

**Remarks by Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin
Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations**

**Commemorative Event for the Victims of the Easter Sunday attacks in Sri Lanka
Co-organised by the President of the General Assembly
and the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka**

General Assembly Hall

3 May 2019

Madam President,

Thank you for reaching out thoughtfully and arranging this commemorative event for the victims of the dastardly attacks on Easter Sunday in Sri Lanka.

2. We appreciate your efforts to bring all of us together on a common platform. In times of pain, a balm helps.

3. As a close friend and neighbour of Sri Lanka with civilizational ties that are millennial, all of India is deeply distressed by the attacks and the cruel violence.

4. We share the deep pain and anguish of the Sri Lankan people in this hour of grief.

5. I take this opportunity to extend our deepest condolences and prayers to the families of the departed and wish a speedy recovery to those who were injured in the attacks. Going forward, for our part, India is ready and willing to assist Sri Lanka in any manner the Government of Sri Lanka desires us to help.

Madam President,

6. The barbaric and cowardly attacks on places of worship and recreation, that took lives of hundreds of innocent people of different nationalities, is a reminder that terrorism aims not only to disrupt livelihoods, destroy lives and traumatise people, but also rupture societies, destabilize states and undermine the fabric of human beliefs by creating panic for the sake of panic.

7. Pluralistic societies that are multi-cultural, multi-linguistic, multi-religious or multi-ethnic are increasingly targets of such insidious attempts by terrorists. The

strengths of diversity and pluralism are sought to be undermined by those who promote intolerance and exclusivism.

Madam President,

8. These are testing times. The challenges posed by the terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka reflect threats to the common heritage of mankind that we strive to build here at the United Nations. Terrorists, globally, seek to lay the foundations of edifices built on violence, even as we strive here to promote the culture of peace. They are antithetical to all that we promote here. Terrorism fundamentally stands for the denial of all that we stand for here at the UN - peace, development, security, and human rights.

9. Yet as Mahatma Gandhi often said, "Let us not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty."

Madam President,

10. While the threat of terrorism is clear and present, the many good men and women gathered here need to reflect how we can reinforce faith in the ocean of human good will by working collectively.

11. None is better placed than Amb. Rohan Periera Sri Lanka's distinguished Permanent Representative who has, for more than two decades, tried to steer us to an outcome on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. Perhaps, as a tribute to the victims in his country, we can all try and strengthen efforts to achieve that objective of a putting in place a global legal framework to counter a global scourge.

12. Mahatma Gandhi once said, "Peace cannot be built on exclusivism, absolutism, and intolerance. But neither can it be built on vague liberal slogans and pious programs gestated in the smoke of confabulation. There can be no peace on earth without the kind of inner change that brings man back to his "right mind".

13. Today, perhaps, is also the time for all of us to start thinking if we can start working on that change of mind.

I thank you Madam President.

