

Statement on Item 5

Statement by Ambassador Raimonds Jansons, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Latvia to the United Nations in Geneva, 27th session of the Human Rights Council, September 19, 2014

Joint Statement on the Promotion of Universality of the Standing Invitations to all Special Procedures

Agenda item 5

Human Rights bodies and mechanisms

Mr President,

I have the honour to address the Council on behalf of 64 countries representing all UN regional groups. The list of countries subscribing to this statement will be posted on extranet:

Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Maldives, Malta, Moldova (Republic of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Tunisia, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay.

More than 160 countries have been visited by at least one special procedure mandate holder. The ability of special procedures to conduct independent country missions is their most prominent tool available. Continuously increasing number of the country visits in recent years is an encouraging sign of cooperation between the special procedures and countries concerned. However, the special procedures on some instances have also signalled that occasionally the requests have been called into question and some countries have never been visited by a mandate holder.

The founding documents of the Council and in particular resolutions 5/2 and 16/21 underline the importance of strengthening the cooperation between states and special procedures.

The supporters of this statement are united by a decision to extend standing invitations to all the special procedures. In doing so, we have demonstrated our readiness to cooperate fully with the

Human Rights Council and have contributed to the strengthening of the special procedures system. The standing invitation is also issued by us in recognition of the important role that the system of special procedures has played and will further play for the fulfillment of the mandate of the Human Rights Council.

Whilst we are aware that the commitment to receive special procedures is voluntary, we encourage all countries that have not done so, to extend a standing invitation to the special procedures, and once this commitment is made to honour it.

We would also like to reiterate that issuing standing invitations should result in genuine cooperation with the special procedures and must go hand in hand with states respecting the working methods of the special procedures with a view to allow them to discharge their duties consistently, independently and effectively.

We note with satisfaction, that since the beginning of this initiative standing invitations have been issued in more than hundred instances, thus further strengthening cross-regional nature of this initiative.

We are also pleased to note the number of recommendations made during the UPR to issue a standing invitation, and we invite all States to accept this call for cooperation. We also encourage States to continue to raise the issue of special procedures visits in the subsequent UPR working groups.

Mr President,

We encourage candidates to the Council to make concrete commitments to invite and cooperate with the special procedures as part of their campaigns. We also call upon the current members of the Council that have not yet extended a standing invitation to demonstrate their support for the Council and its mechanisms by doing so.

Finally, we invite all states to continue to cooperate with and assist the special procedures mandate holders and to promote an open dialogue in the performance of their tasks.

Thank you Mr President.