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## Human Rights Council concludes Interactive Dialogue with High Commissioner for Human Rights

Human Rights Council  
AFTERNOON

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The Human Rights Council this afternoon concluded its interactive dialogue with United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, after speakers raised a wide range of issues including the fight against any form of discrimination, the rights of minorities, the human rights of migrants, gender equality and women's rights.

The High Commissioner, in her concluding remarks, said there was a need to focus forward and build enabling environments for sustainable development. The food crisis was of a common concern to countries and the Office and it was fuelled by speculation, land property, biofuels, and other factors. Sharp increases in food crises seriously undermined the rights of many, especially those living in poverty. Recent occasions of social unrest had been associated with recent food price increases and the lack of avenues for expression and social and political participation. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had stepped up its research, programmatic work, and institutional relations with others in order to bring the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights to the centre of the agenda. The Office was working on promoting the rights of all migrants, regardless of their status, and the activities included advocating for their rights, exploring alternatives to criminal detention, and advocacy for the ratification of the International Convention on the Rights of Migrants and Their Families. The work against discrimination, including religious discrimination, was one of the priorities and the Office would pursue a range of activities to advance minority rights. This year the Office was organising a series of expert workshops on the prohibition of incitement to racial hatred and intolerance.

In the interactive dialogue, speakers congratulated the High Commissioner for taking the lead in the promotion and protection of human rights and said that her independence was important in the fulfillment of her mission. The international community needed to strengthen the fight against racism, especially in light of the tenth anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Some countries noted with concern that unfortunately racism continued to exist and grow and that the international community needed to work and strengthen the international, national and regional efforts to fight discrimination against minority groups and persons of African descent. Many countries acknowledged the swift response of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the crisis in Middle East and North Africa and noted that these crises demonstrated the need for cooperation and partnership between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Human Rights Council. There existed some shortcomings such as the great emphasis on monitoring technical assistance and the insufficient level of coordination with each government in the field.

Concerning the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nation Declaration on the Right to Development, many countries stressed that the promotion of the right to development was key in the fight against poverty and agreed that the Human Rights Council should take this issue more actively. Some speakers noted with concern that any real improvement in the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development on the ground was still to be seen. Members stressed the importance of Special Procedures and said that their activity through effective cooperation and constructive interaction with States would contribute to the further improvement of the human rights situation on the ground.

Speaking this afternoon were Italy, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Honduras, Switzerland, Thailand, Canada, Russian Federation, Paraguay, Mexico, Morocco, Maldives, Greece, Norway, Philippines, Bulgaria,

Slovenia, Turkey, Poland, Uruguay, Belarus, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Palestine, Romania, Uzbekistan, Chad, Ethiopia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Czech Republic, Tunisia, Bangladesh, Mauritania, and Ecuador.

Also speaking were the following non-governmental organizations: International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Arab National Human Rights Institutions, Human Rights Watch, Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, International Humanist and Ethical Union, International Human Rights Association of American Minorities, European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Federation, Cairo Institute of Human Rights Studies, Federation of Cuban Women, World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Foundation for Human Rights and Freedom and Humanitarian Relief, Comite International pour le Respect et l'Application de la Charte Africaine des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples, Action International pour la Paix et le Développement dans la Region des Grand Lacs, International Service for Human Rights, International Commission of Jurists, United Nations Watch, and Amnesty International.

The next meeting of the Council will be held at 10 a. m when the Council will hear the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights deliver a statement on the thematic reports of the Secretary-General and High Commissioner for Human Rights, which will be followed by a general debate on item 2 of the Council's agenda concerning the annual report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

#### Interactive Dialogue with High Commissioner for Human Rights

PAOLO CUCULI (Italy) said that the promotion and protection of human rights was a pillar of Italy's foreign policy and its attention was focused on the death penalty, the fight against any form of discrimination, gender equality and women rights. Italy was increasingly concerned about the rise in acts of intolerance and violence against religious communities around the world. Recent attacks, including the killing of the Pakistani Minister for Religious Minorities, were alarming signals to be strongly condemned. Concerning the reference to the situation of migrants in Italy in the High Commissioner's report, the delegation said that Italian policies in this field aimed at migrants' full social integration, benefitting from an outstanding experience and good practises realised by the State and civil society. Italy was providing massive assistance in the context of the humanitarian crisis caused by ongoing developments in the southern Mediterranean shore and its impact on neighbouring countries.

DIAN TRIANSYAH DJANI (Indonesia) said that the comprehensive overview of the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner for Human Rights had been constructive and Indonesia commended the High Commissioner and her staff for their commitment. Indonesia became a signatory in 2010 to the International Convention on Enforced Disappearance and welcomed the marking of the tenth anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. The Millennium Goals four and five, improving maternal health and reducing child mortality, remained challenging for the Government of Indonesia, which had been encouraged by the commitment to the High Commissioner on generating further progress on these and other Millennium Development Goals. The delegation of Indonesia would like to ask the High Commissioner about the most effective ways to reduce the impact of the increase in global food prices on the most vulnerable communities and would appreciate more specific information concerning the progress of the recent mission to Tunisia.

GERARD CORR (Ireland) said that the statement of the High Commissioner showed the range of work undertaken for strengthening human rights and the role of the Office in encouraging debate for gender equality, equality of people with disabilities and for the protection of minorities. The report highlighted the human rights of migrants and outlined the role of the High Commissioner in the Global Migration Group and Ireland was interested in knowing more about the expanded role of the High Commissioner in relation to migration issues and about its collaboration with the International Organization for Migration. Regarding peacekeeping missions, Ireland said that it would be important to know the requirements that the staff needed in this area.

WALID ABU HAVA (Israel) said that Israel believed in the independence of the High Commissioner

WALID ABU-NATA (Israel) said that Israel believed in the independence of the High Commissioner and her Office and rejected any attempt to interfere with the independence of her functions. Israel was satisfied that various attempts to undermine the independence of the High Commissioner during the review process had failed. Turning to the situation in the Middle East, Israel said that the people were rising up for their civil and political rights. Israel hoped that this transition would lead to freedom and democracy and supported all efforts of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for the engagement in the promotion and protection of human rights. The Council must be open to any initiative taken by the High Commissioner to prevent future human rights violations in any of those countries and elsewhere.

ROBERTO FLORES BERMUDEZ (Honduras) said that Honduras acknowledged the swift response of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the crisis in the Middle East and North Africa. The elimination of all discrimination against migrants was a priority for Honduras. The Joint Declaration of the Global Group on Migration would help countries to ensure that their laws and policies were in accordance with global standards. The Honduran Garifuna community had been preparing the first Word Summit of African descendents which would occur in August. The Office of the High Commissioner helped with the follow-up to the results of the Universal Periodic Review and the Government of Honduras shared the view that all States must close the gap between words and acts and must promote two-way cooperation with human rights mechanisms.

JURG LAUBER (Switzerland) said that recent events in Africa and the Middle East demonstrated that human rights were indispensable for structuring the demands of the population and the key role played by the High Commissioner in this context.

Switzerland encouraged the States concerned to make use of the Office of the High Commissioner's services. Switzerland took this opportunity to welcome the diligence in which the High Commissioner had been reacting to the events and the role played by the staff of her Office. Switzerland shared the concern about the need to strengthen the protection for minority groups, especially those who were subject to multiple forms of discrimination. Switzerland thanked the valuable assistance that the Office of the High Commissioner's services were giving to the Special Procedures.

SEK WANNAMETHEE (Thailand) said that the effective engagement of the High Commissioner in the recent events in the Middle East demonstrated the need for cooperation and partnership between the Office of the High Commissioner and the Human Rights Council. Thailand noted with appreciation that the High Commissioner's report clearly demonstrated the efforts to mainstream human rights into various issues, from migration to development. Thailand was faced by the challenge of different forms of migration and had invited the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children, to visit the country this year. With regard to the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, Thailand supported the work of the working group on communications and looked forward to the organisation of regional workshops on the prohibition of racial hatred and discrimination, one of which would take place in Bangkok. Thailand supported all the work of the Office on human rights education and training and the High Commissioner's plan of action with a focus on human rights in higher education and on human rights training for teachers and educators.

ALISON LECLAIRE CHRISTIE (Canada) thanked the High Commissioner for her annual report and applauded the High Commissioner's leadership in speaking out on gross and systematic violations of human rights, including the recent spate of executions in Iran, the need for an international inquiry into violations in Libya and justice for the victims, the use of excessive force in Bahrain, the need for Egypt to change its system, the patterns of human rights violations in Côte d'Ivoire, the crack down on civil society in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the sentencing of political opponents in Belarus. The most important mandate for this Council, its Special Procedures and the High Commissioner should be to speak up to denounce acts of violence against a civilian population and ensure a provision of remedy to the victims and their families in a prompt and dissuasive manner. Canada therefore continued to defend the independence of the Commissioner and to resist attempts to increase oversight of the activities of her Office. The 54 field offices had been critical and Canada commended the emergency mission to Kyrgyzstan and the activities of the Rapid Response Mission; it deplored the violence in Côte d'Ivoire by the supporters of the defeated electoral candidate Gbagbo.

UAVOUE BY THE SUPPORTERS OF THE DEFEATED ELECTORAL CANDIDATE UGAGOO.

VALERY LOSHCININ (Russian Federation) expressed the satisfaction of the Russian Federation in connection to the visit by High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay to Russia two weeks ago; the very specific discussions would lead to further strengthening collaboration and activities to strengthen human rights protection. The Russian Federation was generally satisfied with the cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Russian Federation for which there was a solid basis. Since 2006 the Russian Federation had contributed to the budget of the Office with a voluntary contribution of \$ 2 million. The Russian Federation noted the measures taken by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to implement the results of the Durban Conference and the main emphasis of the Office to strengthen cooperation with States. However, there were still some shortcomings such as the great emphasis on monitoring technical assistance and the insufficient level of coordination with each government in the field. The Russian Federation invited the Office of the High Commissioner to overcome these shortcomings and to comply with Programme 19 of the United Nations.

JUAN ANGEL DELGADILLO (Paraguay), said that last year Paraguay had started a special stage of cooperation and dialogue with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, with the appointment of the human rights advisor in the country. Uruguay hoped this would tangibly improve the human rights of the population. It was to be hoped that the international community could cooperate on the resolution of the conflict in Libya and in conducting a dialogue with those who were affected. Concerning forced disappearances, Uruguay was concerned by the lack of funds for those activities as outlined in the High Commissioner's report.

SALVADOR TINAJERO (Mexico) said that Mexico would like to thank the High Commissioner for her annual report and for the excellent job the Office of the High Commissioner had done over the past year. The strengthening of the Council and the review process were two areas that Mexico emphasized, including the increased use of dialogue between nations to give the body more flexibility and the use of all available tools so that the Council could promote and protect human rights on the ground. The only way to assess the efficiency of the body should be from the combined use of tools as complements to one another and the Special Session last week illustrated how productive the Council could be when it combined all the tools at its disposal.

OMAR HILALE (Morocco) congratulated the High Commissioner for taking the lead in the promotion and protection of human rights and said that her independence was important in fulfilling her mission. The international community needed to strengthen the fight against racism, especially in light of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Morocco pointed out that unfortunately racism continued to exist and grow. Having national action plans in the area was the most effective means to fight against discrimination. The international community needed to work and strengthen the international, national and regional efforts for persons of African descent and Morocco welcomed the efforts made by the High Commissioner for the global plan of action. Morocco appreciated the panel discussion on people of African descent organized yesterday because it helped to identify the obstacles which prevented those people from fully enjoying their rights. Morocco thanked the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for the efforts made and the logistics to ensure the successful conclusion of the draft Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training.

IRUTHISHAM ADAM (Maldives) said that the annual report of the High Commissioner correctly recognised the historic nature of changes in the Muslim world and that they at heart were about human rights. Events in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and elsewhere demonstrated that human rights were just words on a piece of paper. The Muslim Awakening opened up enormous opportunities for the Islamic world and the international community. It was their responsibility therefore to ensure that newly democratic States emerging across the Islamic world received all the support they needed during a difficult and fragile process of transition. Those emergent democracies would confront challenges such as how to strike a balance between the desire for rapid change and the need to get it right, how to open up the society without giving space for extremism to take root, and how to hold fair and free elections in politically charged atmospheres. The Council should urgently organise an international meeting on

politically charged atmospheres. The Council should urgently organise an international meeting on Muslim Awakening which could exchange ideas and thoughts, ask for and pledge support and work together to ensure that the aspirations were realised and fulfilled.

CONSTANTINA ATHANASSIADOU (Greece) said Greece commended the High Commissioner for the presentation of her comprehensive annual report. Recent events in North Africa had demonstrated the increased need for the protection of human rights and every opportunity should be used to draw on the expertise of the Council, such as the Special Procedures of the Council. The human rights of migrants was a priority for Greece as it was a country of destination and a transit country of ever increasing flows of irregular migration. More than 90 per cent of irregular immigrants apprehended at the external borders of the European Union were detected at the Greek border and the overcrowding of irregular migrants in detention facilities in Greece had become a problem. The Government was committed to effectively handle the challenge of irregular migration as well as the management of those seeking asylum. There should be an effort to promote a culture of tolerance so as to avoid the targeting of people on the basis of their religion or belief. Greece has submitted its candidature to the Human Rights Council as a member for the years 2012-2015.

BENTE ANGELL-HANSEN (Norway) thanked the High Commissioner for her comprehensive introduction of the annual report and appreciated this opportunity to engage in a dialogue. Norway continued to be impressed by the High Commissioner's leadership on thematic human rights issues and her approach to country situations, most recently to the popular movements in the Middle East and North Africa. Norway commended the High Commissioner's swift decision to send a delegation to Tunisia in January. The Tunisian Foreign Minister had responded by asking the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to open an office in the country.

As part of Norway's efforts to promote a global and effective zero tolerance policy against sexual violence, the international community had to continue to work to raise the status of women. Increased status for women in society undoubtedly also increased the threshold for committing sexual violence against them. Norway had expectations as to the positive impact of the working group on discrimination against women in law and practice also in this respect. This was an important part of the broader agenda to fight discrimination to which Norway was deeply committed.

EVAN P. GARCIA (Philippines) said the Philippines commended the recent chairmanship of the Global Migration Group by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and welcomed a landmark joint statement on the protection of the rights of migrants including those in irregular situations made last October during the Global Forum on Migration and Development. The Philippines was looking forward to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development and the events the Office planned to organise to increase support for the realisation of the right to development. The Philippines recommended that the Office maintained a strong focus on human rights implications of climate change, including its impact on the right to development.

GANCHO GANEV (Bulgaria) said Bulgaria would like to thank the High Commissioner for the detailed presentation of her annual report. Bulgaria would like to respond to the statement made by the High Commissioner on the investigation of numerous deaths of children in orphanages in Bulgaria; these investigations were in response to signals by the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee and the inspections had been ordered immediately by the Prosecutor General and were carried out by the relevant prosecution offices with the support of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee and all appellate prosecution offices countrywide were instructed to exercise ex officio instance review of all pre-trial proceedings terminated previously. Bulgarian Helsinki Committee representatives would be granted access to all criminal proceedings and checks. In 2009 a new approach to the deinstitutionalization of child care was adopted by the Government through a new policy document that had set the priorities of implementing the deinstitutionalization of children with disabilities to be placed in special care homes and of children with disabilities aged over three years to be placed in medical and social care homes.

MATJAZ KOVACIC (Slovenia) said that the economic and financial crises in the past two years, as well as other crises, had limited the ability of many people around the world to enjoy their economic

well as other crises, had limited the ability of many people around the world to enjoy their economic, social and cultural rights. The violations of these rights had in recent weeks in the south Mediterranean region once again showed their interconnection with civil and political rights and with the stability and security situation of a country. Slovenia welcomed the reaction of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the situation in Tunisia and Egypt by sending teams to those countries.

Slovenia participated in the review exercise of the Council with high expectations. They expected the review to better prepare and equip the Council to efficiently respond to urgent and grave human rights violations. Through its performance during the last Special Session on the situation in Libya, the Council had proven that it could, if there was a will, perform efficiently and pass clear and strong messages which were followed up by further action.

OGUZ DEMIRALP (Turkey) said Turkey welcomed the efforts of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the implementation of the six thematic priorities. Turkey was pleased to note that the capacity of the Council to respond to emergency situations and strengthen the treaty bodies had been achieved. Turkey supported increased cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and governments in technical assistance and capacity building. Country visits by the High Commissioner had spread the message of the essential need for human rights. Turkey was convinced that the Council as a whole would support the elimination of double standards in order to enhance the credibility of the Council. Progress had been made in submitting reports in a more timely fashion, but Turkey noted that the preparation of reports needed to be done with a realistic approach.

MATEUSZ STASIEK (Poland) thanked the High Commissioner for her annual report and the informative statement on key human rights issues. Poland commended the swift and unanimous reaction of the Council to the events in Libya but would like the Council's capacity to address urgent situations and chronic abuses to be improved. The mission of the High Commissioner's Office to Tunisia and the planned mission to Egypt were welcome.

Poland was concerned about the ongoing harassment and persecution of opposition activists, independent media and journalists and members of civil society in Belarus and had been troubled by the criminal trials against those exercising their right to freedom of expression and assembly. Poland had joined with the Council to demand the immediate release of political prisoners. The Council should demand that Member States live up to their responsibility to protect human rights defenders. The newly established mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association should exert pressure on countries to respect these rights. Poland had been appalled at the murder of Shahbaz Bhatti in Pakistan, a well known human rights activist. It appreciated the work toward the process of the revision of the treaty bodies system and looked forward to the publication of the compilation of the recommendations received and the findings of the meetings held in Dublin, Marrakesh and in Poznan would enhance the effectiveness of the system particularly given its constant enlargement.

LAURA DUPUY LASSERRE (Uruguay) thanked the High Commissioner for the presentation of her report which gave an overview of the activities of the Office in the field. Uruguay was also interested in the briefing and press releases of the High Commissioner and urged that that work could continue with regional human rights systems. Uruguay welcomed the fact that the Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance was now operational. They welcomed follow-up activities in the field and the region and said that national offices should fulfil an important role in this sense and that the Office of the High Commissioner should be a clearing house to facilitate cooperation. Uruguay welcomed the drawing up of a National Plan Against Discrimination and repeated the invitation of their Minister Luis Almagro to the High Commissioner to visit their country, hopefully at the end of this year.

MIKHAIL KHVOSTOV (Belarus) said Belarus categorically rejected the manner in which the High Commissioner decided to arrive to its position on the human rights situation in Belarus. There was no consultation with Belarus and the hidden interests of European countries behind the position were obvious. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights must respect the sovereignty of all States and avoid application of double standards. Belarus had informed the international community about the events in Minsk in December 2010 and said that the demonstrators had enjoyed all protection

about the events in Minsk in December 2010 and said that the demonstrators had enjoyed an protection until the protests become violent. To the countries which called on Belarus to respect its international obligations, the delegation said that those obligations applied in cases of peaceful demonstrations. Belarus rejected the use of terms such as political prisoners and said that the right to freedom of expression could only be enjoyed in peaceful situations.

PARK SANG-KI (Republic of Korea) said the Republic of Korea wished to express its gratitude for the High Commissioner's effective leadership in responding promptly to the current developments in North Africa and the Middle East. The Special Procedures had played a key role in promoting and protecting human rights on the ground and the Republic of Korea would welcome an increase in the number of States that issued standing invitations. The Council should have flexible and effective tools to respond to chronic and urgent human rights situations. The Republic of Korea welcomed the recent increase in the number of treaty bodies to create more synergy with the Human Rights Council mechanism and looked forward to the meeting in Sion to improve the streamlining and strengthening of the treaty body systems.

NTHABISENG AMLEJANE (South Africa) said South Africa shared the High Commissioner's concerns pertaining to the growing incidence of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobic ideas. The plight of migrant workers was also an issue of great concern to South Africa. In this respect, South Africa had the honour of hosting the Special Rapporteur on the rights of migrants, and the Government valued the recommendations that he had submitted. Their view was that these issues needed not to be hidden from the scrutiny of the international community in order to genuinely address them. On the issue of discrimination, South Africa had noted the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' work pertaining to the promotion of racial equality. They would like to establish the extent to which progress had been made to develop a racial equality index. South Africa's delegation appreciated the clarification provided by the High Commissioner during her response to some of the issues raised related to the financing of the activities of her Office. They welcomed the initiative to meet bilaterally and with various regional groups to discuss funding needs in detail.

IMAD ZUHAIRI (Palestine) thanked the High Commissioner and her team for the visit paid to occupied Palestine, which had been held in good time and allowed the High Commissioner to witness the human rights situation there, particularly in the Occupied Gaza and in Jerusalem. Comments made by the High Commissioner echoed the many times repeated need to respect international law. Palestine repeated its appeal to the United Nations and international community to assume their rightful role in the respect of international law, which rejected double standards and selectivity. This law and the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions called for the creation of two States. Israel should be accountable for its action and its future was dependant on the establishment of the rightful Palestinian State.

RAZVAN ROTUNDU (Romania) said Romania would like to thank the High Commissioner for Human Rights for her annual report and would like to add details to comments that the High Commissioner made on discrimination in providing medical services to children in Romania. Romania had established a comprehensive legal framework to avoid discrimination which included criteria such as race, age, ethnicity, health and a National Council was established to combat discrimination through investigations and the application of sanctions. Doctors had no right to refuse medical assistance based on discriminatory issues. Romania had ratified the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and would be willing to evaluate any claims of victims of this discrimination.

AKMAL SAIDOV (Uzbekistan) said Uzbekistan supported and approved the High Commissioner's initiatives aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals, including the Goals in the field of maternal health and gender equality. Uzbekistan had started the implementation of the complex of additional measures for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including through stable social and economic development. Uzbekistan shared the opinion of the High Commissioner on the important role of the Universal Periodic Review in the promotion and protection of human rights. Uzbekistan supported the efforts of the High Commissioner to support the establishment and development of national human rights institutions. The national human rights institution of Uzbekistan took an active part in the events of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in

took an active part in the events of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in particular, in the tenth conference of the national human rights institutions in Edinburgh.

MALLOUM BAMANGA ABBAS (Chad) said Chad warmly congratulated the High Commissioner for Human Rights for all that was being done throughout the world to promote and protect human rights. Chad also thanked her for the future establishment of a human rights adviser and for the support for the implementation of the recommendations made to Chad during its Universal Periodic Review. The High Commissioner could count on the ongoing support of the Government of Chad.

MINELIK ALEMU GETAHUN (Ethiopia) said Ethiopia welcomed the annual report by the High Commissioner and would like to thank the Office of the High Commissioner for the assistance it had received in implementing its reporting obligations under key international human rights treaties. The national economy had grown in double digits and access to social services had been improving and the Government would spread these achievements through its Growth and Transformation Plan which would roll out specific national economic and social programmes. The Ethiopian Government was committed to improving the human rights situation as evidenced by the proclamation, passed by the House of Peoples Representatives, to spread human rights offices throughout the country. The Government had held a national consultative workshop on the outcomes of the country's successful Universal Periodic Review and had embarked on the implementation of the accepted recommendations.

CHRISTIAN STROHAL (Austria) welcomed the mission that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had been able to undertake to Tunisia and was pleased to hear that an Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights team would also visit Egypt. Austria was encouraged by this display of a more open and cooperative attitude by the transitional governments in both countries. Austria was convinced that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as the Human Rights Council and the whole international community had an important role to play in supporting and monitoring this process of democratic transition and in the pursuit of justice and accountability for the human rights violations that had taken place in this context. Austria re-emphasized the great importance that it attached to the independence and effectiveness of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and of the valuable support that the Office provided to the United Nations Special Procedures as well as United Nations treaty bodies. Austria was looking forward to continue to provide full co-operation and active support to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' activities

ISMAYIL ASADOV (Azerbaijan) said that the achievements of the Human Rights Council in the promotion and protection of human rights could not be denied. A selective approach concerning human rights should be avoided and one category of rights should not prevail over the others. One of the bright results of the Universal Periodic Review for Azerbaijan was the establishment of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review in order to ensure the implementation of the accepted recommendations. Azerbaijan stressed the importance of Special Procedures and said that their activity in line with the code of conduct and through constructive interaction with States would contribute to the further improvements of the human rights situation on the ground.

TOMAS HUSAK (Czech Republic) said the Czech Republic appreciated the High Commissioner's presentation of her annual report and reiterated its strong support for the independence, integrity and impartiality of the Office of the High Commissioner. Individual States should show their genuine interest in protecting human rights by demonstrating their effective cooperation with Special Procedures and by extending bona-fide cooperation and providing serious thought to their recommendations. The protection of civilians affected by conflict should be an essential element of any meaningful concept of peace and security and each State should protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The Government of the Czech Republic welcomed the speed with which the Rapid Response Unit had deployed missions on the ground in the Middle East and North Africa and would like to know how States should assist the Office of the High Commissioner further in improving the rapid response capacity. The Czech Republic deplored the violence against and detention of opposition candidates and civil society actors following the presidential elections in Belarus.

ALI CHERIF (Tunisia) thanked the High Commissioner for her excellent presentation and expressed gratitude for the assistance given by the High Commissioner and to all delegations who had voiced solidarity with the Tunisian people. Tunisia was against oppression and injustice and supported defending human rights and universal values.

Tunisia had acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and had withdrawn the reservation to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. All these measures were designed to create the conditions for a healthy political life. Tunisia welcomed the work of many non-governmental organizations. Tunisia believed that the opening of a new office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Tunisia would help to strengthen this collaboration.

NAHIDA SOBHAN (Bangladesh) said Bangladesh took note of the thematic priorities of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and appreciated the attention given to poverty, the global food crisis and the continued price hikes on the global food prices. Poverty was a major challenge to the enjoyment of human rights and Bangladesh was concerned about the non-fulfilment of official development assistance commitments. It was disheartening that any real improvement in the implementation of the Declaration on Right to Development on the ground was yet to be seen. Bangladesh was concerned about the continuation of intolerance and discrimination in some societies and it was important to reverse this trend. There was scope to do more.

CHEIKH AHMED OULD ZAHAF (Mauritania) said Mauritania would like to congratulate the High Commissioner and the team at the High Commissioner's Office for their excellent field work, in particular the visit to the Occupied Land of Palestine which Mauritania hoped would alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people. Mauritania was following the situation in Libya with great interest and would like to reaffirm the commitment of the President of Mauritania, who had been presiding over the group of African countries to try to resolve the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire in accordance with the unanimous decision made at the meeting on Côte d'Ivoire. Mauritania had also welcomed the opening of a bureau of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Mauritania and the visit of the High Commissioner in April.

DIEGO FALCONI (Ecuador) thanked the High Commissioner for presenting her annual report and the fact that she pointed out the most relevant topics that were part of the general agenda; the issue of migration was very appropriate in the report. The document that legalized their status should not be considered as the key of their dignity and in this context Ecuador urged the High Commissioner to continue to participate actively in these issues and to protect these persons. Ecuador agreed that the promotion of the right to development was key in the fight against poverty and agreed that the Human Rights Council should take up this issue more actively and welcomed the dialogues that had been prepared in this context. Ecuador had been able to progressively increase social and public investments and this had benefitted sectors such as health and employment.

Ecuador urged the High Commissioner to continue to work and use the criteria of non selectivity which was very important. Ecuador said that a new convention was coming into force and this increased the work of the Office and clearly there was a big difference between the original context of the treaty bodies system and the actual situation.

FLORENCE SIMBIRI, of International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, said that national human rights institutions were critical actors in advancing respect for human rights in all regions. The support of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights contributed both to the establishment of the national human rights institutions and to their continuing development and growing effectiveness. A significant number of national human rights institutions faced ongoing obstacles and that was why the support of the High Commissioner was critical. The priority placed on combating discrimination and other forms of intolerance was welcomed and was seen as a key to the mandate of national human rights institutions.

MOHAMMED FAYEK, of Arab National Human Rights Institutions, in a joint statement expressed

their support for peaceful protests calling for human rights and condemned human rights violations that took place. The Arab National Human Rights Institutions were concerned about the manifestation of non-respect for the rights of peoples to exercise their fundamental freedoms. National human rights institutions had a major role to play in the promotion and protection of human rights in peaceful times, but their role was no less important in times of conflict. Arab National Human Rights Institutions committed itself to make every effort to provide support to national human rights institutions in the countries affected by crises which now needed to strengthen their capacities and resources so that they could fully play their role in accordance with the Paris Principles. In closing, Arab National Human Rights Institutions condemned the violence and human rights violations in Libya.

JULIE DE RIVERO, of Human Rights Watch, said that the Council must find a way to address the ongoing situation in countries where people continued to take their protests to the streets in order to claim their rights, whether through an urgent debate, a briefing or the discussion of a resolution. The High Commissioner should consider appointing a Special Envoy for the Middle East and North Africa to monitor ongoing developments on the ground who could bolster efforts to provide human rights-related support to States in transition, ensuring that lessons learned were shared across the region, to identify areas of concern to human rights and to make recommendations for quick action to address these problems. The Council must condemn the arbitrary arrest and wrongful prosecution of hundreds of people arrested in Belarus following the presidential election in December 2010; at least 639 people, according to official statistics, had been arrested.

SHERAZADE KARA, of Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, said the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network was disappointed at the failure of the review process to fulfill its potential and urged the Office of the High Commissioner to implement many of the positive proposals such as the compilation of best practices for hosting national consultations and the compilation for the second cycle of the Universal Periodic review outlining the State under review's position on each recommendation made and encouraging States to make better use of existing mechanisms such as the Internal Advisory Procedure of the Coordination Committee. The Network welcomed the Council speaking out against human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

ROY BROWN, of International Humanist and Ethical Union, said that it was clear that the High Commissioner recognized the contrast between the immediate and excellent response of the Council to the barbarity of the Libyan authorities and the continuing lack of effective response by the Council to the state-sponsored rape and murder of people in certain other States. On Monday the United States Secretary of State pointed out that a number of States had committed and continued to commit abuse of human rights against their citizens. In particular, the International Humanist and Ethical Union welcomed her clear statement regarding the gross abuses of human rights being carried out by Iran.

ISHTIYAQ HAMEED, of International Human Rights Association of American Minorities, voiced their belief that the swift and decisive action taken by the Human Rights Council with regard to the Libyan situation was both just and was carried out within an appropriate timeframe. However they noted that other such emergencies in 2010 were not necessarily discussed and acted upon with the same vigour. The International Human Rights Association of American Minorities asked what steps could be taken to ensure that future emergencies, which perhaps did not have such clear cut universal condemnation, were acted upon swiftly and concretely.

ADRIAN JUUKO, of European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Federation, welcomed the visit of the High Commissioner to Uganda in 2010 and particularly appreciated her recent public statements expressing deep concerns about the Anti-homosexuality bill in Uganda. Issues of sexual orientation and gender identity were of urgent human rights concern today as in many African countries lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons continued to face criminal sanctions, killings, violence or torture because of who they were or who they loved. The European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Federation urged the High Commissioner to remain strong in the face of the opposition by some States.

LAILA MATAR, of Cairo Institute of Human Rights Studies, expressed their deep appreciation for the robust and courageous efforts that the High Commissioner and her Office had taken to address the widespread human rights violations carried out against peaceful protestors in the Middle East and North Africa. A unifying theme of all protest movements throughout the Arab region had been a demand for increased political participation, transparency and accountability within their political systems. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights should urgently take measures to make those issues a central human rights paradigm within which the Office would approach the region as a whole, in particular freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, rights to equality, non-discrimination and the right to self-determination.

CAROLINA AMADOR PEREZ, of Federation of Cuban Women, said that the Federation of Cuban Women thanked the High Commissioner for the presentation of her report and the efforts made at incorporating a gender perspective into human rights work. The Federation would like to see a debate held on the impact of the economic crisis on the labour of women and shared the High Commissioner's concern about the treaty bodies. It would like to know what efforts would be made to strengthen the treaty bodies and what criteria and methods would be taken into account to include non-governmental organizations in this process.

RENATE BLOEM, of World Alliance for Citizen Participation, welcomed the annual report which highlighted the leading role of civil society in the current movement in the Arab world and the rapid response of the Office of the High Commissioner in sending a delegation to Tunisia and planning to dispatch a senior staff team to Egypt. The World Alliance expressed concern at the lack of protection for human rights defenders in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and for the situation in Belarus, where the State had failed in its responsibility to protect and enable civil society. The anchoring of the Millennium Development Goals in human rights deserved the utmost attention in this Council and also during the upcoming commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development.

HUSEYIN ORUC, of Foundation for Human Rights and Freedom and Humanitarian Relief, said that the Foundation had been actively working since 1992 to provide humanitarian aid for all oppressed people, without any discrimination according to region, religion, language, race, people who were in difficulty, victims of natural disasters or human rights abuses. The Foundation began with voluntary activities, had rapidly expanded across the world in 126 countries and regions, and the Foundation made a bridge of charity from Turkey to the world.

The Foundation had worked for the people of Palestine since the year of its establishment and was carrying aid not only to Gaza but also to the West Bank, and in the refugee camps in the Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Syria. As the international community had been unable to provide a permanent solution to the embargo despite consequences that had led to starvation, a lack of medical care and death, it had become obvious that humanitarian aid had to be sent to Gaza by land and sea.

MALUZA WASILUSDIO, of International Committee for the Respect and the Application of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, pointed out that, in this year of the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the World Conference against Racism and Racial Discrimination, the effective application of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was relevant and the International Committee welcomed the efforts of the High Commissioner in combating discrimination and the Intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Programme of Action. The International Committee encouraged the High Commissioner to involve more civil society in the field. Attention must be paid to the tragic situation of refugees and Africa migrants. In conclusion, the International Committee expressed support for the clear appeal made by Nigeria calling for a true African priority for human rights.

MAURICE KATALA, of Action internationale pour la paix et le développement dans la région des Grands Lacs (AIPD), welcomed the attention to the implementation of the six thematic priorities in the report of the High Commissioner. The efforts made by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights were welcomed, but it must be noted that with regard to combating poverty and securing peace

not enough progress had been made and many countries were still creating obstacles. There was an urgency to protect human rights in the Great Lakes regions, including involving the members of the Security Council, ensuring success in combating impunity and prosecuting criminals, even those protected by Rwanda, and taking binding urgent measures for the implementation of legal mechanisms to punish violations of international humanitarian law, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

HEATHER COLLISTER, of International Service for Human Rights, said that the key benchmark of the success of the Council was in how it met the human rights challenges. The Libyan case had shown what could be done with the available tools and a strong political will. The Council had sent a strong message to the world that human rights abuses would not be tolerated. Human rights defenders undertook difficult work and without their bravery the work of the Council would amount to nothing. The International Service for Human Rights called on the Council to adopt additional protection and asked about the High Commissioner's vision on that increased protection.

ALEX CONTE, of International Commission of Jurists, said the International Commission of Jurists would like to bring to the Council's attention that in June Pakistan had deposited its instrument of ratification to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and that the ratification had come with a number of reservations, including with respect to article 40 whereby Pakistan declared that it did not recognize the competence of the Human Rights Committee, the treaty body charged with the periodic review of States parties' compliance with the Covenant. Pakistan's reservation should be seen as incompatible with the object and purpose of the International Covenant which included the establishment of supervisory machinery for the obligations agreed to under the treaty. The reservation should be seen as impermissible under article 19 c of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties but as no other State parties had lodged objections this silence was be seen as acceptance. The International Commission of Jurists would like to know what the Office of the High Commissioner planned to do about this situation.

HILLEL NEUER, of United Nations Watch, said United Nations Watch welcomed the High Commissioner's annual report. As accountability began at home, United Nations Watch wished to pose some questions: 1) Why had the High Commissioner not spoken when Qaddafi was chosen to serve on the United Nations Security Council? 2) Why had the High Commissioner not mentioned human rights in its published statements on Libya between 2008 and 2010? 3) Why had the High Commissioner not spoken out when a representative of the Libyan regime was appointed to chair the World Conference on Racism in 2009? 3) Why had the High Commissioner not spoken out when the Qaddafi regime was elected as a member of the Council last year? 4) and why had the High Commissioner not spoken out against the election of the co-founder of the Moammar Kaddafi Human Rights Prize to the Council and when he was made the Council's vice president last year?

PATRIZIA SCANELLA, of Amnesty International said that North Africa and the Middle East were living through momentous times. The events described as revolutions, whether jasmine, lotus or other, and compared to the end of apartheid, the fall of the Berlin Wall or the end of military rule in South and Central America. In the High Commissioner's remarks, Ms. Pillay had told the Council about the Tunisian Foreign Minister's request that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights open an office in Tunisia, and she had mentioned the high-level staff mission that she would send to Egypt and the support that she would provide to the commission of inquiry for Libya. These were not ordinary times, and the existing and foreseeable demands on the High Commissioner's Office would not be ordinary. The primary responsibility for the transition to democracy and better respect for human rights and the rule of law in Tunisia, Egypt, and they hoped, Libya and other countries in the region would lie with the people and the authorities of the concerned countries.

## Concluding Remarks

NAVI PILLAY, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in her closing remarks, said she could never do justice to all the questions raised by the delegations and civil society. The High Commissioner attached great importance to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development and it was an opportunity to raise the awareness of development as a right. There was a

to development and it was an opportunity to raise the awareness of development as a right. There was a need to focus forward and build enabling environments for sustainable development. The food crisis was of a common concern to countries and the Office and it was fuelled by speculation, land property, biofuels, and other factors. Sharp increases in food prices seriously undermined the rights of many, especially those living in poverty. Recent occasions of social unrest had been associated with recent food price increases and the lack of avenues for expression and social and political participation. The updated comprehensive framework for action was rich in recommendations and should be used for collective action, together with the recommendation by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food. This was a matter that required the urgent attention of this Council. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had stepped up its research, programmatic work, and institutional relations with others in order to bring the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights to the centre of the agenda. On ratification of the Optional Protocol to this Covenant, it was only seven ratifications short and the field offices were organising special events to promote the Optional Protocol.

Turning to the issue of maternal mortality, the High Commissioner said that the report to the September session of the Human Rights Council would bring numerous examples of effective best practices of implementation to be picked up by States. United Nations Women had taken on this issue as a matter of priority as well, and work was ongoing that this issue was integrated in system-wide response. The Office was working on promoting the rights of all migrants, regardless of their status, and the activities included advocating for their rights, exploring alternatives to criminal detention, and advocacy for the ratification of the International Convention on the Rights of Migrants and Their Families. The Office was in the process of developing training modules on management of migration which were now being tested and would soon be available for use. The work against discrimination, including religious discrimination, was one of the priorities and the Office would pursue a range of activities to advance minority rights. This year the Office was organising a series of expert workshops on prohibition of incitement to racial hatred and intolerance. On human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, the High Commissioner said that discrimination on this basis should not be condoned. The violations of their rights included beatings, killings and torture and those constituted serious human rights violations. The Office would try to address the challenges to the enjoyment of rights of human beings, and this would not be easy and would require dialogue and understanding. Decriminalisation of homosexuality was not only a good thing to do, but was an obligation of States under international law.

Speaking of country situations and field work in those countries, the High Commissioner said that the plans for country visits for this year would include Senegal, Guinea, Mauritania, Papua New Guinea, Australia, Mexico, Norway and Iran. Following the mission to Tunisia, the Minister for Foreign Affairs had requested an opening of the office there and the High Commissioner would be deploying a team immediately to assist national counterparts and help in defining long-term engagement strategy. There was intent to send a mission to Egypt as well, to explore opportunities to assist in the promotion and protection of human rights in Egypt in line with international obligations. The High Commissioner welcomed the decision to establish a commission of inquiry into the events in Libya and the Office would support its work and was already assisting the President of the Human Rights Council with the selection of commissioners.

## Right of Reply

SO SE PYONG (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), speaking in a right of reply, said that the resolution against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as reported by the United States this morning was the product of the hostility constantly pursued by the United States and its allies for more than half a century with a view to eliminating the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its social system. It had nothing to do with the promotion of human rights and only with constituted political confrontation. The Council must voice its opposition to these double standards and the Council must adopt a resolution against the systematic human rights violations of the United States in other countries.

