

*Human Rights Council – 36th session
Item 2 – Oral Update HC General Debate*

Speaker: Albert Hengelaar

Tuesday 12 September 2017



Mr. President,

Sri Lanka is undergoing a critical period of transition with the adoption of Resolution 30/1. In his oral update, the High Commissioner called on the Government to honour its 2015 commitments, as well as adopting confidence-building measures. The World Evangelical Alliance strongly agrees with this statement. We urge the Government of Sri Lanka to take sincere steps to address the grievances of minority communities.

On June 14th 2017 human rights lawyer Lakshan Dias on TV raised legitimate concerns regarding the persecution of religious minorities. Following his statements, the president of Sri Lanka publicly dismissed such claims as being false. After threats of a state minister Mr. Dias was forced to relocate. However, the World Evangelical Alliance is appreciative of the positive steps taken by the Government to secure the safe return of Mr. Dias.

Sri Lanka is an ethnically and religiously diverse country in one of the world's most prominent regions. What is more, its Government has embarked on a welcome journey to embrace diversity and bring about reconciliation between communities. For this the government must guarantee especially freedom of expression and religious belief of all citizens.

We thank you Mr. President.