Thank you Mr. President.

The World Evangelical Alliance welcomes the oral update of High Commissioner and supports her observations and recommendations on Sri Lanka.

In the wake of the Easter Sunday terror attacks, the Government of Sri Lanka enacted several overbroad Emergency Regulations which have the serious potential to adversely affect the religious freedom of minorities. Further to the enactment of these regulations, Sri Lankan law enforcement officials have made multiple arrests on arbitrary grounds and with disregard to due process protocols.

Furthermore, we are saddened by the developments which led to the pardon of Ven. Gnanasara Thero; a mere week after anti-Muslim riots ravaged the North Western province of the country. Ven. Gnanasara has a history of antagonism against minorities and has been linked to similar situations of unrest in the past. In such a context, this pardon signifies an absolute disregard by the Executive for the concern and safety of minority groups in Sri Lanka.

We call on the Government of Sri Lanka to avoid a repetition of the mistakes of the past, to actively protect and promote the status of minorities, and to ensure equality for all its citizens.

And we reiterate our support to the efforts of the Office of the High Commissioner to strengthen the rule of law and ensure respect for Human Rights in Sri Lanka.

Thank you.