His Excellency

Maithripala Sirisena

President of Sri Lanka

Presidential Secretariat

Galle Face

Colombo 1 - **SRI LANKA**

Luxembourg, the

Dear President,

having been alerted by ACAT-Luxembourg, an NGO campaigning for the total abolition of torture and capital punishment, and affiliated to FIACAT, a UN-accredited federation with member organizations in some 30 countries, I am writing to express my grave concern at the announcement that four executions are scheduled to be carried out imminently in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka has long been held as a positive example in the Asia-Pacific region of a country which, despite adverse circumstances and prolonged internal conflict, has not wavered from its positive record of not implementing the death penalty.

Since it has come to light that you have signed four execution warrants, however, the eyes of the world have turned to Sri Lanka with great apprehension. We are alarmed as the resumption of executions in Sri Lanka, after more than 40 years of a de facto moratorium, would set the country against the global trend away from the death penalty. It would also see Sri Lanka act in contravention of its obligations under international law. Executions for drug-related offences are prohibited under international human rights law, as they do not meet the threshold of the “most serious crimes” to which the use of this punishment must be restricted in countries that have not yet abolished it.

Moreover, there is no evidence that the death penalty has a unique deterrent effect. As recently as March 2019, the UN reiterated in unequivocal terms that the application of the death penalty for drug-related offences did not respect the spirit of the international drug-control conventions and has the potential to become an obstacle to effective cross-border and international cooperation against drug trafficking.

I therefore call on you to halt plans to resume the implementation of the death penalty in Sri Lanka and establish an official moratorium on all executions as a first step towards abolition.

I thank you for the attention you will give to this concern.

Yours respectfully,

Signature

Name:

Address:

Copy: Embassy of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in Bruxelles, Belgium