near future. Sri Lanka also made 26 voluntary commitments aimed at enhancing the promotion and protection of human rights in the country. Sri Lanka faces an election to enable its continued presence on the Council on Wednesday (21) in New York. As a founder member of the Council which was formed in 2006, it has worked to develop mechanisms such as the UPR and also to engage in institution building initiatives of the Council. Taking an active leadership role as former Coordinator of the 13-member Asian Regional Grouping within the Council and as the holder of a Vice-Presidency of the Council since 2007, Sri Lanka has helped build consensus and has cooperated with fellow member-states to uplift human rights promotion and protection in the world. When elected, Sri Lanka looks forward to fulfilling this constructive role in the years to come. The Sri Lankan delegation to the UPR included Hon. C.R. De Silva, Attorney-General; Dr. Dayan Jayatilaka, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the UN, Geneva; Suhada Gamalath, Secretary, Ministry of Justice and Law Reform; Ms. Malkanthi Wickremasinghe, Secretary, Ministry of Constitutional Affairs and National Integration; Mohan Peiris, P.C., Legal Advisor, Ministry of Defence; Prof. Rajiva Wijesinha, Secretary General, Secretariat for Co-ordinating the Peace Process; W.J.S. Fernando and Yasantha Kodagoda, Deputy Solicitors-General; Asoka Wijetilake and Sisira Mendis, Deputy Inspectors-General of Police; Maj. Gen. Ms. Mohanthy Peiris, Director-General/Legal, Sri Lanka Army; G.K.D. Amarawardena, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights; Shirani Goonetilleke, Director/Legal, Secretariat for Co-ordinating the Peace Process; and officials of the Sri Lankan Permanent Mission to the UN at Geneva. (Courtesy : MINISTRY OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS)