

## PRESS RELEASE

### PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM SRI LANKA AND ACROSS SOUTH ASIA DISCUSS HOW TO ENSURE RIGHTS FOR ALL CHILDREN

**COLOMBO**, 2 September 2019 – Parliament of Sri Lanka together with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) is hosting parliamentarians from across South Asia to celebrate the 30-year anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

At the meeting, parliamentarians will take stock of the situation of children in the region and discuss the key challenges towards realization of all rights of all children to ensure further progress.

The South Asia Parliamentary Platform for Children being held in Colombo from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> September will also give the parliamentarians the opportunity to make fresh commitments to push the national agendas for the realization of child rights.

“The Convention has helped to transform children’s lives for the better and has ensured that Governments have favourable policies, changed laws, and made investments so that more children get the chance to thrive and have a good, protected childhood. Nevertheless, the Convention is still not fully implemented everywhere, and millions of children continue to suffer violations of their rights when they are denied adequate healthcare, nutrition, education and protection from violence,” said Ms. Jean Gough, Regional Director for UNICEF South Asia.

This is the third year that UNICEF organizes a meeting with parliamentarians from the region to connect them to discuss the situation of children and inspire them to take action for improvement in their lives.

The Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, Hon. Karu Jayasuriya said “The future of South Asia will depend on how best we take care of our children, 36 per cent of the South Asian population. I am confident that the Colombo Declaration, emanating from the deliberations at the South Asian Parliamentary Platform for Children, will help to renew the commitment of policy makers, for ensuring that our children have *all* their rights fulfilled, which will empower them to face the challenges of the 21st century.”

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most widely ratified human rights treaty. Thirty years on, child rights have not changed, but childhood for about 627 million South Asian children has changed and progress has been made, however challenges remain, with the coming of the internet, the effects of climate change, rapid urbanisation and other emerging issues.

“We see new threats for children, but also many new opportunities for children to realise their rights. That is why we are content to be working with parliamentarians from all over South Asia to ensure that we speed up positive actions for children to ensure a healthy and educated young generation across the region’, said Jean Gough.

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#### About United Nations Children’s Fund

UNICEF works in some of the world’s toughest places, to reach the world’s most disadvantaged children. Across 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone. For more information about UNICEF and its work for children visit [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org).

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