

**24th Session of the Working Group on the Right to Development**

**15-19 May 2023**

**Statement by Sri Lanka**

Mr. Chair,

When the General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on the Right to Development on the 4th of December 1986, 35 years ago it recognized that the right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which “every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized. “

At the outset, we wish to extend our support to the Working Group’s efforts especially the work carried out with regard to the draft convention on the right to development and its second revised text. It is our hope that the current session of the Working Group will see serious and constructive consideration of the draft convention on the right to development.

Mr. Chair,

Challenges faced by developing countries have become more serious and complex over the years. Our pressing sustainable development challenges are closely inter-linked, inter-dependent and mutually reinforcing. Despite continued efforts by developing countries, sustainable development remains a distant goal and implementation gaps exist.

It is our firm belief that the implementation of the right to development should go hand in hand with the principle of international solidarity. While noting that numerous factors hampered the implementation of the right to development, including politicization, a lack of engagement, and adverse global trends, we strongly believe that international cooperation coupled with national programs is the crucial factor for securing the right to development for all people.

We support the expert mechanism on the right to development and the Special Rapporteur (SR) on the Right to Development and thank the practical guidance provided by them for the realization of the right to development. This is especially with reference to the recommendations submitted by the Special Rapporteur to the Human Rights Council pursuant to Council resolutions 33/14 and 42/23, where recommendations were made on integrating the right to development into the response and recovery plans and policies on COVID – 19 as well as their engagement with Member States and a wide range of stakeholders.

Mr. Chair,

Sri Lanka remains committed to ensuring the right to development through its national development policies and programs. With its long history of consistent investments in health, education and poverty alleviation, Sri Lanka has been successful in providing free and universal health care, free education, access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, near universal electrification, and an increased share of population living in permanent houses. Sri Lanka continues to achieve commendable progress with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2021 Global Sustainable Development Report, has assessed that Sri Lanka’s performance on achieving the SDGs has been progressive. We continue to make progress in SDG Goals 1, 4, 12 and 13 and at present, Sri Lanka ranks 76 among 163 countries. Overall country score has increased to 70.0.

Sri Lanka is maintaining steady progress in Quality Education (Goal 4) and Climate Action (Goal 13). In addition, the reduction in Age-standardized death rate due to non-communicable diseases in adults aged 30–70 years (contributing to performance under Goal 3 on Good Health and Wellbeing), reduction in Permanent deforestation (contributing to performance under Goal 15 on Life on Land) and increase in the Times Higher Education Universities Ranking: Average score of top 3 universities (contributing to performance under Goal 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities) are some of the notable improvements made by Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka believes that the right to development can only be realized through active, genuine and meaningful participation and urges all stakeholders to take on board the collective responsibility to achieve the right to development including all States, the UN and other international organizations to reach tangible progress and a prosperous future for everyone.