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## Downplaying Sri Lanka's post-conflict achievements, a disrespect to those who have suffered

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Addressing the 63rd Session of the Executive Committee of the UNHCR on Tuesday (2 October) Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha said, "those who downplay the significance of Sri Lanka's post-conflict achievements and constantly keep shifting goal posts, show disrespect not only to Sri Lanka and its international partners whose steadfast commitment to this task has made these achievements possible, but also to those who have at last emerged from the suffering caused by 30 years of terrorist conflict". Ambassador Aryasinha who noted that "in contrast to the considerable difficulty and gloom in the humanitarian crises that continue to engulf many parts of the world today, Sri Lanka's recent achievements provides confidence and hope". and that "it lends credence to the position that even the most severe and insurmountable of challenges could be overcome with the political commitment and dedication of the concerned country, and the requisite support provided by the international community. He said "Sri Lanka remains ready to share its experience and best practices in post-conflict resettlement and rehabilitation with the international community". Responding to Ambassador Aryasinha's comments, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Mr. Antonio Guterres observed that "the operational role of the UNHCR in Sri Lanka will be phased down for many of the reasons that were elaborated upon in the Ambassador's statement". Press Release and full statement...

**PRESS RELEASE** Ambassador Aryasinha says those who downplay Sri Lanka's post-conflict achievements show disrespect to those who have overcome 30 years of suffering Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha has said, "those who downplay the significance of Sri Lanka's post-conflict achievements and constantly keep shifting goal posts, show disrespect not only to Sri Lanka and its international partners whose steadfast commitment to this task has made these achievements possible, but also to those who have at last emerged from the suffering caused by 30 years of terrorist conflict". Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva made these observations when he addressed the 63rd Session of the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on Tuesday (2 October). Ambassador Aryasinha who noted that "in contrast to the considerable difficulty and gloom in the humanitarian crises that continue to engulf many parts of the world today, Sri Lanka's recent achievements provides confidence and hope". In his address he detailed the considerable progress made over a little over three years - in IDP resettlement, de-mining, re-integration of ex-LTTE combatants, the shrinking of the high security zones, increase of economic growth in the Northern Province and operationalization of LLRC recommendations. He said "it lends credence to the position that even the most severe and insurmountable of challenges could be overcome with the political commitment and dedication of the concerned country, and the requisite support provided by the international community. He said Sri Lanka remains ready to share its experience and best practices in post-conflict resettlement and rehabilitation with the international community, and looked forward to strengthening the ongoing cooperation between the UNHCR and member states". Responding to Ambassador Aryasinha's comments, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Mr. Antonio Guterres observed that "the operational role of the UNHCR in Sri Lanka will be phased down for many of the reasons that were elaborated upon in the Ambassador's statement". He said the "UNHCR will continue to be committed to supporting voluntary repatriation of some of the refugees of Sri Lanka from India, as well as with the resettlement of the remainder of the internally displaced in their places of origin". Click to read full text of the statement Sri Lanka Permanent Mission Geneva 02 October 2012