

**Group of Friends Joint Statement on Special Procedures  
27 June 2018**

Mr. President,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of a group of cross-regional countries, in order to reaffirm the importance of strengthening cooperation between states and Special Procedures, and improving the follow-up and implementation of their recommendations.

We believe that a country visit followed by a report and recommendations, is not the end but the beginning of a process aimed at bringing the UN system as a whole closer to the people and maximizing the impact on the ground.

That is why we believe that as we strive to find more adequate and effective ways to organize the work of the HRC in light of the existing constraints, we should do as much as we can in order to preserve the quality of the debate within the already limited time slots reserved for the Special Procedures.

We also applaud the Special Procedures Coordination Committee for the role it plays in bringing together regional groups and individual countries with the mandate holders, as an informal channel where different perspectives and concerns can be shared and discussed. We believe this dialogue is crucial and contributes to a better understanding of the special procedures work and States' realities.

Mr. President, Special Procedures can easily reach out to local, national and regional stakeholders, and thus contribute to narrowing the gap between the system and people on the ground. Their reports become a natural source to assess advances, identify good practices and lessons learned. Reports can be of extreme usefulness in identifying signs, risks and backsteps on thematic issues that merit special attention in the context of the system's prevention and early warning role.

In that context, we express concern over intimidation and threats directed at mandate holders and those who cooperate with the Special Procedures. These actions inhibit and prevent the work of this important human rights mechanism and by extension, the work of the Council.

For all these reasons we wish to reaffirm our strong support for the

work and the independence of the Special Procedures and we call upon all member states to issue a standing invitation to the Special Procedures and to fully cooperate with them.