Statement by Sri Lanka

Delivered by

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Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka

Human Rights Council

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Agenda Item 1

Decisions and Conclusions: Draft resolution A/HRC/51/L.1/Rev.1

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Mr. President,

It is deeply regrettable that a group of countries has tabled a "country–specific" resolution against Sri Lanka, despite our continued and constructive engagement with this Council on multiple fronts.

It is yet another example of the unfortunate divisions and polarization of this Council which is contrary to its founding principles that, I quote, "…*the work of the Council shall be guided by the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity, constructive international dialogue and cooperation…"*

Sri Lanka categorically rejects this draft Resolution HRC/51/L.1/Rev.1, presented without our consent, despite our efforts to engage with the main sponsors. While this resolution may meet the objective of advancing the political considerations of the sponsors, it is manifestly unhelpful to Sri Lanka. We call on the Members of the Council to reject it by a vote.

Mr. President,

The list of co-sponsors of the draft resolution amply demonstrates its divisive nature. Last year, many countries braved intense pressure by powerful sponsors and opposed resolution 46/1 or abstained in the vote. This year, we thank countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America who supported Sri Lanka during the informal consultations on this draft.

Sri Lanka categorically rejects the resolution, particularly the proposal in OP 8. As we have repeatedly stated, this so-called external evidence gathering mechanism will have wide-ranging legal and political implications for all countries. Such unprecedented and ad hoc expansion of the mandate of the Council and the functions of a technical secretariat was never envisaged when this Council was established. No sovereign state can accept the superimposition of an external mechanism that runs contrary to its Constitution and which pre-judges the commitment of its domestic legal processes.

The Council may take note that many countries have already raised serious concerns on the budgetary implications of this resolution given its ever-expanding mandate. This is an unhelpful and misdirected drain on the resources of all Member States, including the donors in the midst of ongoing global crises. In sharp contrast, we are faced with the dire financial needs of developing countries to prevent hunger and child malnutrition.

We strongly object to the draft resolution pronouncing on domestic, economic and financial policy matters which are outside the framework of this forum. Solutions to economic and financial crises faced today by many countries will not be found in the mandate, instruments or expertise of this Council.

Further, it is deeply regrettable that this rambling resolution, running into several pages, ignores the institutional and political stability restored in Sri Lanka, despite the significant political and social challenges.

Mr. President,

As I outlined in my previous intervention, Sri Lanka remains firmly committed to pursuing tangible progress on human rights through our domestic institutions. This includes replacing the PTA with a comprehensive national security legislation, the introduction of constitutional amendments and a legal framework to strengthen democratic governance, participation and the rule of law, as well as independent institutional oversight. On reconciliation and human rights, the contours of a domestic truth-seeking mechanism is under advanced discussion as we await the final report of the Presidential Commission. We are of the firm view that any solution should be within the constitutional framework of a sovereign Sri Lanka. On our further engagement with this Council, we look forward to domestic consultations in preparation for our upcoming UPR process.

Today, Sri Lanka is making gradual and difficult progress in resolving the severe financial situation we are facing. Globally, it is clear that the causes for the prevailing economic crises affecting all countries are not entirely internal, but also external. We are deeply concerned about the many hardships faced by our people and have made provisions for the necessary social protection measures.

Sri Lanka has overcome many challenges in the past – we have ended decades of separatist terrorism, successfully managed the human-health dimension of the pandemic and despite economic challenges, succeeded in maintaining a high rank in human development. We aspire to build on the economic, political and social stability restored in recent months with the support of all our people, including through outreach to overseas Sri Lankans, in a just fair and inclusive society which realizes the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In these circumstances, it is regrettable that this resolution has been tabled. The North-South divide is clearly reflected in the consideration of this resolution as well as in the voting results of previous resolutions on Sri Lanka.

For all the above reasons, Sri Lanka **rejects this draft resolution** and requests the Members of this Council to **reject this resolution by a vote.**

Thank you.