



**Statement by Sri Lanka at the 2nd Session of the
Open ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the UN Declaration on the Rights
of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas.
2 - 6 February 2015**

Madam Chair,

My delegation at the outset welcomes the convening of the second session of the open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas. We congratulate Ambassador Llanos, Permanent Representative of Bolivia, for her election as Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group.

Sri Lanka aligns itself with the statements delivered by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and Bolivia on behalf of the Like Minded Group (LMG)

As a co-sponsor of the resolution 26/26 on the promotion of the human rights of peasants, Sri Lanka appreciates the work of the Chairperson-Rapporteur of the working group, for convening informal consultations among relevant stakeholders, while taking into consideration the draft text presented by the Advisory Committee, the discussions held during the first session of the working group and presenting a draft text to this working group for consideration and further discussion.

For Sri Lanka this issue is of great relevance where 77.4 of the population lives in rural areas. My delegation supports the adoption of a UN Declaration which would demonstrate the commitment of the international community for the promotion and protection of the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.

Madam Chair,

As stated by our delegation in our interventions during the first session of this Working Group as well as the informal consultations, we reiterate the need for a new text that is streamlined to avoid duplication of existing provisions and human rights standards that are addressed in in other intergovernmental agreements or Conventions.

With regard to possible elements to be considered in a draft Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas, Sri Lanka believes that there is a need to reconsider the definition of peasants, which should take into account specificities depending on the country context.

We are also of the view that the draft declaration will need to take into account a country's national priorities and policies in the consideration of the rights of peasants. Given the increasing vulnerability of the people working in rural areas, special emphasis should be given to the landless, small- scale farmers and women.

Madam Chair,

We are of the view that the draft declaration should also be viewed in the context of sustainable development, as well as the current debate on the post-2015 development agenda, which is to be finalized this year. To this end, we suggest that this declaration should adequately reflect the contribution of the peasants and those working in rural areas towards sustainable agricultural practices and maintaining food security at the local and national levels. Such recognition would also highlight the need to protect and promote traditional agricultural knowledge, which promotes sustainable agricultural practices, and preservation of such knowledge for future generations.

Considering the effects of climate change on farming and agriculture, developments in the context of intergovernmental negotiations on sustainable development and climate change should also be appropriately considered and reflected in this new declaration.

In conclusion Madam Chair, we wish the Working Group success in its deliberations and assure you of our support and constructive engagement.

I thank you.