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Indeed, Madam Chairperson, it also shows that the human rights situation in Sri Lanka needs urgent improvement and consideration."8th Session of the Human Rights Council Item 4: Human Rights Situations that require the Council's attention Madame Chairperson,

The International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) strongly believes that the human rights situation in Sri Lanka requires further attention by the Human Rights Council. We welcome the submission of the "Report of the Secretary-General's Panel of Experts on accountability in Sri Lanka" (the 'panel report) and its recommendations. Furthermore, we hope the findings of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) will contribute towards challenging the culture of impunity and building confidence among the war affected communities paving way for a peace building process in the country. We look forward to the finalization of the LLRC report in November 2011 and its immediate public release thereafter.

These two reports give us an opportunity to open a constructive dialogue within the Human Rights Council among members, observers, civil society and the Government of Sri Lanka to improve the human rights situation in Sri Lanka: There will be an urgent need to address the recommendations stated in these reports and to ensure their effective and timely implementation.

We therefore request the Human Rights Council to set up an interactive dialogue on the human rights situation in Sri Lanka at its 19th session which allows reviewing and learning from the past as the country is facing gigantic challenges in the post-war context. We believe that the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights and the special mechanisms can support this work through country visits. The visits of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression as well as the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances are long overdue. Once again we urge the HRC to consider constructively the appointment of a Country Rapporteur on Sri Lanka as this will allow regular reporting and monitoring in order to ensure the improvement of the human rights situation in Sri Lanka.

Madam Chairperson,

We would also like to bring to your attention that after the side event held by the Government of Sri Lanka here at this current session of the HRC, a well-known journalist and human rights defender from Sri Lanka and the former leader of the Free Media Movement, Mr Sunanda Deshapriya, has come under continuous attack in all state-controlled media – print and electronic – in Sri Lanka with false accusations quoting a statement purported to have been made by the President of the Maldives. This false reporting has led to a major media campaign against Mr. Sunanda Deshapriya and his close family still residing in Sri Lanka. As IMADR we call for urgent attention of the Human Rights Council on this matter and call for an immediate stop to such misleading reporting. Indeed, Madam Chairperson, it also shows that the human rights situation in Sri Lanka needs urgent improvement and consideration.

Thank you.

24th September 2011