

Human Rights Council opens thirtieth session, hears an update by the High Commissioner for Human Rights

MORNING/MIDDAY

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High-level Dignitaries from Sri Lanka, Mexico and the United Kingdom Address the Council

The Human Rights Council this morning opened its thirtieth regular session, hearing an address by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein in which he updated the Council on the activities of his Office. The Council then held a general debate on the update. It also heard from Mangala Samaraweera, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka; Roberto Campa, Undersecretary for Human Rights, Ministry of the Interior of Mexico; and Hugo Swire, Minister of State in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom.

Joachim Rucker, President of the Human Rights Council, in his opening remarks underlined the importance of civil society in the work of the Council, and reiterated concerns regarding cases of reprisals and intimidation that had been brought to his attention.

High Commissioner Zeid expressed specific concerns at the international community's failure to address the situation in Syria. Some countries in the Middle East – Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey – and in Europe – Germany and Sweden – were showing commendable humanity and leadership when it came to hosting refugees and migrants needing protection, and he implored decision-makers in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, as well as Europe, to take swift action to establish effective and principled migration governance and urged European States to put in place an architecture of migration governance that was far more comprehensive, thoughtful, principled and effective, and to expand channels of regular migration and resettlement, which would prevent deaths and cut smuggling. The people most responsible for migration were those leaders who had failed to uphold human rights, and robbed their people of hope, said the High Commissioner. He called on all States to accept scrutiny and to fully commit to the implementation of human rights recommendations by United Nations mechanisms. Upholding human rights was intrinsic to the obligations of sovereignty.

In the ensuing general debate, delegations said that the migration crisis, which was above all a refugee crisis, confronted the world with its failure in ensuring the realization of the human rights of the most vulnerable populations. Although the present situation stemmed from conflicts

in the region and the atrocities perpetrated by the Islamic State, it was exacerbated by the political and institutional disarray left behind by foreign interventions and misguided strategies for the Middle East, often outside international law. There was a need to deal with human rights violations in countries of origin of the numerous refugees and migrants, and to adopt political and economic solutions which would be aligned to international human rights norms and would ensure that human mobility was seen as an indispensable factor of development for both countries of origin and receiving countries. Speakers condemned the crimes and acts of violence committed by ISIL/Daesh. They said that particular attention needed to be paid to terrorism and extremist violence: measures to combat it and de-radicalize societies should address recruitment and financing, while perpetrators of terrorist acts should be held accountable and prosecuted according to international laws and standards.

Addressing the Council, Mangala Samaraweera, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, noted that the recent formation of the National Unity Government allowed traditional rivals in Sri Lankan politics to come together and herald a new culture of consensual politics and so face the important challenges of reconciliation and peacebuilding. The new Government recognized that the process of reconciliation involved addressing broad areas of truth seeking, justice, reparations and non-recurrence, and that the grievances of the Tamil people needed to be addressed.

In his address to the Human Rights Council, Roberto Campa, Undersecretary for Human Rights, Ministry of the Interior of Mexico, reiterated Mexico's commitment to the protection of journalists and said that a specialized prosecution unit for crimes against freedom of expression had been established within the Attorney General's Office, which conducted investigations on common law crimes committed against journalists and human rights defenders. Mexico had drafted the bill on enforced disappearances and was in the process of drafting the law on torture and cruel and inhumane treatment based on international standards.

Hugo Swire, Minister of State in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, told the Council that the United Kingdom had granted humanitarian protection to almost 5,000 Syrians through its normal asylum procedure since 2011 and had committed to resettling a further 20,000 Syrians from the region over the next five years. The United Kingdom was already the second largest bilateral donor to this appalling humanitarian crisis. The United Kingdom's aid would be used to provide basic services to people in Syria and in neighbouring countries, helping them to meet their basic needs where they were rather than taking the desperate decision to risk their lives by attempting to get to Europe.

Taking floor in the general debate were Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union, Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Arab Group, Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, Algeria on behalf of the African Group, Egypt on behalf of the Like-Minded Group, Qatar, Morocco, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Cuba, Argentina, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, France, Brazil, Namibia, Venezuela, Bangladesh, India, Russia, Algeria, Ethiopia, China, United States, Portugal, Pakistan, Nigeria, South Africa, Japan, Paraguay, United Arab Emirates, Montenegro, Botswana, El Salvador, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Maldives, Gabon, Ghana, Sierra Leone, United Kingdom, Switzerland, the Republic of the Congo, Turkey, Norway, Spain, Thailand, Nepal, Jordan, Kuwait, Australia, Benin, Tunisia, Angola, Switzerland, Malaysia,

Italy, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Greece, Iraq, Belgium, Chile, Iran, Ecuador, Senegal, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Croatia, Honduras, Haiti, Moldova, Eritrea, Armenia, Bahrain, Serbia, Libya, Myanmar, Sudan, Hungary, Costa Rica, Philippines, Colombia, Uganda, Niger, Djibouti, Guatemala, Uruguay, the African Union, Egypt, and Burundi.

Also speaking in the general debate were the following non-governmental organizations: Al Khoei Foundation, International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, Human Rights House Foundation, Amnesty International, European Union of Public Relations, Human Rights Watch, Arab Commission for Human Rights, Centro de Estudio Legales y Sociales, Institut International pour la Paix, China Society for Human Rights Studies, World Environment and Resource Council, Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association, Liberation, Commission to Study the Organization of Peace, World Muslim Congress, Maarij Foundation for Peace and Development, Khiam Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture, Agence Internationale pour le Developpement, Global Network for Rights in Development, International Lawyers Organization, Association Burkinabé pour la Survie de l'Enfance, Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain, Iraqi Development Organization, International Service for Human Rights, CIVICUS – World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Verein Sudwind Entwicklungspolitik, and Federacion de Asociaciones de Defensa y Promocion de los Derechos Humanos.

The Council is holding a full day of meetings today. At 4:30 p.m., the Council will hold a clustered interactive dialogue with the Working Group on arbitrary detention and with the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery.

Opening Statements

JOACHIM RÜCKER, President of the Human Rights Council, opened the session and presented the draft programme of work. He underlined the importance of civil society in the work of the Council, and reiterated concerns regarding cases of reprisals and intimidation that had been brought to his attention.

The Council held a minute of silence in memory of Alison Monani Magaya, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of South Sudan, who passed away in August.

ZEID RA'AD AL HUSSEIN, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, started his opening statement with a reference to the images of the little boy, Aylan Al Kurdi, who recently drowned trying to reach Europe. He expressed specific concerns at the international community's failure to address the situation in Syria, and welcomed that some countries in the Middle East – Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey – and in Europe – Germany and Sweden – were showing commendable humanity and leadership when it came to hosting refugees and migrants needing protection. He implored decision-makers in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific – as well as Europe – to take swift action to establish effective and principled migration governance and urged European States to put in place an architecture of migration governance that was far more comprehensive, thoughtful, principled and effective. He underlined the importance of expanded channels of regular migration and resettlement, which would prevent deaths and cut smuggling.

The High Commissioner underlined, however, that the people most responsible for migration were those leaders who had failed to uphold human rights, and robbed their people of hope. He therefore called on all States to accept scrutiny or criticism and to fully commit to the implementation of human rights recommendations by United Nations mechanisms. He underlined the importance of accountability, and said upholding human rights were intrinsic to the obligations of sovereignty. When States limited public freedoms and the independent voices of civic activity, they denied themselves the benefits of public engagement, and undermined national security, national prosperity and collective progress. Civil society was a valuable partner, not a threat. Too many countries had taken extremely serious steps to restrict or persecute the voices of civil society. The High Commissioner expressed concerns about the detention and interrogation in recent months of more than 100 lawyers in China, and was dismayed by the stigmatisation of foreign-funded organizations in the Russian Federation, where a 2012 law had resulted in marginalising and discrediting organizations that contributed to the public good. Reprisals had targeted some activists who had participated in Council-related activities, undermining the legitimacy and credibility of the international human rights institutions. The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offered real hope for stability, prosperity and conflict prevention, and had to be implemented, notably through the Universal Periodic Review. In December, the international community would gather for the United Nations Conference on Climate Change, an issue so vast and threatening to peace, prosperity, social justice and indeed life itself that it demanded that the international community seek solutions together, or face irreparable damage to humanity.

The High Commissioner referred to the human rights situations in the Central African Republic, Sudan and South Sudan, and expressed concerns that impunity remained for perpetrators of human rights violations in these countries. He expressed concerns about continuing violence in Somalia, Mali and Burundi, and about crimes against humanity in Eritrea. He urged Iran to make commensurate progress in human rights, and expressed concerns about arbitrary detentions and human rights violations against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. In the Maldives, the rule of law continued to be manipulated for political ends, he said, while in Malaysia, the Government had increasingly sought to restrict public debate and protest around issues of governance and corruption. High Commissioner Zeid regretted that Australia continued to restrict independent monitoring of detention centres for asylum seekers arriving by boat, and urged the authorities of Nepal to ensure that the security forces upheld human rights at all times. He was disturbed by the recent collective deportation of more than 1,000 Colombians from Venezuela, with lack of due process, destruction of property and separation of children from their families, and by the Dominican Republic's continuing deportations of people of Haitian descent. He remained very concerned about persistent discrimination against African-Americans in the United States, and was alarmed by the high number of civilian casualties in Ukraine since the beginning of the conflict. He referred to corruption in the Republic of Moldova, and to continued social exclusion and forced evictions of Roma in Bulgaria and France. The High Commissioner also referred to recent protests in Guatemala, Honduras and Ecuador. He welcomed the Mexican Government's decision to seek the assistance of the Inter-American Commission to address the case of the 43 students disappeared one year before, and likely murdered by criminal gangs connected to corrupt officials, and urged the Brazilian authorities to investigate the killing of a leader of the Guarani-Kaiowa people last month.

Abuses by ISIL remained a serious concern, High Commissioner Zeid said. He urged in the strongest possible terms an immediate end to the devastating obstruction of humanitarian aid to the people of Syria and of Yemen, and condemned indiscriminate attacks on civilians in Libya. He remained profoundly dismayed by the persistence of serious human rights concerns in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory and excessive use of force in the West Bank. He then referred to his Office's recent visit in Morocco, Western Sahara, and to the Saharan refugee camps near Tindouf, in Algeria, and stressed that respect for the rights of the Saharan population remained essential to achieving resolution of this long-standing dispute. He underlined the importance of accountability in Sri Lanka, as well as for allegations of sexual violence by peacekeepers in the Central African Republic. Later in this session, the Office of the High Commissioner would update the Council on human rights developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya and Ukraine, and on violations and atrocities committed by Boko Haram, and would present reports on human rights in Yemen, technical assistance to Iraq, and the work of the Office in Cambodia. Additionally, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention would be presenting the 'UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Remedies and Procedures on the Right of Anyone Deprived of their Liberty by Arrest or Detention to Bring Proceedings before Court.' An expert meeting would take place to identify steps that States and others could take to end abuses against intersex people.

Statements by Dignitaries

MANGALA SAMARAWEEERA, Foreign Affairs Minister of Sri Lanka, noted that the recent formation of a National Unity Government allowed traditional rivals in Sri Lankan politics to come together and herald a new culture of consensual politics. The formation of the National Unity Government was essential to obtain the bipartisan consensus that was necessary to face the important challenges, such as reconciliation and peacebuilding. The appointment of the Tamil National Alliance leader as the leader of the opposition sent a clear message that in the new Sri Lanka, considerations such as ethnicity, religion, class or gender would not be used to deny anyone their rightful place. The new Government recognized that the process of reconciliation involved addressing the broad areas of truth seeking, justice, reparations and non-recurrence. Accordingly, the grievances of the Tamil people needed to be addressed. The Government, the President and the Prime Minister had already taken some important steps to create conditions for initiating a dialogue aimed at a political settlement. Two mechanisms were established to advance truth seeking: a Commission for Truth, Justice, Reconciliation and Non-Recurrence, which would be evolved in consultation with relevant authorities of South Africa; and an Office on Missing Persons, based on the principles of the families' rights to know, and which would be set up in cooperation with expertise from the International Committee of the Red Cross. In addition, a Judicial Mechanism with a Special Counsel was being proposed, in order to take into account the right of victims to a fair remedy, and to address the problem of impunity. As for the reparations, an Office for Reparations was to be set up in order to facilitate the implementation of relevant recommendations. In order to guarantee non-recurrence, a series of measures was proposed, including administrative and judicial reform, and the adoption of a new Constitution.

ROBERTO CAMPA, Undersecretary for Human Rights, Ministry of the Interior of Mexico, said that Mexico actively participated in the work of the Human Rights Council in order to effectively tackle human rights challenges, and said that it was through cooperation between States and with

civil society that innovative strategies could be put in place to fulfil human rights obligations internationally and nationally. Mexico was firmly committed to the protection of the right to freedom of expression and of opinion, and the protection of journalists. It had set up a specialized prosecution unit for crimes against freedom of expression within the Attorney General's Office, which was now able to conduct investigations on common law crimes committed against journalists. This mechanism had protected 450 journalists and human rights defenders to date. Another priority issue for Mexico was enforced disappearances, and its July 2015 Constitutional amendment authorized the legislative to pass laws on enforced disappearances and torture. The bill on enforced disappearances had been completed and it included elements on search for disappeared persons, a registry of disappeared persons and attention and care for families of victims. Mexico was working on the draft bill on torture and ill, cruel and inhumane treatment based on international standards and the recommendations it had received from various human rights bodies. Both laws were general laws and would therefore be applicable in the entire territory. The Standard Protocol for Investigation of Torture and the Standard Protocol for the Search for Disappeared Persons and the Investigation of the Crime of Enforced Disappearances had been adopted, in order to standardize procedures throughout the country.

HUGO SWIRE, Minister of State in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, said that the United Kingdom had granted humanitarian protection to almost 5,000 Syrians through its normal asylum procedure since 2011 and had committed to resettling a further 20,000 Syrians from the region over the next five years. The United Kingdom was already the second largest bilateral donor to this appalling humanitarian crisis, and last week had announced an additional £ 100 million, bringing the total contribution to £ 1 billion. The United Kingdom's aid would be used to provide basic services to people in Syria and in neighbouring countries, helping them to meet their basic needs where they were rather than taking the desperate decision to risk their lives by attempting to get to Europe. But the migration crisis was not a regional crisis, or a European one; it was a global challenge and required a global response, and a comprehensive approach to the root causes of each conflict. The world must ruthlessly tackle the smuggling networks and those who traded in and profited from human misery. The plight of those held in modern slavery must not be forgotten. The United Kingdom had passed the Modern Slavery Act earlier this year and had established an independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner. Mr. Swire stressed that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea still showed no signs of responding constructively to the concerns of the international community and said that pressure must be maintained through the United Nations. In Burma, the democratic space had shrunk. The election in November would be a crucial test of Burma's commitment to reform. Mr. Swire expressed concern about situations in the Maldives and Venezuela and commended the newly elected government in Sri Lanka for beginning to address post-conflict accountability and reconciliation.

Documentation

The Council has before it the **Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General (A/HRC/30/2)**

General Debate

Luxembourg, speaking on behalf of the European Union, condemned the crimes and acts of violence committed by ISIL/Daesh and other terrorist groups. It shared the High Commissioner's concern over the current migration and refugee situation, which disrupted the lives of millions of people around the globe. In that respect the European Union was committed to the promotion and protection of the human rights of migrants based on their security and right to life, and the principle of non-refoulement, non-discrimination and equality. It also raised concern over the escalation of violence in Burundi, the ongoing violence and human rights abuses in Syria and Ukraine, and the crises in Yemen and Libya.

Saudi Arabia, speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, called for close cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and reiterated its firm condemnation of the occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories by Israel, as well as Israel's complete disregard for international humanitarian laws and human rights. The Arab Group had taken a decision to provide all support to women, children and the elderly, and to bring about a political settlement to the Syrian crisis. The Arab Group countries were welcoming refugees from Syria and providing financial support to them. They refuted all terrorism and extremism. However, they could not accept interference in internal affairs under the pretext of protecting human rights.

Pakistan, speaking on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, underlined States' primary responsibility in promoting and protecting human rights, noting that the advocacy role of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights would remain crucial by providing technical guidance to Member States through dialogue and constructive engagement. Instead of focusing on politicized issues, States should dedicate their collective efforts to address the real challenges facing humanity, without any selectivity and discrimination. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation expressed grave concern over the migration crisis in Europe, particularly over the discrimination of Muslim migrants, and over the human rights violations in the Occupied State of Palestine.

Iran, speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, expressed concern about the increasing trend of extremism and sectarian violence in many parts of the world, which constituted a serious threat to international peace and security. The Non-Aligned Movement vigorously condemned the enormity of atrocities, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by ISIS/Daesh in clear defiance of human rights, and the systematic violation of basic human rights principles in the Occupied Palestinian Territories by the occupying power. The Non-Aligned Movement asked the High Commissioner how he planned to break the continued political impasse in the Working Group on the Right to Development.

Algeria, speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that particular attention needed to be paid to terrorism and extremist violence and said that the measures to combat it and de-radicalize societies should address issues of recruitment and financing. There was a need to deal with human rights violations in countries of origin of the numerous refugees and migrants, and to adopt political and economic solutions which would be aligned to international human rights norms and would ensure that human mobility was seen as an indispensable factor of development for both countries of origin and receiving countries.

Egypt, speaking on behalf of 24 Like-Minded Group of Countries, reiterated their commitment to addressing the problems facing the international human rights system, including the focus on civil and political rights over economic, social and cultural rights, and the lack of respect for religious and cultural diversity. Technical assistance and capacity building played a crucial role in enabling countries to implement their human rights obligations, and the Like-Minded Group of Countries encouraged the role of the High Commissioner in providing those services upon the request of the State concerned, in order to contribute to national efforts in strengthening national human rights mechanisms.

Qatar warned of the escalation of human rights violations across the globe, and underlined that action was needed to protect them. Perpetrators of terrorist acts should be held accountable and prosecuted according to international laws and standards. Qatar strongly condemned the recent attack by Israel on the Al Aqsa mosque and warned that the Syrian crisis had entered into its fifth year due to the narrow minded interests of certain parties. If such a situation continued, it would jeopardize global peace and stability. Qatar thus called on the international community to set up a new Syria which would meet the demands of its people.

Morocco urged the High Commissioner to continue all of his commendable efforts in order to uphold and protect human rights. Political solutions should be pursued in all examples of crises. As for the Western Sahara, the Government of Morocco welcomed the High Commissioner's visit in order to examine the state of human rights in that region and country. Morocco would provide all assistance to the High Commissioner's delegation in order to demonstrate that the citizens of Morocco enjoyed all of their rights. Morocco also firmly condemned the occupation of the State of Palestine by Israel, and condemned Israel's attack on the Al Aqsa mosque.

Germany noted that the protection of human rights of migrants and refugees was an obligation of all States, including countries of destination, transit and origin. The promotion of human rights in the countries of origin remained an imperative in light of the conflicts, repression, poverty, discrimination and poor governance that pushed people to leave their homes. Germany thus welcomed the fact that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reflected a human rights dimension. Germany remained concerned about the shrinking space for civil society, noting that civil society organizations were an essential part of the protection and promotion of human rights.

Ireland agreed that sovereignty could not be damaged by commentary or criticism, and stressed the importance of the independence of the High Commissioner. If States failed to address and give adequate attention to major issues, including migration, climate change, conflict and impunity, they would be failing their duties and the credibility of the Council. Ireland underlined the importance of integrating the input and perspective of the field into the work and debates in the Council, and commended the Office of the High Commissioner for the quality of its reports. Ireland finally reiterated the importance of civil society in assisting in building more healthy, secure and sustainable States.

Netherlands agreed that the international community had to protect both refugees and migrants, and commended the increased role of the High Commissioner in addressing this issue. The

Netherlands pointed out the responsibility of the States of origin perpetrating human rights violations that forced people to flee their country. It regretted that some delegations still maintained a selective approach or pertained to internal affairs of countries. Syria, for instance, had been shielded from international censuring. Human rights were of international concern, the Netherlands said. The United Nations was in this regard answerable to future governments and leaders.

Republic of Korea said recent developments concerning migrants in Europe demonstrated that human rights were deeply intertwined with peace, security and sustainable development. It welcomed that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had recently opened a regional office in the country to investigate abuses in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Republic of Korea reiterated its firm commitment to the independence of the Office, and stressed the importance of ensuring the role of civil society without reprisals.

Cuba regretted that the High Commissioner's statement had not been previously circulated among Member States, and warned that the politicization of issues would not contribute to mutual cooperation and understanding among countries. At a time when a significant migrant crisis was being experienced, it would be useful to provide an update on how migrants' and refugees' rights were respected. The composition of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had to be geographically balanced in order to avoid the politicization of issues in the Council.

Argentina underlined the importance of the protection of civilian populations in conflicts. The current migrant and refugee crisis required creative solutions and Argentina called on States to act on the basis of solidarity and humanity. The Council had to continue to analyse the conflict in Syria and ways to help the endangered population. Argentina emphasized that the elderly suffered a particular vulnerability, whereas the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community continued to suffer from discrimination, despite some progress made.

Indonesia underlined its commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights. In 2015, Indonesia had adopted a National Action Plan for human rights protection and established a National Secretariat in order to monitor and report on the implementation of the plan. In September 2015, Indonesia had held a workshop on businesses and human rights. It was committed to improve the rights of women, persons with disabilities and domestic workers. Indonesia was also consistent in dealing with migrants, emphasizing that the root causes of migration should be addressed.

Saudi Arabia said that it was extremely important to comply with agreed working methods in the Council, which included dissemination of all reports in advance in order to ensure an effective and positive engagement. Saudi Arabia was proud to comply with Islamic Sharia and all international human rights instruments and stressed that the universality of human rights did not mean imposing values contrary to those of Islamic faith. Saudi Arabia expressed concern about the violation of human rights of Muslims in the world, in particular those committed by Israel and Myanmar.

France said that human rights violations were behind the exodus of refugees that Europe was

facing and reiterated its determination to respond to this challenge with humanity, and with respect for principles of responsibility and solidarity, and respect for all human rights of all persons. France underlined the importance of human rights for an effective response to existing crises and the prevention of future ones, which were not an option or negotiable, but an imperative. Whenever human rights were flouted, this gave rise to extremism. The world had a duty to stop Daesh and in this sense the roadmap adopted at the end of the Paris Conference was crucial.

Brazil said that the migration crisis, which was above all a refugee crisis, confronted the world with its failure in ensuring the realization of the human rights of the most vulnerable populations. Although the present situation stemmed from conflicts in the region and the atrocities perpetrated by the Islamic State, it was exacerbated by the political and institutional disarray left behind by foreign interventions and misguided strategies for the Middle East, often outside international law. The Council should review existing gaps between the commitments that inspired its creation and the crude realities on the ground, redouble its efforts on prevention, and focus on the structural causes of violations and the importance of dialogue.

Namibia said the world was facing the worst migration crisis since the Second World War, and said humanitarian aid had to be upheld to both migrants and asylum seekers without selectivity. Ignoring the root causes of migration would not help, and Namibia underlined in this regard the importance of the right to development. It regretted that some States continued to deny the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development, thus exacerbating poverty and instability. Namibia expressed support to the right of the Palestinian people and the people of Western Sahara to self-determination, and underlined the importance of implementing the post 2015 development agenda.

Venezuela said it extended welcome and refuge to migrants from all regions, and ensured that they enjoyed the same rights as nationals. Colombians were always welcomed in Venezuela, and 20,000 Syrian refugees would be welcomed in the country. The Office of the High Commissioner had not provided an appropriate response to the violations of the rights of migrants. Venezuela had taken the decision to carry out border controls in areas where crimes were being perpetrated. It was regrettable that the High Commissioner had made remarks against Venezuela in his statement.

Bangladesh said the Office of the High Commissioner had the responsibility to address equitably all rights, including the right to development. The lack of adequate emphasis by the High Commissioner on climate change was concerning. Receiving States should take adequate measures to protect the rights of migrants regardless of their origins, nationality, religion and legal status. Bangladesh said the most effective way to safeguard human rights was often to strengthen the capacities of national governments in accordance with their need and consent. The report of the Joint Inspection Unit could provide ample understanding and basis of what needed to be done to re-organize the work of the Office of the High Commissioner.

India reminded that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development would focus on the elimination of poverty. However, that goal would remain an illusion if a large number of people continued living in abject poverty. Development should be achieved in a balanced manner. The

international community had only paid lip service to the grave ongoing humanitarian crisis of migrants and refugees. India remained concerned over the unhealthy dependence of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on extra-budgetary resources. It thus called for a greater synergy between the Joint Inspection Unit and the Office in order to improve the efficiency of the Office.

Russian Federation voiced concern over the situation in Ukraine, particularly restrictions of freedom of expression and assembly, and violence perpetrated by the Ukrainian forces. Despite the efforts of the international community, the Government in Kyiv had not lifted the sanctions on the Donbass region. Russia warned that terrorism caused chaos in the Middle East and Africa, adding that a broad coalition should be formed to combat terrorism on all fronts. The irresponsible and disastrous interference in the internal affairs of countries in the Middle East and Africa had caused a mass influx of refugees and migrants. Russia also criticized the European Union Member States which erected walls to prevent migrants from entering.

Algeria encouraged the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue its efforts to protect and promote human rights, and to reduce development differences between States. There was a close link between poverty and migratory flows. However, the current migratory flow could not only be explained by terrorism. The root causes of migration should be investigated more closely. Algeria condemned the occupation of the State of Palestine by Israel. It also welcomed the visit of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to Western Sahara and called upon it to ensure full observance of human rights in that territory.

Ethiopia said that terrorism unfortunately continued to be a global menace and that experience had demonstrated that it could not be defeated by a single country or organization, but only by coordinated and well-planned collective efforts and actions. In this regard, the continued success of the African Union Mission to Somalia and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development countries against the terrorist organization Al Shabab in Somalia was a point in case.

China reaffirmed its strong commitment to the United Nations Charter and the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. China hoped that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights would provide sufficient resources for the implementation of the right to development. China was concerned about the situation of refugees and called upon the international community to reflect on its root causes, all the while respecting the principles of sovereignty and independence of Member States.

United States welcomed the attention of the High Commissioner to the escalating migrant crisis affecting Europe, parts of Asia and Northern Africa and remained dismayed at the lack of respect for international humanitarian law by ISIL. The United States reiterated its ongoing support for the United Nations Special Envoy on Syria, Staffan de Mistura. Human rights in Sudan remained a source of serious concern, as human rights violations and abuses continued with impunity, including bombing of civilians and sexual and gender-based violence.

Portugal said the critical situation of migrants and refugees at the borders of European countries provided the most egregious example of dehumanization and exploitation of mass tragedy. Efforts had to be directed towards the root causes of forced displacement and migration, which

resulted from gross, systematic and unchecked human rights violations. A rights-based approach to financing for development had to ensure that the benefits of development were accessible to all and eliminated discriminatory barriers to the enjoyment of basic services.

Pakistan said it was a democratic State facing challenges relating to terrorism. It benefited from a robust and vibrant civil society, and had an independent judiciary upholding the rule of law. Pakistan was strongly committed to human rights, and a National Institution on the issue had been established. A National Commission on Minorities had also been functional since 2014. Pakistan was also committed to ensure the right to development and to advance the situation of women.

Nigeria shared the concerns by the High Commissioner over the situation of migrants fleeing to Europe, and commended Germany and Austria for their approach to deal with the crisis. It was important to note that these people were forced to leave their countries as a result of conflicts. Nigeria was committed to work with its international partners to combat Boko Haram.

South Africa encouraged the High Commissioner to revert back to the tradition of circulating his statement 48 hours before its delivery in order to afford States the opportunity to engage effectively on his update. South Africa underscored the interconnectedness between economic, social and cultural rights, and of civil and political rights, including the right to development. The realization of the right to development could only contribute positively towards the international community's efforts to comprehensively address the scourges of extreme poverty, inequality, underdevelopment and diseases worldwide. Those scourges constituted the root causes of migratory flows, including refugees.

Japan noted that women had been hurt in the conflicts in the twentieth century, and Japan was doing its best to make the twenty-first century an era in which women's rights would be fully respected. Japan called upon all States to participate in the panel discussion on international abductions and related matters. At this session, Japan would submit a draft resolution on extending the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for human rights in Cambodia. Japan would continue with its efforts in realizing a world free from discrimination against leprosy.

Paraguay expressed solidarity with the civilian victims of conflict across the world. Certain countries should be commended for their humanity in hosting refugees; Paraguay had indicated that it was ready to receive asylum-seekers from Syria. The international community ought to offer a comprehensive response, one that would properly address the current situation. Paraguay, along with Brazil, would submit a draft resolution on the promotion of international technical cooperation.

United Arab Emirates reiterated the invitation to continue efforts to put an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine, where collective punishment of the Palestinian people should also end. On Syria, the United Arab Emirates had provided assistance to refugee camps in Jordan; more than 100,000 Syrian citizens had arrived to the Emirates in 2015, bringing their total number in the country to 250,000. The United Arab Emirates stressed that the refugee problem could be solved only when the conflict had been resolved. Help was also provided to Lebanon so that it could preserve its stability.

Montenegro voiced concern over the evolution of extremist violence and radicalism, and condemned the crimes committed by ISIL and other terrorist groups. It lamented the fact that the civilian population in Syria had experienced an incredible amount of suffering. Montenegro also shared concern that refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan heading to a better future in Europe were subject to violence, trafficking and smuggling. The international community needed to speak with one voice in favour of an approach that addressed the root causes of migration flows and in line with the protection of fundamental rights in transit and destination countries.

Botswana expressed concern over the conflict in Syria, which was a major human rights and humanitarian catastrophe recorded in recent history. It was made worse by the reported use of chemical weapons and by ISIS terrorist activities. Botswana also strongly condemned terrorist acts committed by Boko Haram in Nigeria and neighbouring countries, as well as the conflict in South Sudan and targeted killings in Burundi. Botswana expressed concern over the plight of migrants who continued to die at sea in large numbers. It called on the international community to strengthen efforts towards finding sustainable solutions to migrants' problems.

El Salvador was aware of the concern of the High Commissioner that the United Nations was unable to confront the denial of human rights and political rights in certain parts of the world, as well as about the inaction of the international community. This was due to the lack of political will, the shortage of resources and the inadequate thinking of the international community about the root causes of crises. There could be no swift solutions to the migration crisis, but it was possible to inject a higher degree of humanitarian content in the policy and measures addressing the current challenges.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia shared the concerns expressed by the High Commissioner concerning refugees and migrants. Of particular concern was the fact that their numbers were set to increase, which called for new strategies and coordinated efforts by all stakeholders at all levels. There was a need to address the gaps in the current response to the refugees and migrants, including early warning, prosecution of traffickers, and more regular migrations routes. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was committed to supporting refugees and migrants in its territory, but warned of the shortage of resources.

Maldives said that one of the most important global issues today was the refugee crisis in Europe. Maldives was concerned by the lack of action by recipient States, while thousands of people were dying at sea. Some of those States continued to play leading roles on myriad issues across the world; it was very disappointing that those States had not been able to provide a solution for this global crisis. It was important to address the root causes, and find a solution that protected the rights of those people.

Gabon welcomed the High Commissioner's focus on migration, terrorism, poverty, education and discrimination. The question of the rights of migrants remained of great concern for Gabon, and it noted that solutions to this problem had to be the result of cooperation between countries of origin and host countries. The international community had to take political steps to resolve crises that were the root causes of migration and promote sustainable development and human rights.

Ghana expressed concerns over the refugee crisis, and underlined migrants' courage in fleeing countries where they faced abuses and human rights violations. It welcomed that many people in receiving countries had showed solidarity in hosting migrants and asylum seekers. The international community had to renew its commitment to uphold its responsibility to protect populations from atrocities and genocide. The Council had an opportunity to close gaps in the normative standards relating to the responsibility to protect. Civil society participation had to be encouraged as a mean to hear the voices of the voiceless.

Sierra Leone welcomed that the report by the High Commissioner referred to human rights concerns in various countries, including in Africa. The current migration crisis in Europe remained an issue of grave concern, and migration governance should not be at the detriment of vulnerable people crying out for help. Sierra Leone remained committed to engaging with States in promoting human rights, especially with regard to addressing racism, xenophobia, and various forms of discrimination against women and children. Sierra Leone encouraged efforts to further promote good governance, civil society participation and the implementation of Universal Periodic Review recommendations.

United Kingdom said it continued to push for an inclusive political settlement in Syria, support the Government of Iraq and work for the defeat of ISIL. All Libyan political leaders were urged to restrain their associated forces, and to make progress without delay towards a government of national accord. Widespread violations in Yemen continued to be of concern. Migration was a big challenge for everyone, and the United Kingdom was fulfilling its moral responsibility by meeting its commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of its gross national income on aid and providing resettlement for thousands of Syrian refugees.

Switzerland, speaking on the behalf of 33 States, recognized positive steps taken by Bahrain to improve the human rights situation. Efforts should continue to make the judiciary more impartial. There were still concerns over reports that human rights defenders were imprisoned, and that minors were detained for their participation in demonstrations. The 33 States were concerned about reprisals against those who had reported human rights abuses or had cooperated with the United Nations. The Government was asked to release all persons imprisoned for exercising their human rights.

Republic of Congo regretted the fact that the report of the High Commissioner had been circulated late, but appreciated activities of the Office of the High Commissioner in the reporting period. It was important that financing received under the regular budget be strengthened, so that the Office could appropriately address the growing challenges, including the migratory phenomena, socio-political crises and extreme poverty. States should, inter alia, pay attention to the realization of the right to development, the right to education and the right to a healthy environment.

Turkey said that in Syria the oppression had reached horrific dimensions and that the international community had failed the Syrian people. A political settlement was the only way for a viable solution and the implementation of the Geneva communique must remain a priority. Turkey agreed that taking solely security measures was not the right approach to address the

challenge of refugee and migrant crises; a far more comprehensive and human rights-based approach would ensure that migrants were human beings with rights.

Norway thanked the High Commissioner for his comprehensive analysis of the global human rights situation, and for his principled responses to the horrible violations and abuses of human rights. Not since the Second World War had so many people been forced to flee their homes. This was a human tragedy which needed urgent attention and more joint efforts. It was also a symptom of the failure of States in safeguarding the rights of their citizens. The well-being, safety and freedom of human rights defenders and those who voiced critical opinion were instrumental for sustainable political, social and economic development.

Spain said that refugee reception policy was at the forefront on everyone's mind, but that the policies addressing push factors of migration should not be overlooked. The Council should continue to tackle mass violations of human rights in many countries which were at the root of human movement. The international community must not provide safe haven for impunity and should ensure that the victims of human rights violations obtained justice. The Council had a role to play in the post-2015 development agenda and ensure that human rights were at the forefront.

Thailand expressed concerns over the migrant crisis and underlined the importance of cooperation to address the needs of migrants. Thailand had announced a roadmap this month to work on a new Constitution, which would be put to a referendum. A gender legislation had also recently been adopted, which showed Thailand's commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights for all.

Nepal expressed its commitment to human rights, including the right to development, and to a holistic approach for addressing human rights issues. Nepal remained involved in protecting human rights domestically, and in cooperating with international human rights mechanisms. Nepal was also committed to addressing violations perpetrated during the conflict there and ensuring justice to the victims. In the aftermath of the earthquake that devastated the country last year, Nepal had established a national authority in charge of reconstruction.

Jordan expressed concerns over the continued occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territories, and about human rights violations by the Israeli military. Jordan expressed deep concerns over the continued deterioration of the human rights situation in Syria, and expressed support for a political solution that respected the will of the Syrian people and preserved Syria's territorial integrity. Jordan also reiterated its commitment to supporting, promoting and protecting human rights and to boosting international efforts towards this end.

Kuwait continued to support the Palestinian people in facing the challenges in the context of the continuing Israeli repression. Kuwait expressed its sadness over the serious violations of human rights in Syria, and was continuing to contribute hundreds of millions of dollars for the humanitarian needs of Syrians. Kuwait supported the efforts of disseminating a culture of peace and promoting human rights. Kuwait had strengthened and promoted the culture of human rights locally and internationally.

Australia was deeply concerned by the human rights abuses arising from violent extremism in

the Middle East and Africa. It was the primary responsibility of States to protect their own populations. Australia was also concerned by the flows of people caused by persecution and violence, and the sheer scale of the dislocation was deeply troubling. Australia would resettle an additional 12,000 refugees fleeing conflicts in Syria and Iraq. Australia's places of detention were currently under independent scrutiny by a range of bodies, including the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

Benin said that the Government and the population as a whole were gravely concerned about the unprecedented migration crisis and the terrorist acts committed by Boko Haram. Benin had sent a contingent of 800 soldiers to the multinational force fighting Boko Haram. As part of its efforts to consolidate the basis for promoting freedoms and human rights, legislative and local elections had taken place in Benin in April 2015. In 2016, for the sixth time since the independence, elections for the Head of State would also take place.

Tunisia welcomed the High Commissioner's efforts to provide technical assistance and capacity building, and to support the transition in Tunisia. Tunisia also greatly appreciated partners that contributed to financing its activities. Tunisia expressed concerns over the situation of migrants, and called on all States to abide by their commitments under international law to protect the rights of persons fleeing their countries. The Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the blockade of Gaza continued to be illegal and were responsible for instability in the region.

Angola said continued violations of human rights in some parts of the world led to humanitarian disasters, such as the migrant crisis in Europe. The protection of human rights was a commitment of the entire international community. Human rights defenders had to make further efforts to distinguish themselves from political activists and avoid political turmoil that led to instability in States. Angola had made considerable progress in the field of human rights in recent years.

Switzerland was seriously concerned about the situation of persons seeking protection in other countries. In Syria, human rights violations were systematic and continued in full impunity. It was unacceptable that the authorities there continued to restrict humanitarian access. Switzerland was also concerned over human rights violations in Azerbaijan, and called upon Thailand to respect the principle of non-refoulement enshrined in several international conventions to which it was party. Switzerland finally expressed concerns about human rights in Nepal.

Malaysia remained deeply concerned with the troubling situation in Syria, which had prompted millions to flee their country. The humanitarian needs of irregular migrants had to be met, but permanent solutions to conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Libya also needed to be found. A comprehensive approach and greater understanding of the root causes was needed. Moderation was an important and common value to counter terrorism in all of its forms since it called for mutual respect, tolerance, acceptance, compromise and justice.

Italy stated that there was a pressing necessity to preserve ethnic and religious minorities, whose very survival was under threat in the Middle East. Italy had saved the lives of over 130,000 refugees at sea over the previous 18 months. It was essential that the countries of origin, transit and destination cooperated to address the humanitarian catastrophe, but it was even more important to resolve the root causes of the ongoing conflicts.

Ukraine said that the Monitoring Mission of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had contributed to properly informing the world on the situation caused by the Russian aggression. The Mission's mandate had been extended until March 2016. The latest report showed a clear impact on the human rights of external actors. Technical assistance by the Office was very much appreciated, and helped develop the recently approved National Human Rights Strategy.

Czech Republic said States should be held accountable for human rights violations, and underlined the indispensable role by the High Commissioner. It underlined the importance for a lasting solution to the migrant crisis, including addressing its root causes and providing assistance to the refugees. The Czech Republic asked whether the High Commissioner would soon open local offices in Egypt and Myanmar.

Greece presented efforts it had made to address the refugee crisis despite the tremendous difficulties the country was currently facing as a result of the financial crisis. Greece was committed to ensure the full protection of human rights at any time for all individuals, and underlined the importance of enhanced cooperation in this regard.

Iraq said it had been subjected to aggression by terrorist groups, and said human rights violations by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant had taken an unprecedented scale and had shocked the world. The Iraqi forces had gained great victories and had reconquered regions. The security forces would be held accountable for perpetrated abuses.

Belgium stated that independence was the necessary precondition for the work of the Office of the High Commissioner, and all countries were called upon to cooperate fully with the Office as well as the Special Procedures established by the Council. The additional deterioration of the situation in Burundi ought to be prevented. Belgium supported the efforts of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to abolish the death penalty and would present a draft resolution on the death penalty. The space for civil society needed to be continuously defended.

Chile said that 2015 had seen a record number of displaced persons around the world. Chile stood convinced that the protection and promotion of human rights should set the scene for positive developments, and it stood side by side with migrants and victims of conflicts. It was essential that the resolutions adopted by the Council be applied in all countries, especially when it came to the field work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Chile could not stand by idly while massive violations of human rights were committed by terrorists.

Iran expected that the High Commissioner would show appreciation for the engagement of Iran in the field of human rights. On extremism, it was critical to address the root causes, including poverty and suppression. On Yemen, Iran was alarmed by the gross violations of human rights caused by the illegal attacks of foreign military forces. Concrete actions were needed in Western societies to combat xenophobia and religious intolerance. Iran was disturbed by the recent attacks against the Al Aqsa mosque in Palestine.

Ecuador regretted the late submission of the report of the High Commissioner. Regarding recent

events in Ecuador, the authorities had undergone a national dialogue, including civil society and other organizations, and authorized social protest as a right under the condition that this did not restrict the rights of others. Ecuador was committed to developing a fair and equitable society. Ecuador regretted that other human rights situations requiring international attention did not receive adequate focus by the Office of the High Commissioner.

Senegal said situations of concern remained, and underlined that the migrant crisis required urgent attention. Senegal referred to the issue of climate change, and said racism and gender discrimination also required the attention of the international community. The Human Rights Council and the Office of the High Commissioner were encouraged to continue their efforts to fulfil their mandate and address human rights concerns worldwide, including in Africa.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea said the High Commissioner's office in Seoul was a political plot aimed at overthrowing the social system of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It denounced and condemned the office as an intolerable politically-motivated provocation and a base attempt to making human rights as a means of money making. The Council should focus on the victims of sexual slavery conducted by Japan during World War II, and call on Japan to duly compensate comfort women.

Croatia said that many countries still needed to find a sufficient and properly implemented response to the plight of migrants. Croatia was constantly working on developing appropriate and effective measures that would provide protection and safety for refugees in case it was faced with a large influx of people on its territory. Efforts to address those vulnerable to violent extremism needed to be redoubled. Croatia welcomed the way gender equality was integrated in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. It was running to become a Council member from 2017 to 2019.

Honduras stated that often times the victims of human rights violations were the weakest members of society. Policies needed to acknowledge that appropriate migration management could benefit all. The High Commissioner was right to state that all countries held the responsibility in their hands in that regard. In several months, the Office of the High Commissioner would open an office in Honduras, which had been requested by Honduras and was a testament for the need for an open and transparent dialogue.

Haiti shared the view that no sustainable development could take place without an appropriate respect and protection of human rights. Haiti reiterated its devotion to the ideals of human rights. The electoral process, underway for a year, was coming to an end in October. Migrants today were often persecuted because of their religion or the colour of their skin. Over the previous months, Haiti had received more than 15,000 migrants from neighbouring countries, mostly stateless persons.

Republic of Moldova noted that the record level of global displacement was more alarming than ever, spurred by violence and strife. The complex mixture of motives drove people to seek protection and safety, and this required a sustainable global response beyond emergency. Identified solutions should be proportionate to every individual situation. The international community should use available mechanisms it had at its disposal to put an end to conflicts and

promote and protect human rights on the ground.

Eritrea noted that the statement of the High Commissioner should be circulated among States well in advance so that they could meaningfully participate in the discussion. Eritrea categorically rejected the report of the Commission of Inquiry on Eritrea, noting that it was highly politicized and that it exaggerated the situation in the country. As for the issue of repression of civil society, it said that some issues needed to be further clarified.

Armenia shared the concern of the High Commissioner regarding the violence and destruction in Syria and Iraq, in particular the terrorist acts committed by Daesh. It expressed solidarity with the plight of refugees in the Middle East, reminding that Armenia was ranked third among European States in terms of the reception of refugees. It underlined the role of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in international efforts to prevent genocide.

Bahrain reaffirmed its commitment to cooperate with the Office of the High Commissioner, the Human Rights Council and other mechanisms in a positive and constructive manner. Bahrain shared the concerns voiced by the High Commissioner over the fact that the situation in Syria continued to worsen. Bahrain also expressed concerns over the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and human rights violations by Israeli forces. Bahrain voiced worry over the migrant crisis in Europe, and expressed support for the resolution of the conflict in Yemen.

Serbia concurred with the view of the European Union that a solution to the migrant crisis required a comprehensive approach based on the full protection of human rights. The Balkans had become a major migratory route, and Serbia was committed to combatting smugglers. Despite difficult circumstances, Serbia protected the rights of all migrants and provided support and shelter. It was indispensable that the international community undertook appropriate measures to address this crisis.

Libya commended efforts by the international community to address issues such as violations by the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and the migrant crisis. The credibility of international fora was at stake today, and was questioned by the people of Libya as abuses continued.

Myanmar said that in Myanmar today, people were increasingly using their new-found rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly to participate in the democratic process. The promise of democratic transition in November's general elections was not being undermined. The Union Election Commission was an independent body which set the criteria for the eligibility of election candidates. Those who met the criteria could contest in the elections, and those who did not meet them could not.

Sudan said that the principle of non-politicization was being used selectively by and towards some States. The High Commissioner was welcome to visit Sudan, and the invitation had already been issued by the Ministry of Justice. Despite many challenges the country was facing, the number of courts and prosecutor offices had increased by 80 per cent. Sudan regretted that some issues mentioned in the High Commissioner's report were not in line with the ample evidence.

Hungary said it bore one of the largest pressures in the European Union when it came to the refugee situation. Contrary to the media headlines, both the Government and civil society had taken an active role in protecting and helping migrants. Hungary respected its moral and legal obligations throughout the asylum process. It did not disrespect any international obligations by erecting the fence alongside the border with Serbia, whose goal was to ensure a more controlled inflow through legal channels, and to make the work of human traffickers less attractive.

Costa Rica said that changes in international humanitarian law and frequent conflicts had heightened migratory flows. It agreed with the findings of independent experts that a more stable and fair international system was needed. It also noted that countries could not be considered democratic just because they held regular elections. A space for opposition and dissenting opinions had to be ensured.

Philippines noted that the international community was confronted with increasingly complex situations brought about by conflict, extremism, discrimination, xenophobia, persistent poverty and inequalities. It called for immediate humanitarian action to ensure the protection of the rights of all victims of conflict, such as those who were forced to flee their homes, particularly women, children and the elderly. It also underscored the importance of human rights education and training in improving awareness in order to transform mindsets and eliminate negative stereotypes.

Colombia shared the concern expressed by various delegations over the increased flow of migrants and refugees, noting that the response of the international community towards heightened migratory flows should be based on solidarity and humanitarian values. People fled Venezuela because of fear and destruction of their property. Colombia emphatically rejected the violation of the rights of people living in the border regions between Venezuela and Colombia. It called on the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that the rights of those people were respected.

Uganda shared the concern of the High Commissioner on the worsening situation of conflict and poverty, which were the root causes of the migration crisis. Urgent action was needed to restore peace and security in countries of origins. Uganda urged the Office of the High Commissioner to increase its support to finding durable solutions to conflicts. Uganda drew the attention of the Council to the High Commissioner's report's last paragraphs, quoting that "our lives are connected to one another".

Niger welcomed the High Commissioner's remarks regarding migration and atrocities by Boko Haram, and welcomed the Council's commitment to support African countries in their fight against this armed group. Niger thanked the support of the international community to this fight, and voiced concerns over the large number of civilian victims resulting from terrorist activities.

Djibouti welcomed that States and families had generously opened their borders and homes to migrants and asylum seekers, including some coming from Africa. Djibouti remained concerned over the human rights situation in Eritrea, and expressed support to the Commission of Inquiry's mandate. Djibouti also expressed concerns about the situation in South Sudan.

Guatemala recognized the importance of the backing of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights during the time of political difficulty in the country. The events described by the High Commissioner had taken place in the climate where State institutions had performed their duties. The Congress had accepted the resignation of the President and appointed the Vice-President to that position until the next President took over in January 2016. The election of 6 September had been peaceful and orderly, with a turnout of more than 70 per cent. Guatemala would continue to receive support from the Office of the High Commissioner.

Uruguay said that the international community had the responsibility to help thousands of refugees fleeing conflict and addressing the root causes. Uruguay was contributing, to the degree it could, to alleviating the conditions of persons forced to cross borders. The values of tolerance and mutual understanding needed to be strengthened. Discrimination of all sorts, especially against migrants, ought to be combatted. All the necessary efforts should be made to prevent reprisals against those who cooperated with the United Nations.

African Union attached the greatest importance to fighting impunity and bringing to justice those who violated human rights. The African Union Mission in Somalia was working on the stabilization and protection of human rights in the country, and should not be treated the same way as terrorist groups which had been destroying Somalia for years. An urgent solution needed to be found for migratory flows across the Mediterranean and through the Sahara desert.

Egypt said that it was in the midst of the implementation of new legislation on human rights and a new constitution. Although terrorism was a great threat, the authorities in Egypt were determined to strengthen the rule of law and uphold human rights. It fully agreed with the concern over the refugees fleeing violence and terrorism. It was high time for the international community to react and to provide protection to those most vulnerable.

Burundi informed the Council and the international community that it had a new government. The improvement of the human rights situation was its priority. African Union representatives had arrived in the country to monitor the situation. Many people who had previously fled had now returned. Burundi underlined its commitment to continue cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Al Khoei Foundation warned that the targeting of religious minorities was a global phenomenon, perpetrated by terrorist groups that spilled across national borders. The discrimination and targeting of Shia Muslims was on the increase, even in countries known for their moderation. Churches, mosques, temples and synagogues were being targeted across the world. It urged offending States to cease the discrimination of Shia Muslims and other religious groups.

International Federation of Human Rights Leagues said thousands of people had tried to reach Europe by sea this year; Europe had to come out with a collective response, including opening up channels for legal migration, combatting smuggling, and ensuring that asylum procedures were respected. Efforts had to be made to establish proper search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean. The situation in Burundi was of concern, and the Council should consider taking further steps to address it, as appropriate.

Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, in a joint statement, expressed serious concerns at the human rights situation in Bahrain, including the harassment of human rights defenders, the lack of fair trial, the systematic use of torture by police forces, and arbitrary detention. The independence, accountability and transparency of the Ombudsman Office were questionable, and many who had engaged with this institution had faced reprisals. Ongoing concerns needed to be addressed urgently, and the Council should create a Special Rapporteur on the situation in Bahrain.

Human Rights House Foundation said democracy was not limited to elections, but also included what happened between elections and the possibility for people to speak out and for civil society organizations to engage in an open space. The Council should take concrete steps to address the deterioration of human rights in Azerbaijan, including the crackdown on civil society organizations there. Azerbaijan was urged to immediately and unconditionally release all prisoners of conscience.

Amnesty International noted that the world was facing the worst refugee crisis since the Second World War. Over 4 million men and women had fled Syria to the neighbouring countries, while only a small fraction of them were offered sanctuary in Western countries. More than 350,000 people had fled to Europe since the beginning of 2015, whereas some 2,800 had died at sea. Migrants and refugees were at serious risk at sea unless emergency measures were taken.

European Union of Public Relations warned that no other phenomenon had caused more destruction globally than terrorism. Syria and Iraq had become the largest target of terrorist activities. ISIS was condemned for its brutal crimes, such as the beheading of civilians and slaughtering of children, and the destruction of public property in Syria, Iraq and beyond.

Human Rights Watch noted that three elements were important in the High Commissioner's response to the latest developments in Sri Lanka, namely ensuring that detainees were not subject to torture, legal and judicial reforms, and the application of international humanitarian law. The Office should remain seized of the ongoing processes in Sri Lanka and it should not fail the victims. Many abuses in Burundi remained unreported and Human Rights Watch urged the High Commissioner to regularly report about such occurrences. It also expressed concern over the arrests of civil rights activists in China.

Arab Commission for Human Rights referred to the exodus of Syrians and condemned atrocities in Syria. It was essential to adopt a humanitarian approach to migration, and it was important that a Special Session was held to address the rights of Syrian refugees. What was the strategy of the High Commissioner to adopt a human rights-approach to development and to implement the development agenda.

Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS) Asociación Civil, in a joint statement with Centro Regional de Derechos Humanos y Justicia de Género - Corporación Humanas, highlighted the links between drug policies and human rights violations, including torture, forced disappearances and arbitrary detentions, targeting particularly vulnerable groups. States should continue to document these issues and discuss them during the United Nations General Assembly.

Institut International pour la Paix, said the right to development was a basic human right, but had

to be defined properly. It required States parties to ensure that economic, social and cultural rights were enforced through international cooperation. Monitoring mechanisms were needed to ensure that international obligations were respected.

China Society for Human Rights Studies said that China was undergoing judiciary reform, and pointed out the more than 200 legal reform measures to ensure the independence and impartiality of the judiciary. Currently there were 270,000 lawyers in China who supported citizens in the protection of their human rights. An impartial judiciary was the basis for human rights.

World Environment and Resource Council said the lack of sufficient funding of the rights of the child was the major obstacle to the well-being of children. Broad-based investment in children could level the playing field, increase opportunities for survival, and lead to healthy lives. The education of girls was one of the most important and powerful tools for development, and yet millions of women and girls were denied this right, particularly in societies where radical elements had established themselves.

Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association said India took for granted most of the recommendations made to it by human rights mechanisms and had failed to implement the recommendations it had received during its Universal Periodic Review to improve its human rights record. India, as the world's largest democracy, must be held accountable.

Liberation noted that human rights violations in India remained largely underreported despite the efforts of the High Commissioner. The situation of the Dalits and other minorities in India were not included in his report. The failure of the international community to prevent human rights violations was regrettable. The attention of the Council would be appreciated in order to improve the general situation.

Commission to Study the Organization of Peace noted that the protection of human rights was closely linked to sustainable development. The denial of the fundamental rights led to conflicts and exclusion. The extremist terrorist group Boko Haram continued to pose a threat to Nigeria and neighbouring countries. Its attacks exacerbated the pre-existing social, ethnic and religious tensions. The gross human rights violations perpetrated by ISIS in the Middle East also required urgent attention as radical groups showed no regard for civilian populations.

World Muslim Congress said that the scale of human rights violations and conflicts arising because of the denial of rights was increasing at an alarming rate. The High Commissioner in his update addressed all regions and situations, but he ignored Jammu and Kashmir. Due to continued tension between India and Pakistan, huge loss of life and property was taking place. The Congress thus urged the Council to call on the Indian Government to end human rights violations in Indian-occupied Kashmir.

Maarij Foundation for Peace and Development said all States had to address human rights issues very seriously, and human rights defenders had to be supported. Political measures were possible, and public opinion had to be informed about events. Maarij Foundation regretted that secret court cases were too often taking place, and referred to the case of Norway.

Khiam Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture expressed concerns over the situation in Bahrain, and the imprisonment of political opponents there without a fair trial. Policies intended to prevent ethnic discrimination were contrary to human rights, and the authorities were using lethal force against peaceful protestors.

Agence Internationale pour le Developpement said a culture of human rights should be developed through independent and transparent monitoring, and expressed concerns about grave violations relating to foreign occupation. Of particular concern was the situation in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, where extrajudicial killings continued to occur with impunity.

Global Network for Rights in Development said that it faced an orchestrated campaign by the Norwegian legal establishment, which had filed trumped up charges and withheld evidence from the accused. The right to a fair and public hearing by a competent and independent tribunal had not been respected either.

International Lawyers Organization welcomed the resolution of the Human Rights Council 29/15 on the impact of climate change on the most vulnerable persons on this planet, but regretted the weak language of the resolution. Climate change must be adequately addressed and the High Commissioner should raise the attention of this Council to this urgent question and break from the cycle of high level panels and seminars into the realm of real action.

Association Burkinabé pour la Survie de l'Enfance welcomed the efforts of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to establish accountability for the crimes in Sri Lanka and said that the problem of Sri Lanka was not a problem of minorities, but that of two nations in one island. Tamils were still waiting for justice, and the international community must address the ongoing genocide.

Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain raised concern over the constraints imposed on freedom of expression in Qatar. A poet was recently arrested and accused of offending the Emir. His trial did not meet the fair standards of trial. His conversations were monitored during family visits. Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain noted that Qatar needed to import democracy before exporting it.

Iraqi Development Organization, in a joint statement, called the Council's attention to the rapidly deteriorating human rights situation caused by the war conducted by the Coalition led by Saudi Arabia in Yemen. It urged the Council to create a commission of inquiry to investigate alleged serious laws-of-war violations by all parties in Yemen in line with the calls of Human Rights Watch.

International Service for Human Rights reminded of the disappearance of a Chinese civil rights lawyer. States should follow the High Commissioner's lead in preventing the detention and prosecution of civil rights defenders. It drew attention to the detention of political opposition leaders and all those who voiced opposition to governments. A system-wide response was required to ensure the rights of civil rights defenders.

Civicus – World Alliance for Citizen Participation welcomed the High Commissioner's support

to human rights defenders and civil society organizations, including in Azerbaijan, where the systematic crackdown deserved the Council's attention. The Council should also adopt a resolution that condemned acts of violence in Burundi. Civicus believed the Council should stay the course and serve as a springboard for truth and justice in Sri Lanka.

Verein Sudwind Entwicklungspolitik was concerned about the migrant crisis, and about the increased use of the death penalty in Iran. It also raised concerns about arbitrary detention and prisoners of conscience in Iran, and referred to several individual cases of persons detained solely for criticizing the Supreme Guide and suffering dire detention conditions, including lack of access to health services.

Federacion de Asociaciones de Defensa y de Promocion de los Derechos Humanos voiced concerns regarding violations perpetrated by the occupying forces in West Sahara, and called for the protection of the civilians there. None of the recommendations formulated by United Nations mechanisms had been implemented, and the right to self-determination of the people of Western Sahara remained violated.

For use of the information media; not an official record