Hon. Mahinda Samarasinghe addresses the 19th Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva

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Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe reminds the Human Rights Council to ensure adherence to cardinal postulates of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in the consideration of issues in the promotion and protection of human rights.Hon Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe, addressed the United Nations Human Rights Council with a powerful message during the High-Level segment of the 19th Session, in Geneva. Minister Samarasinghe, the Special Envoy of the President on Human Rights and Leader of the Sri Lanka Delegation, outlined the effective developments taking place within Sri Lanka, and reiterated the Government’s commitment toward the reconciliation process. While emphasising the fact that ‘action initiated in the promotion and protection of human rights in a member State, must have the consent of that State and be based on the principles of cooperation and genuine dialogue’, he further went on to say, that today, there were good examples of instances where this cardinal principle had been violated, and ‘where even the application of a multiplication of special initiatives has nevertheless failed to establish peace’. He rightly pointed out that this had only contributed to exacerbating and at times externalising conflict situations.

The Hon. Minister while reiterating the importance of ensuring adherence to cardinal postulates of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in the consideration of issues in the promotion and protection of human rights, further urged the Council to be guided by the principles in the UNGA Resolution 60/251. The statement stressed Sri Lanka’s hope that all those who wished the country well, would view progress made so far as a catalyst, and continue to engage in a constructive spirit.Referring to actions and groups adamant on undermining the genuine reconciliation process underway in Sri Lanka, the Minister stated that the country categorically rejected ‘such undue pressure from sections of the international community which have fallen prey to the propaganda, coercive tactics and electoral pressures of these elements’. He further pointed out that these elements had disregarded the President’s invitation to become constructive partners in development and building a renewed Sri Lanka. Departing from his prepared text, the Minister also observed ‘What protection can we have against selectivity and double standards from those who have eyes and refuse to see – and those who have ears and refuse to hear – but continue to insist on their pound of flesh?’ Full text of Statement: I am honoured and privileged to be able to once again share with this august body, Sri Lanka’s experience in promoting and protecting the human rights of its people, in accordance with universally accepted standards.In the 2 years and 9 months since the end of the armed conflict against terrorism and the onset of peace, Sri Lanka has made significant progress towards recovery and achieving reconciliation, by incrementally overcoming many challenges posed to the nation and its people by almost 30 years of conflict. The rollback and eventual abolition of emergency regulations in August 2011, in tandem with the gradual improvement in the country’s law and order situation in the post-conflict phase, has led to further consolidation of peace. It has also demonstrated to the world Sri Lanka’s genuine aspiration in its approach to achieving a peace that is stable and sustainable.Terrorism that ravaged our nation for nearly three decades adversely affected not only our people, their livelihoods, property and infrastructure; it also damaged the social fabric of our nation. The reconciliation process set in motion by the Sri Lanka Government has therefore necessarily taken into account a range of factors including economic development, rehabilitation and resettlement and livelihood development in addition to addressing the need to provide a sense of finality among those who suffered trauma and the loss of loved ones. In my statement to the Council last September, I urged that the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission, must be given the time and space to complete its mandate. We continued to brief the international community in Geneva of the interim recommendations made by the LLRC and the measures taken by the Inter-Agency Advisory Committee on their implementation. As you know, the Commission has now delivered on its mandate and submitted its report, including a series of recommendations, to the President of Sri Lanka. The Report was submitted to Parliament by my ministerial colleague and Leader of the House Hon. Nimal Siripala de Silva, who is here with me in Geneva today, on 16 December 2011, together with the Government’s position on the recommendations contained in the Report. Concurrently, the Report was made public. In our view, the Report contains a detailed and perceptive analysis of past errors, including those that led to the failure of the peace process, and several recommendations for the future. The Report is comprehensive and contains detailed annexes, compiled following interviews with over 1,000 persons who gave evidence before the Commission, and over 5,000 submissions received. The proceedings were largely open and persons testified freely and openly before the Commission in public hearings unless exceptional circumstances required in camera proceedings. This was quite different to the Secretary-General’s Advisory Panel which held closed door hearings with unnamed witnesses who were guaranteed 20 years anonymity to secure their statements. This meant that the testimony could not be verified or tested for its probative value. The LLRC Report, on the other hand, places before us material of the basis on which the Commissioners arrived at their conclusions, which are substantive and verifiable. The Commission has dealt with and made recommendations on a whole gamut of issues including aspects of accountability - something which several of our partners and interlocutors have failed to acknowledge; the resettlement of IDPs; the rehabilitation and re-integration of ex-combatants, the detention of suspects; bringing an end to the possession of unauthorized weapons; the deployment of security forces; land issues; issues with regard to restitution; implementation of the language policy; socio-economic and livelihood development; administrative issues; and on the need to arrive at a national consensus with regard to fulfilling the legitimate aspirations of all communities living in Sri Lanka. I am happy to observe that advances have been made with regard to many of the recommendations in the Report. The Government will continue to address these issues in a systematic and thorough manner. Some of the areas in which gains have been made include the resettlement of IDPs;

demining; rehabilitation of ex-combatants; implementation of the language policy; the recruitment of Tamil speaking police officers; the removal of the military from facilitation of civil administration in the north making available land previously used for security purposes for resettlement/return; and carrying out a comprehensive census in the Northern and the Eastern Provinces. There are also other recommendations in the Report which need to be comprehensively addressed. In particular, the Commission’s recommendations about the formulation of a land use plan for each district in the Northern and Eastern Provinces and, as a longer term initiative, the establishment of a National Land Commission for the country as a whole, require further study and careful planning. A pragmatic initial step towards resolving issues related to state land ownership has already been adopted by the Government though in a more modest form. The initiative aimed at the construction of over 78,000 houses in the North, including those built under the North East Housing Reconstruction Programme (NEHRP) constructed with donor assistance. A Land Task Force was established at provincial and district levels to deal with land issues and to seek expeditious solutions, and is further evidence of our efforts. I may also add that the Government is firmly resolved to ensure that all those who have been dispossessed of their lands, are afforded the opportunity to return to the lands they once owned. In relation to livelihood support, a self employment loan scheme has been put in place in the North and East and to date thousands of beneficiaries have been apportioned USD 318 million. Moreover, beneficiaries were provided with Enterprise Development Services (EDS) including the establishment of organizations for the self-employed. With regard to the lands under the former High Security Zones of Palaly and Trincomalee-Sampur, the Commission has acknowledged that the area covered has significantly diminished in terms of both land area and restriction of movement. With regard to the re-demarcation and reduction of the former High Security Zones to aid resettlement, the process was initiated prior to the Commission’s Report, which therefore recognized that the area had diminished significantly. By the end of the conflict in 2009, the High Security Zones (HSZ) covered 4,098.36 Ha and, at present, has been reduced to 2,582.45. The Government will closely monitor and expedite making lands, previously used for security purposes, for resettlement/return. You may have noted that the Commission offers detailed observations and recommendations on International Humanitarian Law issues relating to the final phases of the conflict. The Report endorses the position that the protection of civilian life was a key factor in the formulation of policy for carrying out military operations, and that the deliberate targeting of civilians formed no part of it. This was and remains the position of the Government. I wish to inform this Council that an enumeration to ascertain the number of persons in the Northern Province and to scientifically identify the number of persons who lost their lives in the conflict, is now complete and a detailed analysis will be made known in the near future. Due to the unlawful presence of the LTTE, no proper census could be carried out since 1981. Among the people not accounted for and classified as deceased, we count people killed as a result of the conflict, including those who carried arms for the LTTE, civilians killed by the LTTE as they tried to flee from the hostage situation, persons caught in the crossfire and people who migrated out of the Northern Province, either to the South and who left by sea to India or other countries seeking asylum. We need the assistance of receiving countries to ascertain how many persons they have admitted. As a further step, the Government has decided to put in place a structure to further analyse and verify the data gathered in order to arrive at definite conclusions as to civilian mortalities and casualties. One thing is certain: the story of “tens of thousands” of civilian deaths that supposedly occurred during the final phase of the humanitarian operation, is very clearly proved to be a gross exaggeration and a deliberate misrepresentation of fact. The material placed before the Commission points to several specific episodes which, in its view, warrant further investigation. The Government is committed to a mechanism for gathering and assessing factual evidence relating to the episodes indicated, buttressed by a strong investigative arm. The findings thus arrived at will form the basis of a decision on whether criminal proceedings can be instituted. The material yielded by this investigation will be placed before the Attorney-General for a decision in respect of instituting criminal proceedings, where warranted. The Attorney General is currently seized of and is studying the recommendations in the report with regard to allegations of violations of International Humanitarian Law. Military Courts of Inquiry in keeping with international practice have commenced investigations into specific incidents identified by the LLRC. The mandate of the Court of Inquiry is to investigate, inter alia, civilian casualties and the Channel 4 video footages; including whether any deliberate and intentional attacks were made by the Army on civilians, with a view to causing them harm or damage, or on any hospitals or no-fire zones. If so, the persons responsible for any such activity and to make recommendations with regard to the measures that should be taken with regard to such persons. Madam President, in respect of the controversial Channel 4 footage, the Court of Inquiry has been specifically mandated to ascertain whether any member of the armed forces was involved in the events depicted, authentic or otherwise and to recommend the measures to be taken. A similar Court of Inquiry has been convened by the Sri Lanka Navy to inquire into relevant allegations. As you can observe, Madam President, Sri Lanka has taken clear and definite steps towards implementation of the recommendations of the domestic process, barely two months after the report was made public. We have evolved a mechanism to look into accountability issues raised in the LLRC report, both in the form of civil and military structures. This is coupled with a time bound plan in the form of the National Human Rights Action Plan catering to a number of other recommendations to move Sri Lanka towards comprehensive reconciliation. As we have done in the past, we will keep the Council informed of progress when we participate in the sessions in June, September and in the course of the UPR in October. We have already extended an invitation to the High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit Sri Lanka. I might add that there is already a senior advisor of the High Commissioner’s office working in Sri Lanka from as far back as 2005. Madam President, in the light of this commitment by Sri Lanka, there is no justification or urgency whatsoever in floating a resolution calling for the implementation of the LLRC’s recommendations and engagement with the High Commissioner, when this has already been effectively undertaken by the Government. What we now need from the international community is objectivity in assessing Sri Lanka’s efforts. More than anything we need ensure that the process is allowed to advance unimpeded. We do not need unwarranted incursions that will compromise successful implementation. Such

interference by way of redundant resolutions before this Council, would only undermine the sentiments of this Council as expressed in the decisive adoption of the Special Session resolution on Sri Lanka in 2009. (Departing from his prepared text, the Minister observed) ‘What protection can we have against selectivity and double standards from those who have eyes and refuse to see – and those who have ears and refuse to hear – but continue to insist on their pound of flesh.’ The number of persons in detention for suspected involvement in terrorist activity has been reduced to 225 out of a total of over 4,000. As many detainees as possible have been released or forwarded for rehabilitation and eventual release. The initiative to draw down the numbers commenced with the interim recommendations of the LLRC. We are still investigating several cases and these persons will be tried before ordinary courts of law in the shortest possible space of time. The Police have adopted stringent guidelines with regard to the treatment of persons taken into custody. This will have a salutary effect on the allegations of torture and mistreatment. These are also direct follow up activities relating to the recommendations of the Commission.You will be pleased to observe the establishment of normalcy and the re-democratization of the Northern and the Eastern provinces, including the holding of Provincial Elections in the East, local government elections, as well as restoration of civil administration including the network of 33 divisional secretaries and 912 village level officials in the North. In keeping with the recommendations of the LLRC, the military has been withdrawn from aspects of civilian life, and are now confined to security-related matters. As a result, development-related work which, during the conflict situation and immediately thereafter, came under the purview of the Presidential Task Force for Resettlement, Development and Security of the Northern Province, is now carried out under the supervision of the relevant line Ministries, in coordination and consultation with the provincial and local government representation. Development activities in the 05 districts of the North, are channeled through the relevant line Ministries and institutions at the central government level; the provincial administration and the District Secretaries at the district level and Divisional Secretaries at divisional level. The District Secretary or Government Agent functions as the Coordinating and Executing Officer of the district. The civil service in the North and the East is largely representative of the Tamil and Muslim communities. Chief Secretary/Northern Province and 03 out of the 05 District Secretaries/Government Agents in the North, i.e., in Jaffna, Vavuniya and Kilinochi, are Tamil women civil servants, while the other two are Tamil males. The Chief Secretary of the Eastern Province is also from the Tamil community. It may be noted that the present District Secretary/Government Agent of Jaffna District served in the same capacity in the Mullaitivu District when it was under the LTTE’s control. Allied with this is the sometimes contentious issue of language. Sri Lanka has an official languages policy in place which gives equal place to the Sinhala and Tamil languages, mandated by the Constitution. The right of all persons to function and communicate in a language of their choice is constitutionally entrenched. The Trilingual Policy, announced by the Government in January 2012, will further consolidate the implementation of the Official Languages policy and make a valuable contribution to building bridges between the communities and strengthening national unity. This is a key component of the reconciliation process and language was an important focus of the LLRC’s recommendations. More than 1,600 Tamil speaking police officers have been recruited already, and the Tamil language capability of public servants and the police will be further enhanced in the future. It is a matter of great satisfaction to the Government that our rapid and orderly process of resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) has been recognized and commended internationally. Out of over 290,000 IDPs housed in welfare centres at the end of May 2009, only 6,647 IDPs remained to be resettled by the end of 2011. The Government has spent over USD 360 million on its resettlement programme. We will continue with our commitment to resettling all IDPs, including those termed ‘old IDPs’ who were displaced prior to April 2008. The United Nations OCHA Joint Humanitarian and Early Recovery Update for November and December 2011, records that by the end of December 2011, 421,056 people (belonging to 126,524 families) had returned to the Northern Province. This figure includes 223,745 people (70,625 families) displaced after April 2008 and 197,311 persons (55,899 families) displaced before April 2008. Further efforts to identify and assist IDPs in situations of protracted displacement to achieve durable solutions are ongoing. The de-mining of former conflict-affected areas was carried out at a pace comparable with the best achievements in the world. The Government has at present demined 1,412 square kilometres out of the 2,046 square kilometres that were contaminated with landmines. More than 42,000 Antipersonnel Mines and 227 Antitank Mines, and more than 15,000 items of Unexploded Ordnance have been recovered from these areas. The Sri Lanka Army is responsible for around 80% of the successful demining operations and is supported by other agencies. It may be noted that with the establishment of the National Mine Action Centre under the Ministry of Economic Development in 2010, all coordination related to mine action and mine risk education come under the purview of civil administration. With regard to rehabilitation of LTTE ex-combatants, out of nearly 12,000, less than 900 remain in rehabilitation centres. Psycho-social care has been provided to all, including counselling and drama, dance and music therapy. Spiritual and religious programmes have also been conducted. Adult cadres have been provided with extensive vocational training making them employable and potentially useful members of their communities. Those ex-combatants still to complete the process of rehabilitation remain in the Protective Accommodation and Rehabilitation Centres (PARC) established by law. The 595 LTTE child soldiers who were in Government custody have been rehabilitated under a UNICEF-assisted programme without setting in motion any criminal procedure, and returned to their families within one year. Several have successfully passed their Advanced Level examination last year, some having even gained entry to undergraduate programmes. In accordance with established practice of post-conflict decommissioning, the government has institutionalized a process with legislative oversight, to continuously record specific details on the number of weapons recovered, in order to bring about an end to the possession of unauthorized weapons. This will have important implications for human security in general and positively impact on the law and order situation as well. Economic development continues to play a pivotal role in the reconciliation process and the return to normalcy. Massive infrastructure and development programmes are underway in the former conflict-affected areas of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The Government has embarked upon 27 donor assisted projects of which 23 are implemented in the

North and the East to develop infrastructure including housing, roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, and irrigation schemes, valued at approximately USD 201 million for the year 2011 alone. Of the above projects, 7 are categorized as large projects, each valued at above USD 50 Million per project. The total allocation for infrastructure development in the Jaffna District in the Northern Province is USD 300 million, while USD 250 million and USD 150 million have been invested in development projects in the Killinochchi and Batticaloa Districts, respectively. Since the end of the conflict, a 22% economic growth has been recorded in the Northern Province, while Sri Lanka’s overall GDP recorded around 8% growth in 2011. In terms of investment promotion, the Atchchuveli Industrial Zone, which is being developed in a 25 acre land area is expected to attract approximately 40 local and foreign investors and to generate employment to over 6,000 persons. A further 67 acres is scheduled to be added in the second stage. The Palaly airport - which is to be upgraded, and the Kankesanthurai (KKS) harbor - are located less than 10 kilometres from the Industrial Zone, thus providing additional logistical advantages to investors. The Zone will enable small and medium enterprises to better tap into the post-conflict opportunities in the country. The reconstruction of the Northern railway line which was totally destroyed by the LTTE, is currently under way. Both initiatives are supported by assistance from the Government of India. The rail link from Omanthai to Pallai and on to KKS, will provide connectivity and linkage to markets to the Northern province. A Vocational Training Institute on par with international standards and certification that is being set up in Kilinochchi under the purview of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development with assistance from Germany, will enhance the skill levels and the employment opportunities of the youth in the Northern province. We acknowledge with appreciation the assistance that has been received from several other countries. The peace we have won at such cost to the nation and its people will not be a genuine peace until and unless the legitimate aspirations of all communities are met in a substantive and satisfactory manner. The consensus formula to the national question thus evolved, needs to be democratic, pragmatic and home grown, in order to be sustainable. As a central feature of the Government’s approach to evolving such a process, a Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) is contemplated to achieve multi-party consensus in respect of constitutional changes, to fulfil the legitimate aspirations of the Sri Lankan people enabling them to work in unison and with a sense of national identity for a better tomorrow. Parallel with this multi-party mechanism, the Government has commenced bilateral discussions with Tamil political parties as well as Muslim representation. The Government has already nominated its members to the PSC and is awaiting the nomination of members representing the opposition, after which its sittings can commence. We are mindful that all previous attempts at evolving a constitutional formula have failed due to lack of consensus. We are optimistic that the Parliamentary Select Committee process would help achieve such a consensus, given its inclusivity and transparency, and commitment to democratic ideals. With regard to Sri Lanka’s international commitments to safeguard and promote human rights, it may be noted that it has voluntarily engaged with UN mechanisms including special procedures and treaty bodies. In this regard, Sri Lanka constructively engaged in the consideration of the 3rd and 4th Combined Periodic Reports on Sri Lanka to the Committee Against Torture in December 2011. Sri Lanka will also engage with the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances at its 96th Session in Geneva in March 2012. Sri Lanka’s National Report will be considered in October 2012 during the 2nd cycle of the Universal Periodic Review, which will provide an opportunity to comprehensively discuss the progress made over a four-year period, as well as issues related to reconciliation. Our efforts are directed towards engagement at this next cycle of the UPR. Any and all questions pertaining to developments after 2008 may be raised there and will be fully and fairly answered. We have also continued to engage in Geneva and at other international fora, and briefed the international community about our progress, problems and solutions that we have devised. We have hosted several high profile officials from several countries to visit Sri Lanka to view the reconstruction work. We continue to engage the international community by inviting them to witness first-hand the progress being made on the ground. Domestically, very specific measures have been adopted by the Government to safeguard human rights. It may be recalled that during Sri Lanka’s last engagement with the UPR process in 2008, it pledged to devise a five-year National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. We have worked hard on delivering on that pledge through a participatory process involving Government and civil society. The result is the National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights which was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in September 2011. We are now at the implementation stage of the Action Plan, including monitoring and evaluation. The Action Plan presents a structured framework to monitor the implementation of existing laws, policies and practices and to enhance a better understanding and respect of human rights. It addresses 08 areas, viz, civil and political rights, economic, social, and cultural rights, children's rights, labour rights, migrant worker rights, prevention of torture, women’s rights and the rights of IDPs. We have completed the very first activity identified in the Plan which is the appointment of a sub-Committee of the Cabinet that will oversee its implementation. At the operational level, I will Chair a body of senior officials of institutions that will be charged with implementation. Sri Lanka is firmly committed to strengthening the international human rights system. We are appreciative of the important work being carried out by the treaty bodies for the promotion and protection of human rights. We welcome the initiatives undertaken to strengthen the treaty body system, given the current challenges faced in terms of resources and the increase in their work load. We are however firmly of the view that such should be achieved through an intergovernmental process, which is both transparent and inclusive, and based on a legal mandate. We are also of the view that greater synergy and harmonisation between, and not just within treaty bodies, but also with other human rights mechanisms such as the UPR and special procedures, is necessary to yield optimum results and to minimise duplication. Similarly, Sri Lanka is deeply concerned to observe the continuing imbalance between the assessed and voluntary contributions to the OHCHR budget. We are of the view that voluntary contributions should be subject to the same level of intergovernmental scrutiny and oversight as the regular budget. We continue to support initiatives in this regard in the Sixth Committee as well as through constructive engagement with the OHCHR, with a view to ensuring that the principles of accountability and transparency are institutionally entrenched in the work of the Organization. In light of Sri Lanka’s demonstrated commitment to an

internal reconciliation process, including the implementation of the range of recommendations of the LLRC by the adoption of a road map for implementation as I outlined earlier, its continued engagement with the Member States of the Council and its participation in dialogue with treaty bodies and through modalities such as the UPR, the persistent request for engagement within the formal processes of the Council by some states can only be viewed with misgivings. We are of the view that this could be perceived as undue interference with internal processes of recovery and reconciliation containing strong elements of prejudgment and the application of double standards. Given our bona fide actions on the domestic and international plane, this action would not be in keeping with established international procedure, where domestic processes must be exhausted before resorting to review before external fora. We must keep in mind that one of the major external challenges that Sri Lanka is faced with in the post-conflict context, is that the remainder of the terrorist organisation identified as the world’s most ruthless, is proscribed by 32 countries including the US, Canada and Member States of the EU, are still active in some countries and are engaged in clandestine activities, including fund raising, money laundering, drug trafficking and human smuggling. They also wield considerable electoral and political influence in their host countries due to the concentration of large numbers in key population centres. They continue to advocate mono-ethnic separatism in Sri Lanka, while espousing a separatist ideology of the terrorist group, using the latter’s resources and being manipulated by its surviving leadership. They also resort to exploiting the electoral influence of the expatriate Sri Lankan Tamil community living in these countries. It is unfortunate that this group of the defeated terrorists, by attempting to pursue punitive action at the Human Rights Council through some of their host governments, should actually be resorting to undermining the genuine reconciliation process underway in Sri Lanka. We categorically reject such undue pressure from sections of the international community which have fallen prey to the propaganda, coercive tactics and electoral pressures of these elements. We are conscious of their need to portray a negative picture of Sri Lanka and unreasoning pessimism in order to justify their continued presence in these host countries. Instead of accepting our President’s invitation to become constructive partners in development and building a renewed Sri Lanka, it is most regrettable that these elements devote their time, effort and resources in defaming their motherland and denigrating the genuine efforts of the Government to consolidate peace, development and prosperity for all Sri Lankans. We as a Government, therefore, question the value addition of internationalizing through seeking to deliberate upon an effective ongoing domestic process in international fora. Such endeavours would only serve to detract from an expeditious resolution of the issues at hand. We also wish to emphasise that action initiated in the promotion and protection of human rights in a member State, must have the consent of that State and be based on the principles of cooperation and genuine dialogue. We have good examples today of instances where this cardinal principle has been violated, and where even the application of a multiplication of special initiatives has nevertheless failed to establish peace, and has only contributed to exacerbating and at times externalising conflict situations. It should be apparent, therefore, that Sri Lanka is best placed to successfully conclude a home grown process of reconciliation acceptable to, and benefitting all of its people. It is most pertinent to state that any home grown process would take into account the culture, the values, traditions, customs and history of its people. Therefore, it is of critical importance that Sri Lanka be provided with the time and space required to continue with its genuine national endeavours towards achieving this objective. We therefore urge the Council to be guided by the principles in the UNGA Resolution 60/251, and reiterate the importance of ensuring adherence to cardinal postulates of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in the consideration of issues in the promotion and protection of human rights. It is our sincere hope that all those who wish Sri Lanka well, would view progress made so far as a catalyst, and continue to engage with us in a constructive spirit. The people of Sri Lanka expect and deserve no less.In conclusion, I must point out that Sri Lanka rooted out and destroyed domestic manifestations of separatist terrorism largely on its own with the assistance of a notable few international partners. Those who did assist – materially and otherwise – know that their contribution to eradicating this 30 year conflict, is acknowledged with deep and abiding gratitude. Similarly, our Asian regional partners among others are contributing to the massive recovery process in the aftermath of the conflict. They too are acknowledged with sincere appreciation. However, it is regrettable that some of those members of the international community that are among the shrillest and loudest voices in support of various causes in post-conflict Sri Lanka – who raise a clamour over civilian welfare, women’s rights, displaced persons, children, minorities and a host of other issues - are among the least forthcoming in term of real assistance to the recovery effort. The Government of Sri Lanka, the United Nations and international and national NGOs entered into a tripartite agreement that represents a coordinated and cooperative initiative aimed at recovering from the armed conflict and safeguarding the human rights of those affected. It is named the Joint Assistance Plan for the Northern Province which, at the end of 2011, had only received approximately a meagre 35% of the required funding for that year. One hopes that these nations, given their ostensibly deep and abiding interest evinced in protecting human rights in Sri Lanka, would find it able to assist the civilian population especially in the conflict affected areas. Delivering homilies about human rights in Sri Lanka at fora such as these would be much more meaningful if they were supported by real and substantial cooperation and assistance in keeping with this Council’s Resolution on Sri Lanka in 2009. Enabling a member state to overcome the undoubted challenges it faces in reconciliation and restoration of normality and productive civilian life - particularly amongst those worst affected by the scourge of terrorism - would be much more tangible and helpful to all concerned, rather than the mere repetition of unsubstantiated allegations and unconscionable finger-pointing directed at Sri Lanka. As ever, my delegation and I, assure you of our fullest cooperation in conducting the work of these Sessions.Thank you.