



**54th session of the UN Human Rights Council
Interactive Dialogue on the report of OHCHR on Sri Lanka
Delivered by Permanent Representative Lucy Duncan
11 September 2023**

Mr President, Deputy High Commissioner,

Aotearoa New Zealand thanks the Office of the High Commissioner for the report and welcomes the continued attention on, and support offered to, Sri Lanka.

We welcome Sri Lanka's progress in stabilising its economy following the country's acute economic crisis. We will continue to offer assistance as appropriate. As the recovery continues, we agree that economic reform measures should uphold the basic economic, social and cultural rights of Sri Lankans.

Civil and political rights are also important: of themselves, and in supporting long-term economic prosperity. They provide people with avenues for offering ideas and expressing disagreement legitimately. We therefore urge Sri Lanka to promptly hold legally-prescribed elections which are now overdue, while ensuring all future elections are scheduled in a timely manner according to the law; and to safeguard the fundamental freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association.

New Zealand strongly supports reconciliation and accountability for human rights violations, with a victim-centric approach at the forefront of that work. We acknowledge Sri Lanka's recent focus on reconciliation, including the proposed establishment of a National Unity and Reconciliation Commission. While encouraging these efforts, we strongly urge greater participation of, and increased consultation with, affected communities in order to promote enduring peace and stability.

Thank you.