



PALAIS DES NATIONS – 1211, GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

30 October 2023

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the fourth cycle review of Sri Lanka by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group at its 42nd session in January/February 2023. The constructive engagement between your Government, my Office, and the UPR mechanism is warmly welcome. As the final outcome report on the review of Sri Lanka was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 53rd session, I have taken note of the efforts of your Government to implement specific recommendations since the previous review.

A matrix of thematically clustered recommendations, starting with those supported by your Government, is available at OHCHR's website (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/lk-index>), and should be considered as part of this letter. The matrix indicates the recommending State and links each recommendation to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In annex, I have also attached my Office's observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the UPR. In line with previous practice, I will be sending similar observations to all Member States once their fourth cycle UPR outcome is adopted by the Human Rights Council, with a view to follow-up action in close cooperation with national entities and other stakeholders.

I take this opportunity to draw your attention to the support available through the Voluntary Fund for UPR Implementation, which may be activated at the request and with the consent of a concerned State, along with tools such as the "UPR practical guidance" and the "UN good practices" repository on how the UPR process supports sustainable development, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/upr-main>, with a view to facilitating efforts to implement UPR recommendations in line with the SDGs.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Volker Türk

His Excellency
Mr. Ali Sabry
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka



Observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review

It is welcome that Sri Lanka supported most of the recommendations pertaining to the independence of the national human rights institution, including those referring to the provision of adequate resources for it to carry out its tasks effectively. It is hoped that the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka will function in full accordance with the Paris Principles.

It is noted that since September 2022, the Government has sought to develop new anti-terrorism laws to replace the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). In this regard, the voluntary pledge made by the Government of Sri Lanka to repeal the PTA during the adoption of the 4th cycle UPR outcome is welcome. It is important that the new anti-terrorism laws are in full compliance with Sri Lanka's international human rights obligations.

Sri Lanka's commitment to pursuing tangible progress in national reconciliation is positively noted, in particular its voluntary pledge to ensure women's participation in all measures and mechanisms connected with national reconciliation. The Government is urged to develop, in full consultation with victims and civil society, a coherent plan that connects all elements of truth, redress, memorialization and accountability, and creates an enabling environment for a successful and sustainable transitional justice process.

During the review, Member States recommended that Sri Lanka: continue constitutional reforms in order to ensure non-discrimination on all grounds, in particular to ensure equality and non-discrimination in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity; abolish the death penalty, including through a formal moratorium on executions; prevent and combat all forms of torture, enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention; pursue an effective transitional justice process to hold the perpetrators of gross human rights violations and abuses accountable and to uphold victims' rights to truth, justice and reparations; end impunity for human rights violations, abuses and harassment, especially against members of ethnic and religious minority communities; and cease surveillance of journalists and human rights defenders, among others. Sri Lanka is encouraged to continue to make sustained efforts to address these recommendations.

Sri Lanka is also encouraged to develop an implementation plan in follow up to the UPR outcome, in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the Parliament, the judiciary, the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka and other relevant institutions, local and provincial authorities, professional bodies and civil society organizations. The matrix may be of use in the development of such an implementation plan. The Government is encouraged to explicitly link each UPR recommendation to corresponding recommendations of other international or regional human rights mechanisms and to the relevant SDG and its targets. This will, in turn,



facilitate the creation of synergies between UPR implementation and SDG related actions and reporting within the context of the Voluntary National Review (VNR).

The Government is further encouraged to establish a national mechanism for reporting and follow-up, with the aim of ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to reporting to international human rights mechanisms, and to implementing the recommendations, in line with the guidance provided by OHCHR following regional consultations, and the High Commissioner's report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/50/64](#)).

Further, an important measure that could positively contribute to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term UPR reporting. All Member States are encouraged to submit a voluntary mid-term UPR report some two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome. In this regard, the Government of Sri Lanka may wish to consider submitting a mid-term report on follow-up to the fourth cycle UPR recommendations by 2025, detailing both implementation efforts as well as challenges to implementation, including the possible need for technical or capacity-building assistance.

OHCHR
30 October 2023