

Joint Statement – HRC 30

General Debate (Item 5.)

Mr. President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights on behalf of the core group of countries, namely Hungary, Ireland, Uruguay, and my country, Ghana, as well as on behalf of 52 other countries*.

We remain deeply concerned by continued acts of intimidation and reprisal against those who cooperate or seek to cooperate with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights, including the Human Rights Council. We strongly condemn all acts of intimidation or reprisal and urge all States to prevent and refrain from such acts. As the Secretary General states in his Report on reprisals before this session, "all acts of intimidation and reprisal, no matter how subtle or explicit, are completely and utterly unacceptable and should be halted immediately and unconditionally."

We believe that everyone has the right to unhindered access to and communication with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights. All Member States have a duty to respect, promote and ensure the realization of this right

Mr. President,

We welcome the increased attention devoted to reprisals by special procedures and treaty bodies. The recent adoption of the guidelines against intimidation or reprisals by the chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies is especially welcome, as is the appointment by a number of treaty bodies of rapporteurs or focal points on reprisals.

States have the obligation and responsibility to prevent, investigate and ensure accountability for any acts of reprisal. The Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the President, together with the Bureau of the Human Rights Council also have a role in exposing and ensuring

that States address such reprisals, and we especially welcome and appreciate the actions by the current President and Bureau in this regard.

Regional human rights bodies also have an important role to play. In this context, we particularly appreciate the resolution adopted last May by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights extending the scope of the mandate of its Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in Africa, giving this mechanism the additional responsibility to document, address, and report on cases of reprisals against civil society stakeholders and we would encourage other regional human rights bodies to take a similar approach

Mr. President,

As far as HRC resolution 24/24 is concerned, we take note of developments in New York and consider that it is now high time for the Secretary-General to appoint a focal point on the issue of reprisals, taking into consideration the concerns raised by some States on some of the provisions in the resolution. We trust that these concerns will be appropriately addressed while appointing the focal point.

Finally, we wish to reaffirm our conviction that the Human Rights Council has a moral and legal duty to address reprisals. During the last review of its work and functioning the Human Rights Council strongly rejected “any act of intimidation or reprisal” and urged “States to prevent and ensure adequate protection against such acts”. We are committed to continue making all necessary efforts in order to make this consensual decision by the Council a reality.

Thank you, Mr. President!

***At the time of delivery, the following countries joined the statement:** Australia, Austria, Belgium, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, New-Zealand, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Ukraine, Uruguay