Ambassador Kunanayakam cautions against the setting of dangerous precedents by the HRC

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Statement by the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka:Special Session of the Human Rights Council, 02nd December 2011 Human Rights Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic Delivered by: H.E. Tamara Kunanayakam, Amabassador/Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations and other International Organizations Madam President, Sri Lanka wishes to reiterate its position articulated at the 17th Special Session of the Council on the Human Rights Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, that no action be initiated by the Council in contravention of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the Declaration of Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation Among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, adopted by the UN General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970. Any action initiated in the promotion and protection of human rights in a member country must have the consent of that country and be based on the principles of cooperation and genuine dialogue, aimed at strengthening its domestic capacity to comply with its human rights obligations, as stipulated in UNGA Resolution 60/251. Such action should be aimed at bringing about a genuine and sustainable resolution to the current crisis.

Sri Lanka is, therefore, of the view that there can be no viable solution to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic other than one emerging from a consensus arrived at within the country and based on the active support of and genuine dialogue among all concerned parties. Sri Lanka wishes to draw the attention of this Council to the fact that the resolution adopted at its 17th Special Session on the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, without the consent of the country concerned, has not contributed to achieving positive changes to the lives of the Syrian people, who continue to be affected. It is our considered position that the action envisaged at the current session, evident in the draft resolution prescribing a wide spectrum of action that goes well beyond the scope and mandate of the Council, has the potential to further exacerbate the crisis. The multiplication of such initiatives are now becoming commonplace. This trend, if allowed to subsist, will lead to a dangerous precedent that seeks to impose a new concept in the conduct of international relations that contravenes international law. Sri Lanka welcomes any efforts that will reinforce and strengthen internal domestic processes and efforts aimed at finding a durable solution to the crisis, through international cooperation and dialogue that respects the national sovereignty and independence of the country and its territorial integrity. Madam President, Sri Lanka is therefore firmly of the view that any measure envisaged by the Council should be constructive and developed in cooperation with Syria with a view to enhancing its capacity to resolve the crisis. Any action thus contemplated should be fundamentally aimed at safeguarding the civilian population. Sri Lanka remains concerned about the situation of the Syrian people, and looks to the Syrian Government to take all appropriate measures, in safeguarding the population. In conclusion, we urge the Council to be guided by the principles as contained in the UNGA Resolution 60/251, and reiterate the importance of ensuring universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in the consideration of human rights issues, and the elimination of double standards and politicization, in the promotion and protection of human rights. I thank you Madam President.