

6th session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals:

9th – 13th December 2013

**Remarks by Mr Waruna Sri Dhanapala, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations (on behalf of India-Pakistan-Sri Lanka Troika)
Human Rights, Right to Development and Global Governance**

13th December 2013

Mr. Co-chair,

I have the honour to deliver the following remarks on behalf of India, Pakistan and my own country, Sri Lanka. We associate ourselves with the remarks made by the Permanent Representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Co-Chair,

The lack of development spawns a range of challenges which exacerbates other threats for the enjoyment of recognized rights by the individuals and groups.

A rights-based approach to the development agenda, must first and foremost, translate into a firm commitment to the Right to Development as the fundamental basis of Sustainable Development Goals.

While considering the importance of human rights in the SDGs, we should not forget that poverty itself is the most urgent human rights concern. It is both a cause and a consequence of human rights violations and an enabling condition for other violations.

Not only does extreme poverty inevitably entail inability to attain civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, but persons living in poverty generally experience regular denials of their dignity and equality.

Therefore, a rights based approach can only be ensured by recognizing the centrality of poverty eradication as the central and overarching objective of the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda.

We welcome the initiative of the recent publication of UN High Commissioner on Human Rights entitled "Realizing the Right to Development" which contains a comprehensive analysis of this historic concept.

The right to development must frame our overall approach to the SDGs. The MDGs have focused on several key inequalities in society but here we have to consider all three pillars of sustainable development, with adequate reference to human rights in the context of social and economic development. We must bear in mind that there are other multilateral platforms for discussing human rights-based issues extensively.

Mr. Co-Chair,

While national responsibility for promoting the Right to Development is undoubtedly important, it cannot be considered in isolation. International cooperation is essential for the purpose of creating a supportive and conducive environment for the genuine realization of the Right to Development. We have already explored the essential role of MOI and partnerships in the context of development.

A coordinated international effort is therefore required to ensure that States establish, promote and sustain national and international mechanisms that create an enabling environment for the realization of the right to development. Further, it is vital that the Right to Development is mainstreamed in the policies and operational activities of relevant actors at the national, regional and international levels, including multilateral financial, trade and development institutions. It appears to us that this is an appropriate time to promote this concept with the institutional support of the UN, and its inter-governmental processes.

The UN Declaration on the Right to Development states in Article 4: "As a complement to the efforts of developing countries, effective international cooperation is essential in providing these countries with appropriate means and facilities to foster their comprehensive development".

The Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights adopted by the Human Rights Council in 2012 also state that "As part of international cooperation and assistance, States have an obligation to respect and protect the enjoyment of human rights, which involves avoiding conduct that would create a

foreseeable risk of impairing the enjoyment of human rights by persons living in poverty beyond their borders, and conducting assessments of the extraterritorial impacts of laws, policies and practices.”

Mr. Co-Chair,

As reaffirmed in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Right to Development is a universal and inalienable right as well an integral part of fundamental human rights. The international community must promote effective international cooperation for the realization of the Right to Development and the elimination of obstacles to its enjoyment. We must recognize that the lack of development is at the root of many of the other challenges to the enjoyment of human rights.

Our endeavours did not fully facilitate this right during the MDG era, so we must take into account all previous obstacles that hindered development efforts of many countries.

Since we apply the principle of universality for SDGs, each citizen in the world, regardless of whether they live in a developing country or a developed country must enjoy the benefits of development. All states must therefore respect international principles and uphold these rights.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Good global governance must ensure creating an enabling and conducive environment for constructive engagement of citizens and policy makers, which is the key prerequisite for the formulation and implementation of development goals. The key to managing global challenges is to strengthen multilateralism through open, democratic and participatory global governance structures. Unfortunately, global governance has not kept pace with the rapid changes of the past many decades.

Reforming persistent inequities in global economic governance is of utmost importance. The SDGs and the Post-2015 development agenda must meaningfully address the democratic deficit in global governance in order to give real voice and participation to developing countries. This needs to be done both in the United Nations as well as in multilateral financial institutions. We

must enable an enhanced voice for developing countries in decision making structures of the global economic governance.

Different governing structures at all levels, with their different responsibilities, must keep in mind that the ultimate beneficiaries of sustainable development are citizens. Here, we must always maintain the central role of the United Nations, including the High Level Political Forum for realizing Sustainable Development.

I thank you Mr. Co Chair.