

Sri Lanka National Statement
The 2011 ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review (AMR),
4th -29th July, Geneva

Implementation of the Internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education" by Deputy Minister of Education Hon. Gamini Vijith Vijayamuni Zoysa, Sri Lanka.

Mr. President, Hon. Ministers, Heads of Delegation, Excellencies, Distinguished guests and Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. On behalf of the government of Sri Lanka I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the excellent arrangements put in place for the High Level Segment by the ECOSOC Secretariat.
2. Being a member of the United Nations, Sri Lanka has been engaging with the United Nations would continue to do so, with mutual respect and trust.
3. All Sri Lankans are now living in peace and harmony, after elimination of terrorism that affected Sri Lanka for over three decades.
4. Sri Lanka is a signatory to many International Conventions and agreed to implement initiatives to promote quality and equity in educational opportunities which emphasize equal opportunities for primary education that is a basic right of every child. These include the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), the Millennium Development Goals, the World Declaration on Education (Jomtien 1990), the Salamanca statement (1994) and the Education for All (Dakar 2000).
5. This is reflected in the government's commitment in achieving the MDGs to eliminate gender disparities and achieving universal primary education for all children by 2015.
6. In order to fulfill these tasks, the government has taken many steps including long-standing legislative provisions for free education and compulsory school attendance up to age 14, a full fledged scheme of student welfare measures such as free health care, mid-day meals, free text books, free uniforms, scholarships.

7. Judicial reforms to protect children, including children in detention, had been put in place, along with steps to address the issue of child labour, including a legislation that stipulates the minimum employable age as 16 years.

8. There had also been a number of measures taken to support the children who were affected by the conflict, including school reconstruction and rehabilitation, teacher training in psycho-social response, home learning modules and catch-up education programmes.

9. The Child Friendly Schools programme being implemented by the government of Sri Lanka helps improve the quality and safety of schools.

10. These initiatives had helped Sri Lanka to achieve further improvements in child literacy, especially among the children from the plantation community, enhanced net enrolment rate, and a high degree of gender parity in education. The government has taken measures to ensure children, who do not enroll in schools to be admitted in the future.

11. As you all are aware, the world is facing conflicts, natural disasters, financial melt down etc., it is vital that more equitable distribution of resources, removal of supply and demand barriers are necessary. I strongly believe it is also necessary to provide facilities for children who need special care such as counseling, in addition to meeting physical infrastructure. We have included disaster risk reduction preparedness and strategies in the general curriculum of the schools in Sri Lanka.

12. To address in equity with in Sri Lanka, the government has taken measures to uplift 1000 selected schools in 329 divisions, covering entire Sri Lanka.

13. We believe the support of the International Community and UN agencies is essential to my country in fully achieving the MDG goals and I wish to thank all of for your support in this regard.