
Sri Lankan delegation engages with Special Procedures mandate holders & working groups during HRC 20

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Engaging with the relevant Interactive Dialogues with Special Procedures Mandate Holders and Working Groups since the commencement of the Human Rights Council on 18th June, the Sri Lanka delegation briefed the Council on its positions on the thematic issues of relevance. In the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Counter-Terrorism, Sri Lanka supported a Joint statement presented by the People's Republic of China on behalf of 13 likeminded countries comprising the Russian Federation, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Cuba, Bangladesh, Iran, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sudan, and Venezuela, which condemned terrorism in all its manifestations. Sri Lanka also had its own statement on counter-terrorism, which welcomed the Special Rapporteur's recognition that some of the gravest violations of human rights are committed by or on behalf of non-state actors operating in conflict situations, including by domestic or international terrorist networks. Sri Lanka also cautioned on the many-faceted dangers of these international networks operating in foreign jurisdictions, including in the form of front organisations, while continuing to receive overt and tacit support from host societies. The delegation noted that tolerance and accommodation of these international networks could lead to the resurfacing and rejuvenation of terrorism in countries which have suffered from it and been effectively suppressed. Sri Lanka observed that support from overseas, whether it be by fundraising or via other logistical support, or even via civic or political manifestations that espouse terrorist causes in victim countries, must be stringently guarded against. Sri Lanka upheld that all countries have a responsibility to ensure that terrorism does not jeopardize the rights of its citizens on their own soil, and equally have a duty to ensure that activities in its jurisdiction do not pose a threat to present and potential victims of terrorism in other nations.

In the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty, the Sri Lanka delegation observed that under the Government's Livelihood Development Programme 'Divi Neguma', in accordance with the Mahinda Chinthana Development Policy Framework, steps have been taken to strengthen household economic units and informed that 2.5 million households which account for 50% of the total household population, were provided with seeds, plants, livestock, fisheries and input for small scale industries. Also, Sri Lanka welcomed the Report of the Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice, and observed that there has been a significant improvement in the status of women in Sri Lanka over the years as demonstrated by high levels of attainment in education, health and economic empowerment. The delegation noted that this has been possible due to increased sensitivity to women's issues and a firm Government policy that has sought to empower women and address their specific grievances. Detailing the concrete steps taken to address the issue of violence against women, the delegation indicated that the Government has enacted the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act and taken measures to improve its implementation. As a country coming out of a 3-decade long terrorist conflict, the delegation pointed out that measures have been taken to enhance law enforcement in former conflict-affected areas through the establishment of additional Women and Children's desks at Police Stations. It indicated that the issue of female-headed households has emerged as a new priority concern that needs to be addressed in the post-conflict period. The delegation also emphasised that Sri Lanka, as a State Party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) presented its latest Periodic Report under Article 18 of the Convention which was reviewed in 2011. In the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Migrants, Sri Lanka welcomed the Report, which calls for a rights based approach to migration, entailing the use of human rights mechanisms to protect migrants at all stages of the migration process. The delegation of the Government of Sri Lanka to the 20th session of the Human Rights Council comprises Ms. Manisha Gunasekera, Charge d'Affaires of the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN in Geneva, Mr. Shavindra Fernando, Deputy Solicitor General of the Attorney General's Department, Ms. Sashikala Premawardane, Director/UN of the Ministry of External Affairs and Mr. Nishan Muthukrishna, Human Rights Coordinator of the Ministry of Plantation Industries. The 20th Session of the Council will continue until 6th July 2012.
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