

UPR 14: SRI LANKA**Statement of New Zealand****Delivered by Alana Messent, 1 November 2012**

Thank you, Madame Chair

New Zealand welcomes the opportunities for peace and stability in Sri Lanka following the end of the decades-long conflict in 2009, and the steps Sri Lanka has since taken in this direction, such as the resettlement of internally displaced persons.

While we note the specific post-conflict challenges Sri Lanka faces, overall we remain concerned about the lack of progress on human rights made since Sri Lanka's last review.

New Zealand is pleased to note Sri Lankan efforts to implement the first cycle recommendation to strengthen its Human Rights Commission. To maintain the credibility of and further strengthen this institution, New Zealand **recommends** Sri Lanka adopt legislation on appointments that would ensure the independence of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka.

New Zealand is pleased to see some progress on women's rights issues, but is concerned that substantial challenges remain, in particular domestic violence and legal barriers to equality for women within religious minority communities. New Zealand **recommends** that Sri Lanka enact urgent legislative amendments to the Penal Code to ensure that the rights of women from all religious and ethnic communities are safeguarded. We further **recommend** that Sri Lanka investigate and prosecute all allegations of rape and sexual abuse by the security forces.

While we note the progress made on the death penalty, including the current moratorium on executions, New Zealand **recommends** that Sri Lanka take immediate steps towards the abolition of death penalty in law.