

Sri Lanka – 2013

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UN Youth Delegate Programme

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18. **Ms. Perera** (Sri Lanka), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the issues central to the lives of Sri Lankan youth of various backgrounds were quality education, more opportunities for advancement, job security, gainful employment, social inclusion, and peace and stability. The reluctance of many young Sri Lankans, desirous of job security, to pursue careers in the private sector could be remedied by providing proper career counselling and training. To that end, her Government could establish a youth volunteer programme along the lines of the programme of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which served the young in rural and disadvantaged areas of the country.

19. In order to increase the employability and productivity of its youth, Sri Lanka had amalgamated its Ministry of Youth with the country's skills development institution, providing training and capacity building to meet the demands of the local, regional and global labour markets in cooperation with the private sector. Healthcare and education from primary to tertiary level remained free of charge.

20. **Mr. Bakeer Markar** (Sri Lanka), speaking as a youth delegate, said that his generation was overcoming the pain and the scars of a terrorist war that had lasted nearly three decades. While former child combatants had been rehabilitated and reintegrated into their communities, their social inclusion remained a challenge. The Sri Lankan Youth Parliament served as a platform for reconciliation, a sounding board for national lawmakers, and a structured forum to facilitate youth participation in decision-making, providing an avenue for Sri Lanka's youth to gain policy expertise, leadership qualities and civic values.

21. Political leaders and policy makers had recognized that engaging the young in decision-making processes resulted in better policy formulation and implementation. As a result, the national youth policy was being reformulated through an open, multi-stakeholder consultation process and was increasingly progressive, with a greater focus on the need for quality education, sexual health and education and reproductive rights. Sri Lanka had also volunteered to host a world conference on youth in 2014, the first in the region. In closing, Sri Lankan youth would continue to ask their leaders to enable them to cooperate to promote young people's interests and share best practices.

