

Statement by H.E. Majintha Jayasinghe, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the UN in Vienna at the 49th Session of the Industrial Development Board (IDB) of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

12-15 July 2021

Agenda Item 7: UNIDO's response to the Covid Pandemic

Madam President

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Group of 77 and China and I wish to make the following statement on the agenda item 07 in my national capacity.

Since emergence of COVID-19 as a global pandemic, millions of people are experiencing untold misery and suffering as the virus overwhelms our bodies and economies. Rich and poor, the pandemic has forced us to reconsider almost every aspect of how we live. 10 years short of the ambitious 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the impact of the COVID Pandemic has caused a serious impediment to realizing the benefits of the many important measures taken to alleviate poverty, and other sustainable development goals.

Amidst the recent surge in COVID-19 cases in the region, the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted many aspect of society, compelling the Government of Sri Lanka to place travel restrictions, quarantine, lockdowns and other remedial safeguards to reduce the growth rate of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sri Lanka had successfully contained the COVID – 19, with zero community transmission during the first and second wave through timely interventions and full mobilization of government resources. However during the past few weeks the numbers of cases have risen drastically. Effective mobilization of the government resources and robust healthcare system has helped managing the pandemic without exceeding health capacities. While facing challenges of distribution disparities of vaccines, Sri Lanka has been implementing a robust vaccination drive from the beginning of January 2021 with vaccines donated by friendly countries.

Sri Lanka believes that we can fight against COVID-19 with international cooperation and solidarity, as no country can defeat this crisis alone.

Given the transnational nature of the pandemic we emphasise the necessity to maintain strong international solidarity and multilateral cooperation in the fight against COVID-19 and other zoonotic diseases as well as efforts of Member States to recover from the economic and social impact of the pandemic.

With these comments, Sri Lanka commends the continuous efforts of UNIDO, which have managed to find ways to carrying out its responsibilities as mandated under its framework responding to the crisis and the substantial support of UNIDO to the affected developing countries by the pandemic.

I thank you, Madam President