

Human Rights Council
Item 5
General Debate
Draft Cross-Regional Statement

Thank you Mr. President

This statement is delivered on behalf of Algeria, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Botswana, Bulgaria, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Chile, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Mexico, Moldova, New Zealand, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay, United Kingdom, Tunisia, Turkey.

The countries associated with this statement continue to fully support the work and the independence of Special Procedures, and look forward to engaging with all stakeholders, most particularly Special Procedure mandate-holders themselves, to further strengthen the mechanism's effectiveness.

Mr. President,

The number of active Special Procedure mandates has already passed 50 and continues to grow. We believe it is important for States to give thought to the implications of this expansion, including how to ensure that the widening of the system does not come at the expense of sustainability, capabilities of States to ensure a constructive dialogue and impact on the ground. In that, States should be guided by paragraphs 57 and 58 of resolution 5/1 on the Council's institution-building package.

The sponsors of this statement would like to make six points.

First, we reiterate the call made in paragraph 26 of resolution 16/21, for States to cooperate, or continue to do so, with Special Procedures, including by accepting their requests for visits and by responding to their communications. We welcome encouraging signs of cooperation such as the fact that over the years more than 167 States have been visited by at least one Special Procedures mandate-holder, or that one hundred and ten States have extended a standing invitation. Nonetheless, we believe that there remains room for improvement.

Second, we underscore the importance of transparency, including through the maintenance of public information on requests for country visits and responses thereto, of standing invitations, and of responses to communications, in line with paragraph 29 of resolution 16/21. We also note that Member States decided, in paragraph 27 resolution 16/21, that the Council should remain as a forum for open, constructive and transparent discussion on cooperation between States and Special Procedures. With this in mind, we welcome the presence of the Chair of the Special Procedures Coordination Committee, as

a way to optimize regular interaction, as well as the additional information contained in the report.

Third, as recognized by the General Assembly in paragraph 12 of resolution 60/251, follow-up on recommendations and their implementation is key to ensure the effectiveness of the Special Procedures system. In this regard, we recognise the efforts made by some mandate-holders to follow-up on the outcome of country missions and to table follow-up reports in annex to their main report, and also welcome continued discussion, among all mandate-holders, about how to strengthen follow-up across the mechanism. We also encourage mandate-holders, and OHCHR, to explore synergies between the provision of, and follow-up to, recommendations by Special Procedures, Treaty Bodies and the UPR.

While we are conscious of resource and capacity constraints, we believe that follow-up, and the maintenance of constructive dialogue, is extremely useful in order to assist States with the implementation of recommendations. In this regard, we are pleased to note that at this session, a number of States have used the Item 5 general debate to make statements updating the Council on the domestic implementation of Special Procedures recommendations, and we encourage others to follow suit.

Fourth, we underscore the importance of ensuring the provision of adequate and equitable funding, to support all Special Procedures according to their specific needs.

Fifth, we welcome the increased coordination and systematization of the Special Procedures. We note the efforts made by mandate holders to better coordinate their work and act jointly on thematic and country issues in order to avoid duplication and overlap while identifying complementarities. This is illustrated, for example, by the increased number of joint appeals, statements and communications. Special Procedures have also contributed to UN efforts to mainstream human rights. We encourage the Special Procedures to continue their efforts in this area.

Finally Mr. President, we believe it is important for all UN Member States to uphold and protect the dignity, and ensure the personal safety, of all Special Procedures mandate holders. We also recall that the Council strongly rejects any act of intimidation or reprisal against any individual or group who cooperate with Special Procedures, in line with paragraph 30 of Council resolution 16/21. We underscore the important leadership role of the President of the Council and his Bureau in both regards.

I thank you.