



**National Statement of Sri Lanka at the General Debate of the High-level Segment of
ECOSOC**

**by Hon. Gamini Jayawickrama Perera
Minister of Sustainable Development and Wildlife
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Mr. President,

Sri Lanka is very happy to be represented at the first High Level Political Forum since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As the first country in the Asia-Pacific Region to establish a Ministry for Sustainable Development, and as the current Chair of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, Sri Lanka now is in a unique leadership position to champion transformation to sustainable development.

Towards facilitating the transformation, a National Sustainable Development Act in conformity with the SDGs will be tabled in the Parliament of Sri Lanka within a month. The objective of this new act is to formulate a National Policy and Strategy on Sustainable Development and provide the legal and institutional framework for developing and implementing it. The Act will mandate ministries, provincial councils, local governments and all public sector agencies to prepare sustainable development strategies and carryout audits and provide annual progress reports based on a set of sustainable development standards, guidelines and indicators.

My Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife has commenced formulating a "National Sustainable Development Roadmap" under the theme of "Planning for an Inclusive Transformation". To ensure no one is left behind we launched the "National and Provincial Sustainable Development Engagement Platforms" bringing together representation from political, administrative, local government, civil society, academia, business, development agencies and women and youth. We will soon initiate formulating "Regional Sustainability Plans" that will provide key input to the Roadmap.

We have been developing a systems linkages mapping between and amongst the 169 targets and the 400 plus mandated implementing agencies to help define the roles and responsibilities of implementing the SDGs and assessing the capacity building and means of

implementation. The ultimate goal of Sri Lanka is to create a model of implementing the SDGs in three phases; 2017 to 2020, 2020 to 2025, and 2025 to 2030.

Arahat Mahinda, son of Great Emperor Asoka, in his historical preaching to King Devanampiyatissa of Lanka in 300BC said; "O great king, the birds of the air and the beasts have as equal a right to live and move about in any part of the land as thou. The land belongs to the people and all living beings; thou art only the guardian of it". The king then declared the entire land of Lanka as a sanctuary. This is the very philosophical context of ecological rights that my ministry has been founded upon.

In conclusion, let me reiterate again that the prosperity of humans depends on the survival of the planet. Time is running out and we must act fast to ensure that no one is left behind!

Thank you, Mr. President.