

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

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

**Review of Cyprus – 29 January 2019**

Sri Lanka appreciates the comprehensive presentation made by the delegation of Cyprus today.

We welcome the initiatives taken by Cyprus to improve promotion and protection of women’s rights, including the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018 – 2021 and increasing the budget by 30% for gender equality programmes.

The steps taken to combat gender discrimination in the areas of education and employment as well as to address gender pay gap are encouraging.

We also consider the advances made in promoting the rights of the child and the recent adoption of the Strategy on the Health Rights of the Child in 2017 and the 2018 – 2020 Strategic Plan on education as positive measures. Continuing progress in the implementation of the Foster Care Pilot Programme aimed to improve the quality of foster care for unaccompanied migrant children will go a long way to help inspire other countries in the region.

Efforts taken to combat trafficking in human beings, in particular the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group against Trafficking in Human Beings (MCG), the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and most importantly the support and protection services extended to victims of human trafficking are commendable.

My delegation would like to recommend that Cyprus :

* Continue to take steps to improve the working conditions of all non-EU citizens and the safety and health of all workers including domestic workers
* Achieve progress in addressing any disparities including social and economic barriers faced by the minorities
* Initiate early ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

We wish Cyprus success in its UPR engagement.

Thank you.