

**Statement by Hon. Minister of Justice of Sri Lanka**  
**The High Level Segment of the 14<sup>th</sup> United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention**  
**and Criminal Justices, 7 to 12 March in Kyoto, Japan**  
**(Pre-recorded Video Statement)**

**Excellencies and distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentleman**

I am pleased and honoured to address the High Level Segment of the 14<sup>th</sup> United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) commenced in Kyoto, Japan from 7 to 12 March 2021.

Sri Lanka congratulates the President of the 14th Crime Congress on her election and ensures the fullest support and cooperation of the Sri Lankan delegation to effectively carry out this meeting.

**Madam President,**

The Government of Sri Lanka appreciates the efforts and endured determination of the Government of Japan, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and especially the diplomatic community based in Vienna for successful conclusion of a comprehensive Declaration following detailed consultations pursuant to the General Assembly resolution 73/184.

Sri Lanka being one of Asia's oldest democracies, fully respects its international commitments towards safeguarding people against conventional, emerging and other forms of crime.

Crime is often considered as a major impediment to economic growth and development, as it tends to increase economic uncertainty, discourage long-term investment and new employment opportunities ultimately causing erosion of the rule of law and criminal justice systems.

His Excellency Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the president of Sri Lanka in his National Policy Framework "Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour" identified the importance of A Righteous, Disciplined and Law Abiding Society.

**Excellencies,**

Sri Lanka enacted the Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act, No. 25 in 2002 (MACMA) in accordance with the "Harare Scheme" for mutual assistance in criminal matters to share information and assist in "criminal matters" relating to each jurisdiction.

Sri Lanka enacted a set of comprehensive legislation to give effect to Sri Lanka's obligations as a signatory to the International Convention on the Suppression of Terrorist Financing adopted by the

United Nations to prohibit the financing of terrorist acts, terrorists and terrorist organizations. Sri Lanka established Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) to which is mandated to counter three layers of money laundering namely placement, layering and integration to effectively combat money laundering, terrorist financing and other related crimes in Sri Lanka.

**Madam President,**

Sri Lanka is cognizant of all international commitments in the Cybercrime domain and supports international efforts specially General Assembly resolutions and the Global Programme on Cybercrime, and has taken steps in this regard.

**Madam President,**

Sri Lanka being an ocean state in a strategic location takes every effort at its disposal to safeguard the free flow of goods and services with the support of its friendly neighbors, minimizing the risk of maritime crime and sea piracy in its waters. To combat maritime crime, a number of initiatives have been undertaken especially with the assistance of the government of Japan and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Sri Lanka is the host nation of the headquarters of the Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP) and continues to undertake exercises and training courses in collaboration with the UNODC to coastguards from the region.

**Madam President,**

Sri Lanka acknowledges the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children to safeguard the lives of the most vulnerable persons across the globe.

Sri Lanka established a Border Surveillance Unit in 2019 to conduct random and spontaneous checks to identify human traffickers, human smugglers, victims of trafficking, and other irregularities.

The development of a “Standard Operating Procedure” on identification, protection, and referral of victims of human trafficking bears testimony to Sri Lanka’s firm commitment to eradicate this heinous crime.

Sri Lanka took early action to establish the National Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force in 2010 led by the Ministry of Justice. The Task Force is the national coordinating body which advises and monitors activities to be implemented in combating human trafficking

Sri Lanka enacted the Assistance to and Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses Act in 2015 in compliance with accepted international norms, standards, and best practices to uphold the rights and entitlements of victims and witnesses of crime.

**Madam President,**

The Government of Sri Lanka has in the recent past has adopted a holistic approach to solve the problems and issues created by drugs and narcotics in which apart from arresting the drug trafficking, the laws related to this issue are being re-looked at together with prison reforms focusing on rehabilitation as a long term solution particularly to the drug addicts while expediting the cases against drug traffickers in terms of strengthening the institutions providing the services such as the Government Analyst and the Court houses. The approach that is being taken is to review the entire process from end-to-end, to identify the problems in each of the segments of that process, and then put into action an overall targeted plan to fix the issue in its totality.

Sri Lanka firmly believes that enhancing international cooperation, particularly in the areas of mutual legal assistance, exchange of information, extradition and identification in accordance with domestic legislation is of utmost significance to contribute to countering the threats posed by transnational organized crime and to sustain effective criminal justice responses as well as prevention of crime in its all forms and shapes.

**Madam President,**

In conclusion the High-Level Segment of the 14<sup>th</sup> Crime Congress in Kyoto comes at an opportune time at which the entire world is engulfed in the unforeseen and unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic.

Sri Lanka appreciates the unwavering support of the government and the people of Japan and the continued and determined efforts of the UNODC in the face of difficulties and challenges to adopt the much needed Kyoto Declaration to protect and safeguard Criminal Justice Systems across the globe.

I Thank You