

**Statement**

**Item 6**

**General Debate**

**Friday 18 March 2011**

Mr. President,

On February 24<sup>th</sup>, the Human Rights Council completed the Review of its Work and Functioning and we welcome your efforts to lead this process. All stakeholders invested a significant amount of energy and resources towards a review that suggested promising results and created expectations from civil society around the world. Unfortunately, closer to its end, the process was diluted to a mere 'fine-tuning' exercise as opposed to a thorough Review. The adopted Outcome of the Review and Functioning of the UN Human Rights Council did not introduce major improvements in any area, including in that of the Universal Periodic Review. Many proposals made by various stakeholders that were specifically aimed at strengthening the UPR were dropped over the course of the Review. The Outcome document represents, as it stands, a weak instrument that does not enhance the UPR mechanism.

Mr. President,

37 NGOs from Geneva and around the world came together last October to put forward proposals to improve the UPR process. This Joint NGO Contribution was submitted to the first session of the Open-ended intergovernmental working group in October 2010 and contained seven key issues upon which actions needed to be taken to strengthen the UPR. Although some proposals contained in this Contribution were partially supported, others - very strong ones – were disregarded.

Mr. President,

We believe that the UPR mechanism has a much greater potential than reflected in the present Outcome of the Review. As it remains for the General Assembly to have a final say in the Council's Review, if the Outcome document presented by the Council were adopted by the General Assembly in its current form, the UPR would not benefit from it.

As a result, we call on the General Assembly to carefully revise the Outcome of the Council's Review and make the changes to enhance the UPR and enable it to better fulfil its mandate, which is to improve the human rights situation on the ground. Herewith we again stress the need to include the following clauses into the UPR part of the Council's Review:

1. National consultations should be well prepared, be based on a clear timeframe and held well in advance of the preparation of the State report and fully include civil society.

2. Opportunities should be given during the interactive dialogue for the OHCHR compilation of the UN information and summary of stakeholder submissions to be introduced to the UPR Working Group.
3. Recommendations should be focused and action-oriented. Particular attention should be given to recommendations from other human rights mechanisms.
4. Mechanisms and modalities for the assessment of the implementation of recommendations should be developed.
5. NGOs without ECOSOC status should be able to make comments on the UPR outcome at the plenary adoption.

We also support other proposals aimed at enhancing the UPR, such as the implementation plan to be submitted by the State under Review. These key proposals, if supported by the General Assembly, will ensure the effectiveness and progress of the UPR mechanism and will demonstrate the value added by the UPR globally and on the ground.