

Sri Lanka Statement to HLPF Session 10 on 12 July 2017 (16:30-18:00)

Session 10: Thematic review Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world

Statement by: Uchita de Zoysa (Chief Negotiator for Sri Lanka to HLPF / Advisor to the Minister of Sustainable Development and Wildlife Sri Lanka)

Mr Moderator,

1. Related to this session, I wish to present two relevant scenarios from Sri Lanka.
2. First Scenario: Heavy rains on 25th May this year in the south-western watersheds in Sri Lanka lead to flashfloods affecting nearly ½ a million people.
3. At the same time, a total of around 850,000 individuals in eight districts in the north and east were affected by a severe drought.
4. Resilience appeared to be weak and a desperate recovery plan had to be adopted, ahead of the national development plans.
5. Sri Lanka certainly is not alone in this situation where development planning widely continues to be fragmented and disintegrated while resilience investment is weak.
6. Second Scenario: 6.7% of the population in Sri Lanka lives below the national poverty line that is defined as the estimated minimum level of income needed to secure the necessities of life.
7. However, while poverty in the Capital District of Colombo is at 1.4%, the gap between this and poorest districts reaches over 25% which creates a wide gap in the levels of wellbeing and prosperity.
8. This also is a reality not exclusive to Sri Lanka, but countries across the world experience such disparities in poverty, wellbeing and prosperity where siloed solutions are continued to be practiced.
9. How we present poverty rates from an aggregated and disaggregated data approach, or present poverty eradication targets from an economic perspective while accepting it as a multidimensional problem, defines the game plan towards a true transformation.
10. Zero poverty becomes a reality only when climate change is adequately addressed, marine resources and ecosystems are effectively conserved, all sectors of society including women are equally empowered, etc. etc. and all addressed and invested at the same time.
11. Also, prosperity limited to a portion of a country does not equate to transformation, and transformation cannot become a reality if only a few countries achieve prosperity.
12. A half clean-green-prosperous world is not even half transformed.
13. Therefore, as a High Level Political Forum, our deliberations must transcend beyond the conventional and address the deeper political issues that continue to deviate us from eradicating total poverty everywhere and in all forms while prosperity eludes us as transformation is being delayed.

Thank you!