National Statement of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka at the 31th Session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by Dr. Dammika Patabendi, Hon. Minister of Environment

Mr. President
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to address this important gathering at COP31 on behalf of the Government and people of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka is an island developing state, highly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, despite contributing only a negligible share of global greenhouse gas emissions. Our country is increasingly experiencing the consequences of climate change, including extreme rainfall, floods, landslides, prolonged droughts, rising temperatures, coastal erosion and other climate-related hazards. Recent extreme weather events have further demonstrated the devastating impacts of climate change on our people, livelihoods, infrastructure, agriculture, ecosystems and the national economy.

For Sri Lanka, climate change is not merely an environmental concern; it is a critical development challenge that directly affects food and water security, public health, economic stability and the well-being of present and future generations.

Despite these challenges, Sri Lanka remains firmly committed to the objectives of the Paris Agreement. We are strengthening our national climate policies, enhancing our Nationally Determined Contributions, advancing adaptation planning and improving climate resilience across key economic sectors. We are also committed to pursuing a low-carbon and climate-resilient development pathway, while ensuring a just and inclusive transition that safeguards vulnerable communities.

However, our ambitions must be matched by adequate and predictable international support.

In this regard, we wish to emphasize four critical priorities:

First, developed countries must fulfil their climate finance commitments and significantly scale up the provision of new, additional, predictable and accessible grant-based and concessional finance, particularly for adaptation and addressing loss and damage.

Second, simplified and direct access to climate finance through mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund and the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage is essential, particularly for countries with limited institutional and technical capacities.

Third, enhanced technology transfer, innovation and capacity-building are crucial to strengthen early warning systems, climate-resilient infrastructure, climate-smart agriculture, water management and ecosystem-based adaptation.

Fourth, greater international cooperation is needed to address climate-induced loss and damage, strengthen disaster preparedness and build the institutional and technical capacities of vulnerable developing countries.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

The success of the Paris Agreement must be measured not only by our collective commitments, but also by the tangible support delivered to countries on the frontlines of climate change.

Sri Lanka stands ready to work constructively with all Parties towards ambitious, balanced and equitable outcomes at COP31. We call upon the international community to translate commitments into concrete action, guided by the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

Let COP31 be a turning point in transforming climate commitments into meaningful support and real action, ensuring that no vulnerable country is left behind.

Thank you.