

## **SPEECH BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF SRI LANKA**

Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to deliver this statement on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka. Allow me, at the outset, to express our sincere appreciation to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for its continued technical and strategic support extended to Sri Lanka in advancing our implementation of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Sri Lanka remains fully committed to this global framework, and continues to adopt a proactive, evidence-based, and victim-centred approach to combat trafficking in persons. The **National Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force (NAHTTF)**, chaired by the Secretary of Defence, serves as our multi-sectoral coordination mechanism, bringing together more than twenty national agencies. With UNODC's valuable guidance, the Task Force has prioritized strengthening investigations, prosecutions, and victim assistance—while integrating technological tools such as open-source intelligence and digital forensics to counter emerging threats like online scams and forced criminality.

Through the Review Mechanism, Sri Lanka has benefited immensely from UNODC's assessments and recommendations. We are aligning our forthcoming **National Strategic Action Plan (2026–2030)** with these insights, emphasizing trauma-informed justice, digital evidence management, and institutionalized victim protection. Our collaboration with UNODC has also enhanced judicial and prosecutorial capacities, embedding victim-sensitive procedures and promoting the use of remote testimonies in transnational cases.

Recent challenges—particularly those linked to cyber-facilitated trafficking and coerced online criminality—have underscored the need for robust digital forensics and stronger international cooperation. In this regard, UNODC's assistance in building investigative capacity, promoting cross-border data sharing, and facilitating partnerships with regional bodies such as the **Bali Process** and **IOM**, has been invaluable.

Sri Lanka stands ready to contribute to the collective effort by sharing its experiences and case studies, particularly in addressing forced criminality and online recruitment scams. We also express our readiness to host regional dialogues and expert group meetings in collaboration with UNODC and partner states.

In conclusion, Sri Lanka reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the UNTOC framework and the global fight against trafficking in persons. We extend our deep appreciation to the UNODC and all partner countries for their continued cooperation and shared vision of a world free from human trafficking.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.