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Statement by the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

15th session of the Universal Periodic Review

Review of Serbia – 30 January 2013

Mr President,

The delegation of Sri Lanka welcomes the high level delegation of Serbia, and appreciates the comprehensive presentation of the National Report and the progress made since its first universal periodic review.

Sri Lanka takes note of the development of normative and institutional frameworks in the country, including the successful completion of its parliamentary, provincial, local and presidential elections last year.

We welcome the adoption of the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination, and the country's commitment toward protecting the multiethnic and multicultural nature of its society. Noting that Serbia has a large number of nationalities whose legitimate body is the National Council of National Minorities, and the adoption of the Law in this regard, we would like to request the delegation to explain the role of these national councils, in improving the education of peoples.

Sri Lanka welcomes the many steps taken to strengthen the position of women, including the adoption of the Law on Gender Equality, and notes that of the 19 ministers that make up the Government, 5 are women.

My delegation further welcomes the legislative measures adopted by Serbia, aimed at effectively protecting and promoting the rights of children.

Conscious that Serbia remains a country with the highest number of refugees and internally displaced persons in Europe, we commend the Government's efforts to find durable and lasting solutions to this issue, including through effective integration initiatives and measures aimed at the empowerment of refugees, such as resolving housing needs and economic assistance.

We take note of the multiple efforts to combat trafficking in persons at strategic and operational levels. In this regard, we would appreciate if the delegation could explain what preventive actions have been taken in accordance with the implementation of the UN Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, adopted by the General Assembly on 30 July 2010.

In conclusion Mr President, Sri Lanka wishes Serbia all success in its UPR engagement.

Thank you.