



**Statement by Dr. Ananda Rathnayaka, Chairman of the National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol (NATA) at the General Debate of the Eleventh Session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (COP11),
on 18 November 2025**

Agenda Item 3: Global Progress in Implementation of the WHO FCTC, followed by a General Debate

Madam President, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Guests,

Thank you very much for the opportunity,

Sri Lanka was the first country in our region to ratify and sign the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). Since then, we have remained steadfast in upholding its principles and values, guided by the convention that protecting our people from the harms of tobacco is essential to securing a **healthy planet and a healthy future for generations to come**.

Our uniquely comprehensive legal framework encompasses both tobacco and alcohol control, reflecting our unwavering commitment to safeguarding public health and contributing to global efforts to create **tobacco-free societies**.

In line with this year's theme—**20 years of change - uniting generations for a tobacco-free future**, Sri Lanka has implemented a broad set of strong regulatory and public health measures, including:

- A minimum purchasing age of **21 years**, protecting young people from early initiation.
- A **comprehensive ban** on all forms of advertising, promotion, and sponsorship, covering product displays, brand names, and manufacturer-linked messaging.
- The prohibition of **sponsorships, free product distribution, and tobacco vending machines**.
- A ban on **e-cigarettes containing tobacco**, as well as **flavoured and smokeless tobacco products**, reinforcing our commitment to a harm elimination approach.
- One of the **highest tobacco tax percentages** in the region, ensuring effective fiscal deterrence and reducing consumption.
- **Large pictorial health warnings**, among the most prominent in the region, ensuring clear communication of health risks.
- A **national quitline** and a **tobacco industry observatory**, dedicated to monitoring and reporting industry interference.

- Strong collaboration with **civil society organizations**, ensuring sustained community engagement in tobacco prevention and control.

These measures embody our belief that safeguarding the health of our people goes hand in hand with protecting our environment and strengthening our collective future.

Sri Lanka remains fully committed to contributing actively and constructively to the COP decision-making process and to advancing global tobacco control efforts. Together, let us unite to secure a **healthy planet and a tobacco-free future for generations to come**.

Thank you.