

35th regular session of the Human Rights Council
General Debate Item 2 - Interactive Dialogue with High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein
7 June 2017

Statement of Portugal

Thank you Mr President.

Mr High Commissioner, Portugal welcomes your update to the Human Rights Council and praises you and your Office for your efforts and constant activity in upholding human rights in the face of deepening crises.

We fully concur with you on the challenges as to the relevance of the UPR and the need for full implementation of recommendations from all human rights mechanisms. Priority should be set for advancing an effective and systemic "human rights implementation agenda". We should cease the opportunity created by the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, the SGNU reforms and the beginning of the Third Cycle of the UPR. Let me highlight the huge potential we see in the emerging dedicated national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up in aggregating different actors and views on the ground and boosting domestic implementation across the board. This also embodies the willingness of states to exchange national practice, discuss common challenges, and learn lessons. We would very much welcome your further views on how to improve effective impact on the ground.

We underline Portugal's opposition to the death penalty, for all cases and in all circumstances. As historically pioneer in the abolition of the capital punishment, 150 years ago, we refuse all attempts to justify this inhuman and cruel punishment and call on the countries that still retain the death penalty to establish a de facto moratorium, as a first step towards the full abolition of the capital punishment.

We reiterate our firm commitment to continue to promote a human rights based approach to mental health, which for too long has been covered by layers of stigma, prejudice, segregation, exclusion and abuses and violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

As we speak, more than 60 million people in the world, including a huge number of children, are away from their homes and countries, expelled by war, famine or other motives, and facing all sorts of violations and abuses of their human rights. We continue to be concerned with the political rhetoric relating to migration, that attempt to relativize human rights obligations of States in relation to migrants or refugees. Portugal hopes that your Office may continue to play a significant role in upholding not only the universality of human rights, but also their legally binding nature.

Thank you.

