**Sri Lanka Statement at the 12th Meeting of the Working Group on the Smuggling of the Migrants held from 9-10 October 2025**

**at VIC, Austria**

Sri Lanka is a State Party to the **United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)** and has signed and ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, as well as signed the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.

As an island nation, Sri Lanka faces particular challenges relating to the smuggling of persons, primarily by sea and air routes. **The Immigration and Emigration Act No. 20 of 1948** provides the legal framework for criminalizing human smuggling and regulating the entry and exit of persons from the country.

A new Immigration and Emigration Act, which is now in its final stages, includes an entire chapter dedicated to the smuggling of persons, introducing clear definitions and recognizing aggravated forms of smuggling that are not covered under the current legislation. I am pleased to announce that this proposed law is substantially aligned with the Smuggling Protocol.

In Sri Lanka, the Department of Immigration and Emigration is primarily responsible for the detection, detention, and arrest of offenders. The Sri Lanka Navy, Coast Guard, and Police also play vital roles in preventing illegal departures, while **Border Surveillance Unite Officers (BSU)** at airport act as the first line of defense. Investigations are carried out by special units established to investigate Human Trafficking and Smuggling within the **Criminal Investigation Department (CID**), including the **Maritime Crime Investigation Unit**.

Prosecutions are conducted by a dedicated unit of the Attorney General’s Department, comprising five officers who specialize in cases related to migrant smuggling.

In the past, most smuggling attempts have targeted destinations such as Australia, Réunion, Diego Garcia, and India via maritime routes. However, incidents have significantly declined in recent years, largely due to intensive media awareness campaigns. The last known interception of a boat bound for Australia occurred in 2023.

Sri Lanka continues to collaborate closely with Australia through the Sri Lanka–Australia Joint Working Group, which serves as a platform for sharing knowledge and best practices. A Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries also strengthens cooperation in combating human smuggling, human trafficking, and other transnational crimes.

Finally, Sri Lanka deeply values its long-standing engagement with **UNODC** and appreciates the technical and capacity-building assistance given to the law enforcement agencies and the prosecutors over the years, which have been instrumental in strengthening our national response to smuggling of persons.