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திகதி
Date

09.07.2010.

PRESS RELEASE

The attention of the Ministry of External Affairs has been drawn to the Statement made in New York on 8th July and attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Statement claims that the Sri Lanka authorities have failed to prevent the disruption of the normal functioning of the United Nations Offices in Colombo.

The Ministry of External Affairs wishes to categorically emphasize that throughout the situation, the Government of Sri Lanka has looked after the safety of the United Nations premises. The demonstrations taking place outside have not resulted in harm to anyone. Access has continued to be afforded to the premises, through the facilitation of the movement of persons wishing to enter or exit.

Even as the measures necessary for the security and access to the compound were being deployed, the Government of Sri Lanka through the proper channels gave the United Nations in New York very explicit and emphatic assurances. Moreover, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Colombo was kept apprised of the efforts of the Government to ease the situation, while acting within the parameters of a democratic system wherein the right to peaceful demonstration remains a fundamental entitlement.

Given the above context, the Ministry of External Affairs believes the decision to close the UNDP Regional Centre in Colombo which at present serves to address a range of issues relevant to 34 nations of the Asia-Pacific region, to be disappointing. At the same time, the Government of Sri Lanka is committed to dialogue as the way forward, as the avenue for the resolution of issues of this kind. The Ministry of External Affairs wishes therefore to reaffirm its intent to continue to be engaged with the United Nations system.

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