**45th HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**GENERAL DEBATE - ITEM 5**

**SEPTEMBER 2020**

**JOINT STATEMENT OF THE GROUP OF FRIENDS OF SPECIAL PROCEDURES[[1]](#footnote-1) AND OTHER COUNTRIES[[2]](#footnote-2)**

Mme. President,

Special Procedures are an integral part of the UN human rights system and an essential mechanism of the Human Rights Council. This Council has progressively built a system of Special Procedures to bring an independent voice to the human rights debate. The Council must therefore ensure that the necessary conditions for mandate holders to implement their mandates in an independent, impartial and efficient manner, free from attacks, undue pressure or interference of any kind, are preserved.

Likewise, member states should encourage applications by candidates that are independent, impartial, experienced and objective and can contribute to gender parity and geographical representation.

When disagreements or misunderstandings between mandate holders and States occur, dialogue and open discussion should always prevail. In this regard, the Coordination Committee has proven its commitment to do so in order to improve dialogue and cooperation with States as well as improve their working methods.

The Group of Friends and countries that joined us continue to stress that there are rules and guidelines that Special Procedures mandate holders have an obligation to respect. Mandate holders are guided in their work by the Code of Conduct, the Manual of Operations, additional rules and guidelines developed over the years. On the same level, the GoF and countries that joined us wish to recall that the Internal Advisory Procedure is an established channel to raise issues of concern, and it is open to states, civil society or indeed mandate holders themselves. We fully support the words of Coordination Committee in its letter dated September 8 to the Bureau regarding the complaints presented by a group of countries. We call on all States to raise their concerns regarding Special Procedure mandate holders through the appropriate channels.

We invite all States to cooperate and support this important human rights protection mechanism to ensure the effective functioning of the UN human rights system as a whole.

Finally, the GoF and countries that join us support the press release issued by the Coordination Committee on September 28, warning of the damaging impact that the UN funding crisis can have on the Special Procedures mechanism.

1. . Group of Friends of Special Procedures: Australia, Belgium, Botswana, Chile, Costa Rica, Estonia, Fiji, Ireland, Latvia, Mexico, Morocco, Norway, Peru, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom, Uruguay. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . Albania, Argentina, Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Japan, Korea, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Palestine, Paraguay, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)