**28th Session of the UPR Working Group – Review of Sri Lanka**

**Statement by Austria**

15 November 2018

Austria welcomes H.E. Deputy Minister de Silva and the delegation of Sri Lanka and thanks them for their presentation.

While we welcome the ratification of the Convention on Enforced Disappearances (CED) and the CRPD last year, we would be interested to know more about the timeline for presenting and enacting legislation to criminalize enforced disappearances and give full effect to the obligations under the CRPD.

We continue to be seriously concerned about numerous reports of human rights violations under the Prevention of Terrorism Act which the government of Sri Lanka had committed to repeal. The widespread use of torture against persons held under this Act which has recently been assessed as “routine and endemic” by the (previous) Special Rapporteur on counter-terrorism and human rights and the fact that torture seems to be deeply engrained in the security sector is a source of major concern.

Frustration among the population with the slow pace of reforms and the roll-back on previous commitments seem to be growing; both High Commissioner Zeid and Special Rapporteur (on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence) de Greiff have very recently underlined the importance for the Government to adopt a plan for a comprehensive transitional justice reform process.

Building on our previous recommendations, Austria would like to recommend to Sri Lanka to

* Ratify the Rome Statute of the ICC as well as OP-CAT and establish a National Torture Prevention Mechanism;
* Adopt a National Policy on the protection of journalists and human rights defenders to combat intimidation and violence, and to ensure effective investigation of such acts and prosecution of perpetrators;
* Act on its commitments in HRC Resolution 30/1 including to establish transitional justice mechanisms, and to establish a clear timeline to this end;
* Implement recommendations by relevant treaty bodies such as the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to end military involvement in commercial and other civilian activities.

I thank you.