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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

28 November 2012

Excellency,

Let me first express the hope that the recent cease-fire which put an end to the escalation of violence between Israel and the Gaza Strip will endure, so as to avoid additional losses of innocent lives on both sides. I also sincerely hope that this will constitute a first step towards a comprehensive peace agreement based on the relevant U.N. resolutions and the political commitments of all concerned parties.

Let me now turn to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), one of the most valued mechanisms by the Council and by the international community, more generally. As you may know, the first UPR cycle which ended in March 2012, gave the opportunity, for the first time in the history of the U.N., to review the human rights situation in each U.N. Member State (193 States in total). All States face human rights challenges and in this regard, the truly universal nature of the UPR allowing for a comprehensive review of all U.N. Member States is of great added-value.

In this regard, it is particularly worthwhile mentioning that all 193 States that underwent the UPR review were subjected to exactly the same modalities, whatever their particular size or circumstances. Furthermore, the 100% participation rate was commended by all delegations which took the floor during the debate at the General Assembly plenary or during the interactive dialogue at the Third Committee held in New York on 14 November 2012. Each of these delegations also publicly committed to continue on this virtuous path.

While the UPR process is a peer review of an international nature, it is mainly a national process. Indeed, both before and after the actual review takes place in the Council's framework, the UPR offers significant room for dialogue and reflection at

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the national level on the human rights challenges that lie ahead and on the follow-up to be given to the recommendations received. This consultative and constructive process is meant to create a space for civil society to provide input and to contribute to the implementation of concrete measures aiming at following-up on the recommendations received.

As a democratic country, Israel surely values this kind of tool set up by the universal system of human rights, which complements governmental efforts in the promotion and protection of human rights. Israel was first reviewed on 4 December 2008, and its second review is scheduled on 29 January 2013, as per the applicable rules. I am thus writing to you, Excellency, to remind your authorities of this commitment, hoping to have a delegation from your country at the 15th session of the UPR Working Group, in order to present an update on the human rights situation of Israel and to engage in an interactive dialogue with Council Members and Observer States.

Although the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has not yet received the national report of Israel, I hope it will be sent soon, so that it may be translated and distributed in time before the session. As you may know, the national report is considered together with two other documents, i.e. the U.N. compilation, and the summary of civil society inputs. The national report is voluntary but it definitely enriches our debates by presenting the State's perspective on progress made and efforts underway or planned.

States under review also have the opportunity to focus on their priority issues during their oral opening statement on the day of the review. Let me here underline that until now, most States have been represented at high-level during their review, thereby demonstrating their respect for this process and the positive impact that the UPR may have at the national level.

Finally, I would like to inform you that on 14 January 2013, an Organizational Meeting of the UPR Working Group 15th session will take place in order to look at every detail needed to have a successful session, and in particular in relation to the selection of the troikas of Member States that will facilitate the various reviews, in accordance with the Institutional Building Package of the Council. The presence of a representative of your country would be of importance in drawing by lot the members of the troika that will serve on 29 January 2013.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Laura Dupuy Lasserre
President of the Human Rights Council