



Human Rights Council 37th Session

UNFPA STATEMENT ON SRI LANKA UPR OUTCOME REPORT

As UNFPA approaches fifty years of engagement with the Government of Sri Lanka in 2019, we commend and recognize the many progressive achievements made by the country in the areas of maternal and reproductive health, women's empowerment and youth empowerment. UNFPA in Sri Lanka wishes to make a few observations in supporting the government towards meeting the following challenges for the full realization of SRHR for all:

In the context of universal health coverage, there is a need to ensure **equal access to SRH services** without discrimination, including persons with disabilities, the elderly and other populations in disadvantage.

UNFPA is supporting the Ministry of Health to develop the national condom security guideline and its promotional campaign to ensure enhanced access to commodities without stigma and discrimination. Strategies to raise awareness with all stakeholders will need to address myths and misconceptions surrounding family planning services. Moreover, UNFPA supports the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Women & Child Affairs (MoWCA) on their efforts to advocate for reduction of unplanned pregnancies and strengthening legislative processes to establish global minimum standards in that area.

Further measures are needed to provide Youth and Adolescents, including those who fall outside of formal educational settings with **access to quality CSE and RHE**. UNFPA will continue to support the Ministry of Education and associated institutions to develop a National CSE teacher training guide in line with the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education as well as the Ministry of Vocational Training to reach out to out-of-school young people. A strategic partnership with University Grants Commission is supporting the implementation of "Road to Adulthood", an online guide on CSE for youth.

Adolescents and youth should have opportunities to meaningfully engage decision makers to ensure an **inclusive approach to development and peace-building processes**. UNFPA along with UN Women and UNV are supporting inclusive approaches as part of the UN Peace-building Fund project.

The implementation of the National Action Plan to **address Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV)** and the Women Headed Household Action Plan needs to be expedited with adequate budgetary allocations and the enforcement of laws for a timely prosecution of rape and sexual violence and compensation for victims, including the appointment of a special prosecution team to address SGBV cases. UNFPA will continue to support the MoWCA in the implementation of those plans.

UNFPA with UNICEF & UN Women has initiated a **study on FGM/C**, prevalent in certain communities in Sri Lanka, which will provide evidence to visualize the existence of Female Genital Mutilation in Sri Lanka and to recognize it as a violation of the rights of women and girls.

The non-discrimination clause under Article 12(2) must be enhanced to explicitly prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity and expressions. UNFPA with the support of implementing partners of Global Fund HIV prevention Project has initiated discussions on strengthening the legal and ethical subcommittee of National AIDS Committee to provide modalities for the implementation of actions put forward by the government of Sri Lanka in the National Human Rights Action Plan in relation to

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non-discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity to increase their service access and reduce STI & HIV infections.

A social protection system in adherence to international norms and standards needs to be put in place in order to secure the rights of Older Persons. UNFPA launched the monograph on population ageing with the Department of Census and Statistics in 2017 and conducted a series of evidence-based advocacy initiatives to reach to the public and policy makers highlighting the need for positive perspectives on ageing, eliminating discrimination against older persons, and inclusive social protection systems.

In giving effect to the above, we further support the Government's exertions to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Official Languages Policy to sustain all the progressive efforts made in key areas covered in ICPD. Finally UNFPA would like to reiterate our continuing support to the government and people of Sri Lanka in the efforts to develop and implement evidence-based policies to ensure no one is left behind. Thank You.