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Agenda item 2

**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

Letter dated 4 March 2020 from the Acting Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the President of the Human Rights Council

I recall with appreciation the meeting that the Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, Ravinatha Aryasinha, and I had with you on Friday, 21 February 2020, ahead of the commencement of the forty-third session of the Human Rights Council.

As discussed at the above meeting and subsequently announced by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, Dinesh Gunawardena, in his statement delivered at the high-level segment of the Human Rights Council on 26 February 2020, the Government of Sri Lanka, following the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers, has decided to withdraw its co-sponsorship of Council resolution 40/1 on promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka, which incorporated and built on previous Council resolutions 30/1 of 1 October 2015 and 34/1 of 23 March 2017.

The Minister's statements, delivered at the high-level segment on 26 February and during the general debate on agenda item 2 on 27 February,* outlined in detail the rationale for the decision of the Government of Sri Lanka, primarily based on the fundamental contradiction between Council resolution 30/1 and the Constitution of Sri Lanka, as well as other procedural, substantive and legislative anomalies. Notwithstanding the withdrawal of its co-sponsorship, the Government remains committed to achieving the goals set, on justice, accountability and human rights for the benefit of all Sri Lankans, towards sustainable peace and reconciliation throughout the country.

It would be much appreciated if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the forty-third session of the Human Rights Council and posted on the website of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as a response to the report of the Office of the High Commissioner (A/HRC/43/19), and be duly reflected in the report of the Council to be submitted to the General Assembly for adoption at its seventy-fifth session.

(Signed) Dayani Mendis
Acting Permanent Representative

* See www.lankamission.org/human-rights-humanitarian-affairs/2743-statement-made-by-hon-dinesh-gunawardena-minister-of-foreign-relations-at-the-43rd-session-of-the-human-rights-council.html and www.lankamission.org/human-rights-humanitarian-affairs/2745-43rd-session-of-the-human-rights-council-high-level-segment-statement-by-hon-dinesh-gunawardena-minister-of-foreign-relations-of-sri-lanka.html.

