**Update since the submission of the Response to List of Issues in relation to the 6th Periodic Report**

1. The Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) wishes to submit the following update to the Human Rights Committee on developments in Sri Lanka since the submission of Sri Lanka’s response to the List of Issues (LoIs) in relation to the 6th Periodic Report under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in May 2022.
2. The period under reference posed unprecedented challenges for Sri Lanka including the COVID-19, Easter Sunday attacks, the pandemic and global crises that led to unprecedented socio-economic challenges in the country, particularly in the year 2022. Sri Lanka is looking towards 2023 as a year of socio-economic stabilization, reconciliation and recovery.
3. Under the leadership of the new President, steady progress has been made on the broad political, social and economic fronts and the GoSL is committed to achieve a sustained recovery which is essential for the welfare and progress of the people. Democratic constitutional processes have been strictly adhered to in effecting political transition and Parliamentary and public institutions have remained resilient.
4. The Government’s response to the political and social challenges had been firmly within a democratic, constitutional framework, respecting the civil and political rights of the people, including their right to peaceful assembly and protest. The Government continues to afford highest priority to addressing the socio-economic hardships faced by people. This includes the provision of special budgetary allocations for 2023 for this purpose, efforts to enhance the nutritional status of the people, and ensuring the availability of essential items and commodities.

**Legal and Institutional framework**

1. In October 2022 the Parliament of Sri Lanka passed the 21st Amendment to the Constitution, further strengthening democratic governance, independent oversight of key institutions, the composition of the Constitutional Council and independent commissions. The Constitutional Council includes members of civil society. The Council has now started the process of calling for applications from those interested to be appointed as members of the Independent Commissions.
2. On 19 January 2023, the Regulation of Election Expenditure Bill was passed in Parliament and certified by the Speaker and passed into law. This Bill is expected to vest the Elections Commission with the powers to monitor campaign expenditure.
3. The Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) was substantially amended by enacting Amendment Act No 12 of 2022, by the Parliament in March 2022, making it in line with international standards. Further, a Cabinet Sub-Committee was appointed in September 2022 to develop comprehensive legislation on counterterrorism that balances national security concerns while considering, inter alia, international standards and best practices.
4. Regarding anti-corruption, the 21st Amendment to the Constitution passed by the Parliament of Sri Lanka in October 2022. It enhances the independence and powers of the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery and Corruption, established in 1994, as the permanent body to investigate matters of bribery and corruption. The 21st Amendment enables measures to implement the UN Convention Against Corruption and any other international Convention relating to the prevention of corruption to which Sri Lanka is a party.

**Domestic Mechanisms for National Reconciliation**

1. In order to garner the political support to achieve reconciliation and tangible progress on this important national issue, the President convened an All Party Conference, in December 2022 and January 2023. The convening of these Conferences was to take the reconciliation process forward.
2. The President appointed a Cabinet Sub-Committee on Reconciliation under his Chairmanship which includes the Prime Minister, to promote reconciliation among different communities and to address and resolve matters relating to issues encountered by the people of the Northern and Eastern Provinces.
3. A Special Unit on solving issues of people in the Northern Province was established under the Presidential Secretariat to coordinate the function of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Reconciliation with a view to expedite the Northern development, reconciliation and national unity and address the issues encountered by the people of the Northern Province.
4. Several discussions have taken place relating to a Truth Seeking Mechanism within the framework of the Constitution. The contours of such a model that would suit Sri Lanka are currently being assessed. The Cabinet of Ministers has approved the concept of the mechanism.
5. On 19 December 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the establishment of an Office for Overseas Sri Lankan Affairs which envisages to facilitate more vigorous engagement with overseas Sri Lankans encompassing all communities and generations and the process has been set in motion to operationalize the office.
6. Sri Lanka remains committed to pursuing tangible progress in the protection of human rights and reconciliation through independent domestic mechanisms. Salient points of Sri Lanka’s progress in this regard are highlighted below:
7. **The Office on Missing Persons (OMP)** has conducted panels of preliminary inquiries (2,389 complaints) as part of its verification process that leads to in-depth investigation. More than 85% of persons met with members of these panels and their testimonials were recorded. Further, the validity period of the Certificate of Absence (CoA) was extended by another two years from 2021 to 2023.
8. The National Reparations Policy and Guidelines formulated by the **Office for Reparations (OR)** was approved by the Cabinet in 2021 and tabled in Parliament in February 2022. During the year 2022, LKR 405.2 million was disbursed by the OR covering 2402 cases.
9. The **Office for National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR)** continues toexecute its mandate under 08 thematic areas, and through its economic engagement programmes, over 1 million persons benefited from livelihood assistance and restoration of basic infrastructure facilities.
10. The **Presidential Commission of Inquiry (PCoI)** presented its first Interim Report in 2021 and following public sittings in Colombo, Jaffna and Kilinochchi, its second Interim Report was submitted in February 2022. The term of the PCoI has been extended upto 31st January 2023 enabling it to present the final report. On 6 February 2023 PCoI submitted a “synopsis” of the Commission’s Report pending the submission of the Final Report.
11. The **Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL)** has been reconstituted in accordance with the procedure mandated by the Constitution, and financial provisions have been allocated to implement its mandate.
12. In addition to the 92% of the private land which has been released to the legitimate owners through local Government authorities, 100 acres of land have further been handed over to the Government Agent of Jaffna on 03 February 2023.
13. The Government has continued with the **resettlemen**t process. As of this month, a total of 2,324 families remain to be resettled. Of these, 149 live in welfare centres while 2,175 live with extended family or friends.
14. Sri Lanka has made steady progress towards achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)** despite the challenges. Sri Lanka presented its Second Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development in July 2022. An inter-agency Steering Committee was established to accelerate progress on SDG 16 focusing on four core areas, i.e., strengthening public security and law enforcement, corruption control, access to justice and public service delivery.

1. Notwithstanding the challenges faced by the country, Sri Lanka reiterates its commitment to continue its engagement with the United Nations as well as the international community in a spirit of cooperation and constructive dialogue with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights, in line with its voluntary undertakings.