Sri Lanka – 2019

Ms. de Silva, Mr. Edirisooriya

UN Youth Delegate Programme

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Youth Delegate Search: https://youthdelegatesearch.org/sri-lanka-2019/

48. **Ms. de Silva** (Sri Lanka), speaking as a youth delegate, said that her country's long-standing welfare policies provided free education and health care to all citizens. However, the youth skills gap and youth unemployment were significant challenges. In response, her Government had established a youth development programme and a technical and vocational education policy, as well as offering vocational training to vulnerable young prisoners. It had adapted the national volunteering policy to reduce barriers to volunteering. Sri Lanka needed to address social disparities in access to education, which especially affected those in post-conflict areas and in the plantation sector. Various educational projects were being implemented with a view to strengthening the free education policy and reducing unemployment. Sri Lanka was heavily impacted by climate change, and Sri Lankan youth had the capacity to assist in tackling that pressing issue.

49. **Mr. Edirisooriya** (Sri Lanka), youth delegate, said that young people must learn from the past and find ways to move forward, and they should be guided in the process of healing and reconciliation. Such action was more relevant than ever following the bomb attacks that had taken place in his country on Easter Sunday in April 2019. Those attacks had shown the resilience of the Sri Lankan people, and of its young people in particular: they had rallied to help those in need, regardless of race, ethnicity or religion.

50. It was encouraging that the hard work of the country's young people was being recognized through the establishment of advocacy platforms such as a youth parliament. The young people of Sri Lanka had the ability to collectively affect great change, but their work had only just begun.