

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

IMADR Oral Statement, Human Rights Council 17th Session

Item 2 and 3: General Debate

3 June 2011

Thank you Mr. President

IMADR join all the civil society organizations committed to democracy and a sustainable peace in Sri Lanka, in welcoming the report of the Panel of Experts.

We believe that the report offers an opportunity for the government of Sri Lanka, and for the Sri Lankan polity as a whole, to address the range of political, economic and social issues that have emerged in the post-war environment and to redress injustices and human rights violations that continue to plague all communities.

We believe that the Expert Panel Report sets out its assessment of the nature and scope of allegations. It states that the mechanisms and initiatives taken by the government fall short of acceptable norms of accountability, and calls for the establishment of an independent international mechanism.

Sri Lanka is facing the challenge of developing a comprehensive post-war reconstruction programme that can bring economic and social advancement to the north and east at the same time bring peace and prosperity to all Sri Lankans. In order to realize the full potential of this endeavour, there is the urgent need to create a transparent and accountable mechanism. WOUNDS, ESPECIALLY WOUNDS OF WAR REQUIRE TREATMENT AND NOT COVERING UP TO BE INFESTED.

We appeal to the HRC to listen to the voices of thousands of women and children who are asking for the whereabouts of the disappeared family members. Some want to know who and how the father, brother or sister died or why they were killed. Are these questions irrelevant to this body which is the temple of Human Rights. How long should these victims wait till we seek a relevant agenda item to open a dialogue?

Human Rights cannot be allowed to be traded off for political agendas of any state. Victims come here seeking justice, transparency and honesty. This body is accountable to them in upholding the sovereignty of the people. Countries are after all land where people live.

We would like to support all efforts taken by the Office of the High Commissioner to assist in the formation of effective national and internal mechanism to investigate and further provide technical support to Sri Lanka to address the recommendations in the report.

Thank you, Mr. President