



Statement by the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka  
18th Session of the Universal Periodic Review  
Review of Afghanistan – 27 January 2014

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka welcomes the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan led by H.E. Mr. Mohammad Qasim Hashimzai to the UPR Working Group. We thank the delegation for its comprehensive national report and the presentation this afternoon.

As a fellow South Asian country, we welcome progress made by Afghanistan since the first cycle of the UPR, notwithstanding inherent impediments, not least terrorism and insecurity. As a country that not so long ago was fighting one of the world's most ruthless terrorist groups, Sri Lanka recognizes the long-term debilitating impact terrorism can have on a country and its people, and the difficulties the government has to face to overcome these challenges.

We are encouraged that many of the positive developments relate to guaranteeing the rights of women, both legally and socially. In this regard, special mention should be made of the ten-year strategic plan which supports the economic and social upliftment of women. We particularly welcome initiatives such as the adoption of the Education Law, which aim at securing access to education for girls and women without any discrimination, as guaranteed by the Constitution of Afghanistan.

We observe that much progress is also being made in the health sector, through the development of health policies and strategies such as "Health for All Afghans" and the provision of improved health care services.

Sri Lanka wishes to make the following recommendations to Afghanistan:

1. Continue and strengthen its efforts to combat the illegal use of children in armed conflict;
2. Continue measures to combat terrorism, including the financing of terrorism;

Sri Lanka wishes Afghanistan success in its UPR engagement.

Thank you.

H.E. Ambassador Ravinatha Arayasinha