

HRC 34, item 2 Interactive Dialogue with the High Commissioner

9 March 2017

Statement of Portugal on behalf of the

Group of Friends on national implementation, reporting and follow-up

Mr. President

I have the honour to deliver this Statement on behalf of a group of States from all regions, Angola, Bahamas, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador, Fiji, Georgia, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Paraguay, Republic of Korea, Seychelles, Slovenia, Sweden, Timor-Leste, Tunisia and my own country Portugal, that have come together to form a new Group of Friends focused on strengthening domestic implementation, impact, reporting and follow-up.

This new initiative aims to bring together States, OHCHR, UN agencies, NHRIs, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders, on an informal, open, inclusive and voluntary basis, to share national good practice on implementation coordination, impact, measurement, reporting and follow-up, discuss common challenges, and learn lessons. The Group of Friends is focusing on what the Office of the High Commissioner has termed: 'national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up' (NMRFs). Allow me at the outset to congratulate the Office on its engagement and its outstanding work to-date in helping States establish and strengthen NMRFs.

Mr. President,

Effective national implementation of the human rights recommendations generated by the main UN human rights mechanisms (UPR, Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures), and ensuring and measuring their impact on the ground, has recently emerged as a policy priority for the international human rights system. This agenda is seen as crucial to the improved enjoyment of all human rights around the world, as well as to the realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in a manner that 'leaves no-one behind.'

A key pillar of this emerging 'implementation agenda' is the establishment and/or the strengthening of dedicated national mechanisms responsible for implementation coordination, reporting and follow-up. An increasingly large number of States are today putting in place different and increasingly sophisticated national mechanisms, and are also working together to share experiences and cooperate.

Last year, OHCHR compiled a global study and guide on NMRFs, which was also instrumental in drawing international attention to this important area of UN work. The

guide helps identify emerging good practice at national level and demonstrates the added-value of such structures in coordinating and tracking national follow-up and implementation, while reducing the 'reporting burden' on States, and boosting the mainstreaming of human rights across national policies. A 'no one size fits all' approach, the exchange of good practise, at bilateral and regional levels, as well as technical and capacity-support are emerging as important 'trends' in this dialogue.

Motivated by the promising work done so far, and willing to bring all these efforts together, the new Group of Friends aims to:

- Create an informal space for dialogue and exchange between States that have established or are undergoing the process of establishing such mechanisms, or that are simply willing to engage in dialogue on questions of implementation, follow-up, impact and reporting.
- Create a space for developing activities that would support the further development of such national mechanisms.
- Create a space for sharing good practice, lessons-learned and challenges faced by Sates at domestic level in implementing, tracking and reporting on human rights recommendations and identifying ways to better overcome challenges, including through bilateral and regional experience exchange. In this context, the Group welcomes that Georgia announced its intention to organize a first regional platform in May.
- Create an informal channel allowing for communication, reflection and the sharing of information with OHCHR, other interested UN agencies, Treaty Bodies, Special Procedures, civil society and other relevant stakeholders.
- Promote the role of national mechanisms responsible for implementation coordination, reporting and follow-up and the wider 'implementation agenda' within other related Council initiatives, with the ultimate aim of boosting efforts conducive to the overall strengthening of the on-the-ground enjoyment of human rights for all.

Thank you.