

**Statement by the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka**

**32nd Session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Review of Vanuatu – 24 January 2019**

Mr. President,

Sri Lanka welcomes the delegation of Vanuatu and appreciates the comprehensive presentation made today.

We appreciate the recent legislative measures aimed at further strengthening Human Rights in Vanuatu. Of particular significance are recently introduced initiatives to enhance women & children’s rights including Vanuatu National Gender Equality Policy 2015 – 2019, Vanuatu Child Online Protection National Strategy Framework 2014 – 2021 and Vanuatu National Child Protection Policy 2016 – 2026 as well as other progressive policies governing education and health sectors.

These initiatives as well as other progressive measures such as the endorsement of a Gender Responsive Budget and the introduction of a quota system for women’s representation in local government institutions would go a long way in further strengthening democratic governance in the country.

While being mindful of the constraints and challenges in terms of resources and capacities as stated in the National Report, Sri Lanka encourages Vanuatu to consider early ratification of International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention of Elimination of Racial Discrimination at the earliest opportunity.

My delegation recommends that Vanuatu:

- Continue its ongoing work to ensure universal registration of births,

- Progress with the implementation of the Universal Primary Education Policy and to consider expanding free education to cover secondary schools,

- Continue to ensure improving medical health services in the country including through further investments in training of healthcare professionals.

We wish Vanuatu success in its UPR engagement and thank the delegation for its informative presentation.

Thank you.