Ambassador Tamara Kunanayakam exposes U.S manoeuvres to deceive the Human Rights Council

Wednesday, 22 February 2012
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Given below is the text of a communication issued today, by the Sri Lankan Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Tamara Kunanayakam, which rejects a misleading and unethical communication sent out to Missions in Geneva by the Permanent Mission of the United States, and exposes manoeuvres to deceive the Human Rights Council. Full text of letter: Dear Colleague, It has been brought to our attention that an e-mail dated 21st February, purporting to have originated from the Mission of the United States to the United Nations and other International Organisations at Geneva, signed by one Miriam Shahrzard Schive has been sent to Member States of the Human Rights Council and Diplomatic Missions in Geneva. It seeks support for a resolution on Sri Lanka supposedly sponsored by the United States, that is to be presented to the Human Rights Council Sessions in March. This e-mail creates the impression that diplomatic officials of the U.S. have been in close contact with the Government of Sri Lanka, as well as this Mission, to work, “collaboratively on issues of accountability (in Sri Lanka) and the implementation of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission’s Report”. It goes on to express the hope that ‘the Sri Lankan Government will work with us on this Resolution’. It obliquely canvasses the position of a co-sponsorship of a Resolution and conveys a false impression that Sri Lanka is working with the United States on this Resolution.

Sri Lanka categorically states that at no time has the Government or its Mission in Geneva, ever worked with representatives of the United States on any Resolution on whatsoever. It is inaccurate and misleading to seek to create such an impression that Sri Lanka was consulted, has cooperated or in any other manner been part of such a process. Indeed, Sri Lanka has started on the implementation of the recommendations of the LLRC, among other initiatives to secure peace, prosperity and reconciliation for our people, in the aftermath of the thirty year conflict against separatist terrorism. We have consistently maintained that it is unnecessary, unhelpful and counterproductive to bring any resolution concerning this matter barely two months after the publication of the LLRC Report and more particularly in the context of implementation of its recommendations. We have continued to openly and comprehensively brief the international community in Geneva and elsewhere of all recent developments in this regard. Moreover we plan to inform the Council and its Membership of the current position as to all relevant matters during the forthcoming session of the Council – a practice that we will continue in the future. It is unfortunate that such an unethical distortion of the true position has been resorted to by interested parties who can only be pursuing some parallel agenda, seeking to achieve some collateral gain, given Sri Lanka’s commitment to engage constructively with its partners, its forthrightness in discussing issues pertaining to post conflict recovery and the realization of positive developments within its territory relating to reconciliation and development. It is opportune to observe that we have received widespread support on the endorsement of the principle that a domestic mechanism must be given the time and space, to achieve its objectives. Sri Lanka’s position is that given the considerable progress that has been achieved in the implementation of the recommendations of the domestic mechanism from the release of the Report to date and the path to further progress, any resolution of whatsoever nature is most unhelpful and highly unwarranted. Tamara Kunanayakam Ambassador/Permanent RepresentativePermanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United NationsGeneva22nd February 2012