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3rd Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on Sri Lanka at UNHRC

(Colombopage.com) - The United Nation Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the third Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on Sri Lanka at the 28th session of the Universal Periodic Review. At the session, Joaquín Alexander Maza Martelli, President of the Human Rights Council (Adoption) proposed the working group to adopt the recommendation section of the draft report and the UPR of Sri Lanka and declared the section of the report is adopted.

The review of Sri Lanka was held on 15 November 2017. The delegation of Sri Lanka was headed by Deputy Minister of National Policies and Economic Affairs, Dr. Harsha de Silva.

Sri Lanka accepted 177 out of the 230 recommendations made by the 3rd UPR and noted 53. Sri Lanka has also undertaken 12 voluntary pledges.

Sri Lanka's special envoy to the Session, Deputy Minister Dr. Harsha de Silva delivering final remarks at the session said all the recommendations made are constructive and useful to Sri Lanka and each and every one of them is extremely meaningful.

He said the 3rd cycle of UPR gave Sri Lanka an important opportunity, right from the process of drafting the National Report, to the point of

undergoing the Review in Geneva, to demonstrate the importance that Sri Lanka, especially since January 2015, attach to human rights, and the way in which the government is seeking to fulfil its commitments to the people, in a manner that



Deputy Minister Dr. Harsha de Silva (centre) delivering final remarks

empowers and benefits everyone in our country. However, Dr. de Silva said Sri Lanka has to be mindful in ensuring that the recommendations are accepted in a "sincere and responsible" manner. He said that some recommendations relating to ongoing processes such as the constitutional

reform process, law reform processes, and the transitional justice process involve multiple arms of government and agencies, including specific procedures that have to be adhered to.

"Such processes are not solely in the domain of the executive arm of government, to make decisions. Some, for example, relate to processes that are in the domain of the Parliament and the Judiciary," the Deputy Minister said explaining that Sri Lanka therefore, had to 'note' such recommendations. "However, we will, in our domestic processes, look at all recommendations made to us, carefully, and share all recommendations

with relevant institutions, for consideration, and consultation," he assured.

"We explore new and constructive ways for effective implementation of recommendations, involving civil society, and all stakeholders," the Deputy Minister said.

The Deputy Minister sought support of the member states to implement the recommendations.

"We look forward to carrying forward our assessment and implementation of the recommendations until the 4th cycle, and look to all of you, the UN system and member states, for support."

The Deputy Minister concluded the remarks by reiterating Sri Lanka's sincere commitment to respect, secure and advance fundamental rights by all organs of government, for all Sri Lankans, as mandated by the Constitution, and the desire to contribute to promoting human rights for all, both locally and internationally, in partnership with the UN.

Video of Deputy Minister's speech - <http://webtv.un.org/watch/sri-lanka-upr-adoption-28th-session-of-universal-periodic-review/5648873311001/#>

Full speech: <http://www.mfa.gov.lk/index.php/en/component/content/article/1-latest-news/7260-remarks-by-hon-dr-harsha-de-silva-mp-deputy-minister-of-national-policies-and-economic-affairs-at-the-adoption-of-the-working-group-report-of-the-3rd-cycle-of-the-universal-periodic-review-of-sri-lanka-geneva-17-november-2017->

Congratulations Lakshitha Karunarathna

(Colombopage.com) - Lakshitha Karunarathna's photo of a pride of huddling African lionesses was the Grand Prize winner of the 2017 Nature's Best Windland Smith Rice Awards held in Washington D.C. on Thursday, November 16.

Lakshitha accepted the award at a gala event at the Smithsonian Natural History Museum. This is the first time in the competition's two-decade-long history a photographer from Sri Lanka has taken home the award.

The Grand Prize winner was picked from 26,000 entries from the world over. The winning image was captured while Karunarathna was on a photography tour in Kenya's Maasai Mara National Reserve. Karunarathna said the picture was taken in the blink of an eye, and when later he checked the camera's

viewfinder he instinctively knew it was a very special photograph.

A past pupil of Ananda College, Colombo and a tea-taster by trade, Karunarathna's passion for photographing nature has already won him many international accolades. He says he picked up photography as a hobby three years ago. The visual essayist has visited many countries, from Sri Lanka's wildlife parks to the Polar Regions and everywhere in between.

Priyanga Wickramasinghe, Chargé d'affaires of the Embassy of Sri Lanka in Washington D.C. who presented the citation and award to Karunarathna noted the photographer's extraordinary achievement in winning the Grand Prize and said how his Sri Lankan roots would have influenced his approach to wildlife conservation through his photography.

She also commended him for bringing honour to Sri Lanka and shining a spotlight on the country's talented young photographers.

A remarkable large print of Lakshitha Karunarathna's winning entry is on display until September 2018 at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington D.C.

Launched in 1996, the Nature's Best Photography Awards is an endowed exhibition program run in partnership with the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, one of the most-visited museums in the world.

More of Lakshitha Karunarathna's work can be seen here:

www.lakshithak.com, www.instagram.com/lakshithak/

Competition page: Nature's Best Photography site.

Bottom left - The award winning photo, Below right - Lakshitha



accepting his award at the award ceremony, Top - Lakshitha Karunarathna.



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