**4th Cycle of the UPR**

**1st February 2023**

**Intervention by Ministry of Women**

**Duration; 3 minutes**

**Mr President,**

1. The Government continues to make progress in achieving **Gender Equality and Women’s Advancement** in social, economic and political settings as follows:

* **The Cabinet of Ministers in September 2022, requested the Women Parliamentarian’s Caucus in Parliament to prepare a preliminary draft to be used as a basis for the preparation of Gender equality and women’s empowerment Bill.**

Accordingly, the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Policy is to be submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers shortly. Two Bills are being drafted based on this Policy, namely **Women’s Empowerment Bill** and **Gender Equality Bill**. The **National Women’s Commission Bill** is also being redrafted after considering the observations of the Cabinet of Ministers, Attorney General Department and the Legal Draftsman Department.

* **A circular was issued to Ministries in November 2022 to incorporate gender responsive budgeting in their budgets for 2023.**

Since Gender-disaggregated data is a pre-requisite to implement gender mainstreaming, all ministries are required to maintain gender disaggregated databases in relation to projects and programmes conducted by them.

* **With regard to vulnerable groups of women, including in the estate sector, Fisheries Sector, Women-headed Households and disabled women, Government had taken steps to provide Financial and Technical support to facilitate self-employment projects during the years 2021 and 2022.**

1. On addressing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Sri Lanka adopted the **National Action Plan on SGBV (2016-2020)** that focused on: preventing SGBV, intervening in situations of SGBV, and advocating for policies and laws to combat and address SGBV. Pursuant to its review in 2021, a new Action Plan is under preparation.
2. It is noteworthy that the Women and Children’s Units established at 340 Divisional Secretariats also provide services to victims of SGBV including counselling and addressing their socio-economic needs.
3. Prevention of Domestic Violence Act is also being amended based on recommendations made by civil societies, law practitioners and other relevant stakeholders.

Thank you.