



**Fourteenth Session of the Implementation Review Group (IRG) and
the Fourteenth Session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on
the Prevention of Corruption -
UN convention against Corruption (UNCAC)**

12-16 June 2023, Vienna

Sri Lanka Country Statement

Agenda Item – 4, State of implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption:

and 2 (a) Thematic discussions on good practices and initiatives in the prevention of corruption:

Mr. President,

Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. President for Chairing the session and assured of my delegations' full support in reaching the objectives of this session.

My delegation also would like to appreciate the support shown towards Sri Lanka by the Secretariat and all Member States to successfully complete the first and second review sessions of this flagship convention.

Mr. President

Allow me to briefly share our experiences with respect to implementation of the Convention.

During the first review cycle from 2009- 2015, Sri Lanka was reviewed by China and Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka voluntary agreed to be reviewed in the first year of the second cycle from among the 29 countries. Accordingly, on 16th December 2016, Sri Lanka submitted its comprehensive self-assessment check list to the UNODC secretariat and the three day country visit in this regard was held and concluded in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 31 March 2017. Full country review reports under both cycles are completed and the same are available on the respective website.

Whilst being reviewed, Sri Lanka in turn took part in reviewing Botswana in respect of the first year of the second cycle. It turned out to be a great experience to review another country whilst

being reviewed by other countries. We are happy to say that Sri Lanka has chosen to review two more State Parties and look forward to complete it successfully based on our past experience. We expect that all state parties will give their fullest support for the completion of the reviews that are already scheduled to be completed. It will be of great assistance to States Parties in considering the next phase in furtherance of the objectives of esteemed Convention.

Mr. President ,

Consequent to the recommendations made in the First and Second Review Cycles, we adopted several significant measures to comply with the relevant Articles of the UNCAC.

Several significant changes were introduced to the Laws of witness protection by enacting Protection of Victims of Crime and Witnesses Act, No. 4 of 2015, The Right to Information Act No. 12 of 2016 was enacted in August 2016, Amended the Bribery Act No 22 of 2018. Hence, now corruption cases can even be filed in the High Court which was earlier restricted merely to the Magistrate Courts. A major legal amendment was brought to the Sri Lankan **Judicature Act** by enacting provisions to set up a permanent Trial-at-Bar comprising of three high court judges who are to be named by the Chief Justice on the application of the Director General of CIABOC. Thus, the Trial-at-Bar would hear serious financial crimes and corruption cases on a day to day basis. Further, the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act, No. 25 of 2002 was amended in 2018 widening its scope of application on Mutual Legal Assistance requests. Moreover, Sri Lanka intends to amend the Financial Transactions Reporting Act No. 6 of 2006, to fill the lacunas in the law on money laundering and related offences.

In terms of the First Review Cycle, it is happily submitted that most of the recommendations have been complied with. Moreover, the National Audit Act, No. 19 of 2018 was passed in parliament. Furthermore, an Audit Commission was established. Sri Lanka enacted the Commission of Inquiry (Amendment) Act No. 3 of 2019, allowing CIABOC to rely on evidentiary material collected by ‘Presidential Commissions of Inquiry’ created a gateway for speedier access of justice. Sri Lanka enacted Act No. 24 of 2019 for the Prevention of offences relating to Sports such as Match fixing, Corruption, illegal manipulation, and illegal betting.

Mr. President,

Concentrating on the recommendations suggested by the second review cycle, we adopted several significant measures. The fact that Sri Lanka do not have a national policy on anti-corruption was initially recognized by the reviewers and thereby with the cabinet approval Sri Lanka **formulated and ceremonially launched a** National Action Plan for Combatting Bribery and Corruption in Sri Lanka, The NAP, integrates a multi-pronged strategy,

premised on the four pillars of - Prevention, Value Based Education, Institutional Strengthening, and Law and Policy reforms. We established and inaugurated our Prevention Unit within the main Anti-Corruption Institute named Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption to carry out the prevention works.

Furthermore, in order to effectively implement the National Action Plan, we have taken steps to make the public officials aware of the same. Thus, we have **conducted training programs as well as training to train workshops so that the message is spread effectively.**

Furthermore, we enlisted three training **manuals for trainers and for trainees, and also prepared the National Action Plan Implementation Monitoring Tool and its guidelines.** In order to ensure that the public officials are in fact free of bribery and corruption, we have taken steps such as conducting training programs. We **have published 04 handbooks,** exploring certain identified areas which would shape the course of the drive against bribery and corruption with the help of the public sector. Namely, **“handbooks on gift rules”, “Conflict of Interest rules”, “Integrity hand book” and policies & law reforms”.**

We have conducted regular public outreach campaigns at different levels in different geographies. In accordance with the national action plan, series of awareness programs were conducted to educate the general public, public officials, private sector youth, children, the media and the civil society. **We have already taken measures and initiated discussions with the National Institute of Education and universities to include anti-bribery and corruption as a subject to the curriculum.** Furthermore, **CIABOC and the Ministry of Education have commenced several long-term and short-term projects including** introducing regulations to curb corruption in the school administration, introducing anti-corruption measures to schools' syllabuses, establishing Integrity clubs in all schools etc.

Mr. President

My delegation happy to mention that **Sri Lanka hosted a Global Expert Group meeting in July 2018 organized by the UNODC together with the UNDP and Transparency International** and the outcome of that meeting is available in the “Colombo Commentary” which is a UNODC publication.

Mr President, In keeping with international obligations and the implementation of the National Action Plan of Sri Lanka to Combat Corruption, Sri Lanka has drafted a comprehensive Anti-Corruption Act. The draft has been reviewed by a committee appointed by the Ministry of Justice and bill has been published in the Gazette on 03.April 2023 and was presented to

Parliament. Accordingly, Laws pertaining to Bribery & Corruption will be amended, including extremely progressive provisions such as Whistle blower protection; criminalization of private sector bribery, bribery of foreign officials, and conflicts of interest; an electronic assets declaration system etc. compatible with the UNCAC provisions.

Mr. President, we have now embarked on a progressive transitioning with Anti-corruption reforms with the fully-fledged, premier anti-corruption institution by increasing capacity and making crucial and innovative changes where needed.

With that note, my delegation reaffirms the country's commitment to continued cooperation with UNODC and the UNCAC Secretariat towards successful implementation of the Convention.

Thank you.