Ambassador Kunanayakam in her capacity as Chairperson-Rapporteur presents her Report to the Council

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Amidst Sri Lanka’s active engagement within the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Tamara Kunanayakam, in her capacity as Chairperson-Rapporteur of the United Nations Working Group on the Right to Development, presented to the Council, the Report of the Working Group. Drawing on the importance of the Declaration on the Right to Development, Ambassador Kunanayakam reminded the Council of the Declaration’s modernity and relevance in the context of today’s global challenges. Pointing out that she had on several occasions, affirmed the continued validity and modernity of the right to development, in the context of the economic, social, political, and ecological crisis, she further said that the situation at hand served as a reminder of the urgent need to make progress in the realization of the right to development. The Ambassador also affirmed that the Declaration ‘advances a vision of development that is, at once, comprehensive, global, multidimensional, structural, and dynamic.’ She rightly pointed out that the Declaration provides the opportunity to achieve and maintain a sustainable development that will benefit both present and future generations. State delegations and Regional Groups (including the Non Aligned Movement and the African Group) took the floor during the General Debate to express appreciation and gratitude toward Ambassador Kunanayakam for her leadership and guidance through the Working Group’s deliberations. Full Text of Statement: Mr. President, Excellencies,Ladies and gentlemen, It is an honour to address you in my capacity as Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right to Development and to present the report on its 12th session which is contained in document A/HRC/19/52. The 12th session of the Working Group took place last year when the international community commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development. It was also a year when the world felt the full force of the multiple global crises and its after-effects. I have on several occasions, affirmed the continued validity and modernity of the right to development, a fortiori, in the context of these economic, social, political, and ecological crisis – unprecedented in the history of humanity. It serves as a reminder of the urgent need to make progress in the realization of the right to development, to overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of this intrinsic right and to identify concrete ways and means of putting into practice the commitments we undertook in adopting the Declaration. The right to development should not be seen as a divisive concept, but as the means by which the human person, individually and collectively, can become the principal actor of his or her own destiny. It is up to each peoples and States, given their cultural and historical specificities, to choose the economic, political and social systems in which they desire to live, work, and realize their full creative potential. As the declaration rightly points out, international solidarity and cooperation are essential to create the conditions that are necessary to make the right to development a reality for everyone. Mr. President, Excellencies,Ladies and gentlemen, At its last Session, the Working Group shared its views on the work of the task force as contained in documents A/HRC/15/WG.2/TF/2/Add.1 and Add.2, and on the way forward. The Task Force outcome included the right to development criteria and operational sub-criteria. The Working Group also considered the reports of the Chairperson-Rapporteur containing synthetic summaries of the submissions received from Governments, groups of Governments and regional groups as well as the inputs received from other stakeholders pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 15/25 (A/HRC/WG.2/12/2 and 12/3). The Working Group also had before it the summary of Human Rights Council panel discussion on “The way forward in the realization of the right to development: between policy and practice” (document A/HRC/WG.2/12/4) submitted in accordance with Council decision 16/117. The Working Group focused its deliberations on the right to development criteria and operational sub-criteria and acknowledged the need to further consider, revise and refine those criteria. In its recommendations, the Working Group, at its 12th session, entrusted me with the task of holding informal consultations with Governments, groups of Governments, regional groups and relevant stakeholders and requested that I report accordingly to the next session of the Working Group with a view to moving the process forward. Here, I should like to express my thanks to the United Nations bodies, agencies, funds and programmes and other specialized and multilateral institutions, and all non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples’ groups for their active participation and support during this important and inclusive process. Mr. President, Excellencies,Ladies and gentlemen, Despite what, at times, appeared to be insurmountable differences, the Working Group, following its past invaluable tradition, once again adopted its conclusions and recommendations by consensus. I choose to take this as a positive sign and although it may seem that we have much work ahead of us, I am confident and optimistic that the task is achievable. In this context, let me express my sincere gratitude to all groups and delegations for their substantive contributions and especially for their tireless and successful efforts in maintaining consensus and moving this process forward. I take this opportunity to inform you that the 13th session of the Working Group will be convened from 7th to 11th May. I encourage all delegations and relevant stakeholders to redouble their efforts and to constructively engage in the review process. In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that, 25 years after the adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Development, its modernity and relevance in the context of today’s global challenges, remain. The Declaration advances a vision of development that is, at once, comprehensive, global, multidimensional, structural, and dynamic. It provides us all with the opportunity to achieve and maintain a sustainable development that will benefit both present and future generations. I would like to thank the Council for its support toward the Working Group. It is my hope that such efforts will continue. It is important for the Council and its Working Group to build upon the momentum created last year by the anniversary commemorative events, and to advance our thinking and future work for the effective realization of the right to development. Thank you for your attention!Please click this link to listen to the speech: http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/2012/03/report-on-the-right-to-development-25th-meeting-19th-session.html * * * * *