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வெளிநாட்டு அமைச்சு
FOREIGN MINISTRY

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Media Release

Country Statement of the Honourable Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka for the 3rd Ministerial Meeting of the Archipelagic and Island States (AIS) Forum, 25 November 2020

Excellencies,

Hon.Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

Ayubowan.

It is my pleasure to be invited to address this august gathering, representing my country.

Let me commence my remarks by congratulating His Excellency Luhut B. Panjaitan, Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs of Indonesia, UNDP and the AIS Secretariat for organizing this important event.

As you may be aware, Sri Lanka is highly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change and is ranked sixth (6th) in the Climate Risk Index of 2020.

Like other archipelagic and island countries, Sri Lanka is faced with climate induced disasters, biodiversity depletion, over exploitation, pollution, oil and chemical spillage, ocean acidification and sea-level rise. The continuation of COVID-19 pandemic has further escalated the impact of these calamities in multifold.

Appropriate steps are being taken to address these issues and the protection of marine ecosystems and threatened species, under the visionary leadership of His Excellency, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, President of Sri Lanka, through the implementation of the National Development Framework of the country, “Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour”, with Environment being recognized as one of the key priority areas in achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

As such, Sri Lanka’s National Determined Contributions, submitted in 2016, are being updated with more ambitious targets to arrive at a net carbon zero country, without compromising our national development requirements.

Being an active member of the Action Group on Mangrove Ecosystems and Livelihoods under the Commonwealth Blue Charter, Sri Lanka has taken considerable efforts to conserve the ecosystem, including the launch of the National Policy on Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Mangrove Ecosystems in September 2020.

In addition, Sri Lanka has identified some important adaptation technologies, including restoring coral reefs and declaring those as protected areas, replanting of sea grasses and sand dune rehabilitation as soft defense mechanisms, construction of dikes, and floating mariculture for sea weeds and fish.

Furthermore, to reduce the impact of micro-plastic pollution, which also has contributed to the rapidly declining fish stocks, a high priority is therefore banning the use of single use plastics.

Having chaired the 13th Meeting of Parties to the Montreal Protocol, in 2001, I am happy to state that Sri Lanka is moving forward with the Colombo Declaration on Sustainable Nitrogen Management, with an ambition to halve Nitrogen waste, also to mitigate the harmful effects of algal bloom, ocean dead zones and eutrophication.

Sri Lanka welcomes the Manado Joint Declaration adopted at the 1st Ministerial Meeting of Archipelagic and Islands States Forum, and looks forward to future discussions of an ambitious Road Map to tackle ocean sustainability challenges through the implementation of policy and community level approaches, regionally and internationally.

Ayubowan

Thank you.