**United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland**

**Human Rights Council – 58th session**

**Sri Lanka Core Group statement - General debate on item 2**

**Monday 3 March 2025**

Thank you, Mr President,

This statement is by the Sri Lanka Core Group comprising Canada, Malawi, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and the United Kingdom.

High Commissioner, we wish to thank you for your oral update on Sri Lanka.

We would like to welcome Sri Lanka peaceful elections and smooth transition of power last year. We recognise that the new Sri Lankan Government has only been in place for four months, and we encourage Sri Lanka to use the opportunity that this transition represents to address the challenges it faces.

We appreciate the Government’s commitment to making meaningful progress on reconciliation and the initial steps taken, including returning land, lifting roadblocks, and allowing communities in the North and East to commemorate the past and to memorialise their loved ones.

In order to build and sustain trust, it is essential to ensure the protection of civil society spaces, including by ending surveillance and intimidation of civil society actors and organisations.

We welcome commitments to implement devolution in accordance with the constitution and to make progress on governance reforms.

We take note the Government’s stated intention to replace the Prevention of Terrorism Act and emphasise that any new legislation should be in line with Sri Lanka’s international obligations. We encourage the release of those who remain detained under the Act.

As the Government seeks to make progress on human rights and corruption cases, we urge that any comprehensive reconciliation and accountability process carry the support of affected communities, build on past recommendations and meet international standards.

We also encourage the Government to re-invigorate the work of domestic institutions focused on reparations and missing persons.

We reaffirm our willingness to work with the Government to ensure that any future transitional justice mechanisms are independent, inclusive, meaningful, and meet the expectations of affected communities.

Thank you