

Sri Lanka – 2018 – II

Ms. Shamilka Karunanayake

UN Youth Delegate Programme

Original: UN Doc. A/C.3/73/SR-15, 11 October 2018, p. 7

Youth Delegate Search: <https://youthdelegatesearch.org/sri-lanka-2018/>

44. **Ms. Karunanayake** (Sri Lanka), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, despite recent women-centric movements, such as “#MeToo” and the “HeForShe” campaign, patriarchy remained widely prevalent and fair treatment for women from all society stakeholders worldwide remained questionable.

45. Although Sri Lankan women across all sectors had found success — the world’s first woman Prime Minister, elected in 1960, the current Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth and the first Sri Lankan to summit Mount Everest, the country still faced challenges with regard to discrimination and violence against women. The nearly 30-year war had left numerous widows and orphans and many households headed by women, who continued, years later, to face economic, physical and psychological hardships, balancing household duties and childcare with their roles as sole breadwinner while battling social stigma. Working closely with grassroots civil society groups, the Government had implemented psychosocial well-being programmes in areas where the conflict had been most prevalent and had assigned a counsellor and a women’s development officer to every divisional secretariat to work more closely on day-to-day issues faced by women.

46. The Women’s Bureau and the National Committee on Women, both under the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, were working to create a gender-sensitized society, through the implementation of Government commitments on gender equality overseen by civil society organizations. A national framework for women-headed households in post-conflict Sri Lanka had been developed to address socioeconomic insecurities faced by women. Since its ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Sri Lanka had been mainstreaming gender priorities and strategies. In 2017, the Government introduced legislation to guarantee a minimum of 25 per cent local representation, in an effort to give women a [*8*] voice in governance. Nevertheless, it was everyone’s responsibility, not that of Government alone, to put an end to the stereotyping of women and to ensure respect for and the empowerment of women.

