-Check against delivery-

## Oral Statement

**Item 2: General Debate on High Commissioner’s Global Update and oral update on Sri Lanka**

UN Human Rights Council

Fifty-fifth Session

26 February– 5 April 2022

Mr President,

We reiterate the broad range of serious human rights concerns in Sri Lanka highlighted by the High Commissioner, and condemn the ongoing violations committed in the context of drug control operations.

We draw your attention to the statements of the High Commissioner as well as the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers and the Special Rapporteur on Health, on the negative impact of the Sri Lankan government’s Yukthiya anti-drug operation on human rights and individual and public health.

Violations range from unauthorised searches, targeting of poor neighbourhoods, arbitrary arrests and detention, strip searches in public, cavity searches, intimidation of lawyers, and detention in compulsory treatment centres and overcrowded prisons. This is particularly concerning given that people detained in drug treatment centres – some of which are managed by the Sri Lankan military - suffer physical and psychological violence, inhuman conditions of detention, and lack of evidence-based treatment.

These violations are enabled and exacerbated by laws that contravene international human rights standards.

Mr President,

We urge the government of Sri Lanka to adopt a human rights and health centred approach to drug laws and policies abide by a zero tolerance policy on torture, investigate all deaths in custody, and ensure those found responsible are held accountable.

We call upon the Office of the High Commissioner to conduct due diligence to ensure the engagement of all UN agencies on this issue is in accordance with human rights principles. We also urge the High Commissioner to call upon donors who support programmes in-country to abide by the ‘do no harm principle’ and adhere to human rights standards.

Thank you.