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3 May 2006

Dear President Mahinda Rajapakse,

CC:

Mr. Mangala Samaraweera, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Mr. Mahinda Samarasinghe, Minister of Disaster Management and Human Rights  
Mr. Prasad Kariyawasam, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN in New York  
Ms. Sarala Fernando, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva  
Mr. D.J.B.De Silva, Secretary, National Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka  
Mr. Rory Mungoven, Senior Human Rights Advisor, Office of the High Commission for Human Rights  
Mr. Chenkyab Dorji, Secretary General of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation  
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva

**Subject: Sri Lanka's pledges as a candidate to the new United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council**

The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), Information Monitor (INFORM) and Law Society Trust (LST) welcome the pledges that have been made by the Government of the Sri Lanka on 10 April 2006 (reference number POL/G/279).

However, we are concerned that Sri Lanka's pledges falls short of substantive steps forward to ensure effective promotion and protection of human rights domestically and internationally. In addition, we note that many of the pledges are vague and general, without specific information as to how they will be implemented in practice.

We therefore attach to this letter our comments on the pledges that have been made, as well a list of pledges that have been omitted by Sri Lanka and a set of questions that we would like the Government to clarify. We would be grateful if you could respond to these questions through an informal consultation with NGOs, or via e-mail at [unadvocacy@forum-asia.org](mailto:unadvocacy@forum-asia.org) or via fax at +66 2 391 8801.

We would like to emphasise that although the pledges are not legally binding, the Government has the moral obligation to implement them and to be held accountable to its people and the international community, whether or not Sri Lanka becomes a member of the Human Rights Council.

We look forward to your response and an opportunity for consultation and dialogue with civil society to demonstrate in practice Sri Lanka's suitability as a possible member of the Council.

Yours Sincerely,

Anselmo Lee, Executive Director, FORUM-ASIA  
Sunila Abeysekera, Executive Director, Information Monitor (INFORM)  
Damaris Wickremesekera, Director, Law and Society Trust (LST)