

Human Rights Council 50th session

Joint Statements

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Joint Statement on the Human Rights Situation in China
Item 2 - Interactive Dialogue on the High Commissioner's Annual Report, 50th Session
of the UN Human Rights Council
Delivered by H.E. Ambassador Paul Bekkers, Permanent Representative
June 14, 2022 – Geneva, Switzerland

Mr. President,

I have the honour of delivering this cross-regional joint statement on behalf of 47 countries*.

Madam High Commissioner,

We continue to be gravely concerned about the human rights situation in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Numerous extensively researched and credible reports indicate that over a million people have been arbitrarily detained. Furthermore there are reports of ongoing widespread surveillance, discrimination against Uyghurs and other persons belonging to minorities as well as of severe restrictions on Uyghur culture and the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to freedom of religion or belief. We are also concerned about reports of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, forced sterilization, sexual and gender-based violence, forced labour, and forced separation of children from their parents by authorities.

We repeat our call on China to urgently address these concerns and implement the CERD's eight recommendations relating to Xinjiang from August 2018, as well as the concerns raised by numerous Special Procedures since that time, including to end the arbitrary detention of Muslim Uyghurs and persons belonging to other minorities.

We also continue to be gravely concerned about the deterioration of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong and the human rights situation in Tibet.

We urge China to ensure full respect for the rule of law, to comply with obligations under national and international law with regard to the protection of human rights and to ratify the ICCPR. In addition, we urge the Chinese government to provide meaningful and unfettered access for independent observers to Xinjiang, including Special Procedures. In view of the severity of the situation in Xinjiang, we call on all countries to respect the principle of non-refoulement.

Finally, we acknowledge your recent visit to China, including Xinjiang, which provided an opportunity for dialogue with the Chinese authorities on various human rights related concerns, and your statement of 28 May. We are interested in more detailed observations, including on the restrictions the Chinese authorities imposed on the visit as well as on your access to members of civil society and to places of your choice.

Madame High Commissioner, recalling your announcement at HRC48 that your Office would release a report on human rights in Xinjiang, we look forward to its prompt release. Could you provide the Council with further information on the timeline?

Thank you.

This statement was supported by:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Eswatini, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America (47).

**JOINT STATEMENT ON FOOD INSECURITY AS A RESULT OF ARMED
CONFLICT (UNITED KINGDOM / THE GAMBIA)
TO BE DELIVERED BY THE GAMBIA DURING THE INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE
ON THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Madam High Commissioner,

I am pleased to deliver this Joint Statement on behalf of [xxx] countries.

We encourage you to engage on the global food security crisis as an important part of your work for the coming year. The latest report from the UN Secretary General suggests that more than 1.7 billion people across over 100 countries are affected by this crisis, with over 43 million people at risk of famine.

We see the effects of this humanitarian and human rights crisis within countries affected by armed conflict. But we also see how armed conflict in one country can exacerbate food insecurity globally.

The war on Ukraine, a major producer of wheat, corn and cooking oil, has disrupted agricultural production, blocked ports and destroyed infrastructure. It has deepened disruptions, caused unprecedented risks for global supply chains and accelerated food insecurity, increasing the risk of hunger and famine with huge implications of worsening livelihoods around the world.

Madam High Commissioner,

Hunger constitutes an outrage and a violation of human dignity. It must never be used as a weapon of war. We must all work together to ensure that sufficient, safe, affordable and nutritious food is available and accessible to everyone, including the poorest and most vulnerable.

Thank you.

High-Level Commemorative Event on the occasion of the Council's 50th Session
Joint statement by the Contact Group

Thank you, Mr. President.

I am speaking on behalf of the contact group on Council membership.

We are grateful for today's commemorative event and thank the speakers for their comments.

The Council is only as good as its members and as GA resolution 60/251 makes clear, all members elected to the Council are required to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights and to fully cooperate with the Council.

The purpose of the contact group is to make Council membership more inclusive and diverse by encouraging States with a demonstrable commitment to human rights and democracy to strengthen their engagement with the Council and consider standing for election. Our particular focus is on small states.

As we reflect on the Council's achievements over 50 sessions, we think we need to keep the issue of future membership clearly in mind. In 2017, 95 states had never been members. Now that number is down to around 60. But there is still some way to go, and the majority of states who have yet to become members are LDCs and SIDS.

One of the Council's stand out successes has been the creation and work of the LDCs /SIDS trust fund. We would like to pay tribute to its achievements, and express our ongoing support for its work.

We would like to ask the panel, what more can be done to support LDCs and SIDS to engage with the Council's work and to seek Council membership.

Thank you.

**Statement delivered by H.E Ambassador Dr Katharina Stasch (Germany) on behalf of
over 100 countries at the High-Level Commemorative Event on the occasion of the
Councils 50th Session**

Geneva, 15th June 2022

Thank you Mr. President,

Today's commemorative event not only provides us with a moment of reflection on the past 49 sessions of the Human Rights Council but also an opportunity to warmly thank you, Madame High Commissioner, on behalf of over 100 countries, for your tireless work throughout the past years.

Four years ago, you said you were "ready for the challenge" to protect and promote the human rights of everyone, everywhere. You also said, it is one of the most important jobs at the international level and you could have added that it is one of the most challenging as well.

Current crises, inter alia climate change, the pandemic or armed conflicts have highlighted that a strong voice and advocate for human rights is indispensable. We would like to thank you for being this voice who has tirelessly advocated for universal responses anchored in human rights.

Thank you.

- 1 Afghanistan
- 2 Albania
- 3 Andorra
- 4 Angola
- 5 Argentina
- 6 Armenia
- 7 Australia
- 8 Austria
- 9 Bahamas
- 10 Bahrain
- 11 Bangladesh
- 12 Barbados
- 13 Belgium
- 14 Bhutan
- 15 Bosnia and Herzegovina
- 16 Botswana
- 17 Bulgaria
- 18 Cabo Verde
- 19 Cambodia
- 20 Canada
- 21 Chile

22	Colombia
23	Costa Rica
24	Côte d'Ivoire
25	Croatia
26	Cyprus
27	Czech Republic
28	Denmark
29	Djibouti
30	Dominican Republic
31	Ecuador
32	El Salvador
33	Estonia
34	Fiji
35	Finland
36	France
37	Germany
38	Greece
39	Guatemala
40	Haiti
41	Honduras
42	Hungary
43	Iceland
44	India
45	Indonesia

UN Human Rights Council, 50th session
Interactive dialogue with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, on her oral
update on the grave human rights and humanitarian situation in Mariupol
Joint statement by the Group of Friends of Accountability Following the Aggression
against Ukraine
Delivered by Albania

Mr. President,

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of the 46 member states in Geneva of the Group of Friends of Accountability Following the Aggression against Ukraine.

We thank the High Commissioner for her update and welcome this important opportunity to discuss Russia's ongoing military aggression against Ukraine.

It is a discussion that concerns us all, as Russia's military aggression against Ukraine violates the UN Charter and international law, which underpin peaceful coexistence and global security. Safeguarding this rests on our collective ability to ensure accountability for perpetrators and justice for victims, in Mariupol and elsewhere. We urge Russia to abide by its obligations under international law, confirmed by the legally binding ICJ order of 16th March 2022.

We remain horrified by continued reports of indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, forced deportations of children followed by threat of illegal adoption, rape and other sexual and gender-based violence in Ukraine. We call on all parties to strictly respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law and seek individual accountability.

We are furthermore deeply concerned about the grave effects of the Russian military aggression against Ukraine on global food security and energy systems. Developing countries and persons in vulnerable situations are particularly affected.

The Group of Friends welcomes the many initiatives to collect evidence and investigate crimes committed during the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, including those by the Commission of Inquiry and the ICC, as well as the valuable support of the Office of the High Commissioner to these endeavours. We encourage all involved actors to strengthen coordination to ensure effectiveness and to avoid re-traumatization of victims.

Civil society actors continue to have an important role in documenting violations and abuses.

We stand in full solidarity with Ukraine and its courageous people.

Madame High Commissioner, how can we best pursue accountability when access to Mariupol and other regions under temporary Russian control in the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine

are restricted by Russia, and given the alleged deportation of people from Ukraine to Russia, including victims and witnesses?

Thank you.

Signatories:

1. Albania
2. Australia
3. Austria
4. Belgium
5. Bosnia-Herzegovina
6. Bulgaria
7. Canada
8. Colombia
9. Croatia
10. Cyprus
11. Czech Republic
12. Denmark
13. Estonia
14. Finland
15. France
16. Georgia
17. Germany
18. Greece
19. Guatemala
20. Iceland
21. Ireland
22. Italy
23. Japan
24. Latvia
25. Liechtenstein
26. Lithuania
27. Luxembourg
28. Malta
29. Marshall Islands
30. Montenegro
31. Netherlands
32. New Zealand
33. North Macedonia

34. Norway
35. Poland
36. Portugal
37. Republic of Korea
38. Romania
39. Slovakia
40. Slovenia
41. Spain
42. Sweden
43. Switzerland
44. Ukraine
45. United Kingdom
46. United States

50^o session of the Human Rights Council
Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the
enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health,
Tlaleng Mofokeng
20 June 2022

Joint Statement of the GoF of the SOGI mandate*

Thank you,

It is my pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Friends of the mandate of the Independent Expert on the protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, comprised of 34 States and co-chaired by Argentina, Chile and my own country, Uruguay.

We would like to extend our appreciation to the Special Rapporteur, Tlaleng Mofokeng, for her thematic report, in which she provided a comprehensive analysis on the impact of violence in all its forms and manifestations on the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

We take this opportunity to commend, in particular, the inclusive and intersectional approach that the SR has decided to mainstream throughout this report.

In fact, we recognize the importance of addressing gender-based violence from a comprehensive approach that includes all forms of violence targeting individuals based on their gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, therefore affecting the lives of everyone, especially women, girls, boys and LGBTIQ+ persons. In that regard, we agree with the Special Rapporteur that “gender-based violence should be addressed through a non-binary approach that is cognizant of it being a phenomenon that includes matters of sexuality, and violations against persons on the basis of their real or imputed sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics”.

In addition, we echo the concern of the SR over the fact that health-care workers worldwide in many cases are not trained to meet the needs of LGBTIQ+ individuals, which can constitute a significant obstacle for their enjoyment of the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including their sexual and reproductive health. In this regard, we emphasize the need to address the effects of the pandemic on access to SRH.

We also share the concerns of the Rapporteur on the impact of violence and discrimination on the mental health of LGBTIQ+ Youth and the need of doing more in this regard.

Taking into consideration existing challenges, we encourage States to consider requesting technical guidance to the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and the SOGI independent expert.

Finally, we encourage you to continue mainstreaming this substantive gender equality approach to the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health in the implementation of your mandate. You can count with our GoF continued support for this inclusive approach, that should serve as an example to other special procedures.

Thank you.

*The GoF of the mandate of the Independent Expert on the protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is composed of: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States and Uruguay.

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

50th Session

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right to Education, Koumbou

Boly Barry

22 June 2022

Joint Statement on behalf of the EU and a group of XX countries

President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the European Union, its Member States and XX other countries.

We thank the Special Rapporteur for her timely report.

Education is a human right. The digital transformation provides unique opportunities to accelerate the achievement of SDG4 on ensuring access to inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

We stand for a digital transformation governed by human rights and we reiterate our commitment to promote economic, social and cultural rights, in respect of the principles of universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights.

While underlining the opportunities, we are acutely aware of the risks of digital technologies, including potential violations of individuals' right to privacy and child abuse.

Online learning allowed millions of children and youth to keep accessing education during lockdowns. The pandemic also exposed global digital divides with 87% having internet access at home in high-income countries compared to 6 % in low-income countries.

We are committed to closing the various digital gaps, including the digital gender gap, foster access to digital, information and media education and to empower everyone, especially women and girls, and those in vulnerable situations to participate confidently and safely in today's digital society and economy. Global connectivity to an open, free, global, interoperable, reliable, and secure Internet is a prerequisite in this regard.

Special Rapporteur, how can we best address the digital gender divide and promote digital learning for all?

I thank you

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
50th session
Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and
Expression
24 June 2022
Joint Statement on the situation of human rights in Russia

Mr. President,

The EU has the honour to deliver this joint statement on behalf of a the [cross-regional] group of [...] countries.

We are deeply concerned about the substantial deterioration of the situation of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in the Russian Federation and we echo the worries expressed by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in her annual update.

Over recent years, we have seen significant crackdowns and broad restrictions by Russian authorities of the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of association, freedom of peaceful assembly, as well as freedom of religion or belief. The shrinking civic space has prevented and discouraged Russians from actively participating in public life. Recently, especially since the Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, repressions and attacks against dissenting Russian civil society representatives and organisations, human rights defenders, members of the political opposition and critical voices, independent media and journalists, researchers, and other individuals exercising their human rights and fundamental freedoms have significantly increased. The increasing repression is a significant enabling factor of Russia's aggression abroad.

We condemn the forcible dispersal of peaceful protests and mass arbitrary arrests and detentions of protestors, such as those speaking out against Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. We condemn censorship and the forced closure of independent media, advocacy groups and civil society organisations, such as internationally well-known and respected International Memorial and the Human Rights Center "Memorial". We deplore the disinformation campaign fabricated and fuelled by the Russian authorities concerning their war of aggression against Ukraine and the consequences thereof. We are seriously concerned about increasingly repressive legislation, including laws targeting so-called "foreign agents" and "undesirable organisations". We continue to call on Russian authorities to cease their brutal crackdown against members of the political opposition and their supporters and anti-corruption activists, exemplified by the ongoing mistreatment and politically motivated imprisonment of Alexei Navalny, the ongoing politically motivated trial against Andrei Pivovarov under the law on "undesirable organisations", and the ongoing prosecution of opposition activist Vladimir Kara-Murza and many others who are now charged for allegedly spreading false information under Russia's new repressive laws.

Furthermore, we denounce the ongoing serious violations of human rights in the Chechen Republic, including extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, and attacks on media and human rights defenders, in an environment of impunity.

We also deplore the discriminatory laws and policies against LGBTI persons as well as persons belonging to religious minorities, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, in Russia.

Mr. President,

People in Russia, as individuals in any country, deserve their human rights and fundamental freedoms to be respected, protected and fulfilled and to benefit from this Council's attention, including through increased scrutiny.

We call on the Russian Federation to abide by its international obligations and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms for everyone in Russia. We also call on Russia to cooperate with international human rights mechanisms, such as the OHCHR and the Special Procedures of this Council.

We encourage the High Commissioner for Human Rights to report to the Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in Russia.

We stand in full solidarity with the people in Russia and encourage everyone to stand up for all those who continue to strive for their human rights and fundamental freedoms as the foundation for their future, often at great personal risk.

The full version of this statement is uploaded on the HRC Extranet.

Thank you.

Co-sponsors:

1. EU27,
2. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,
3. United States of America,
4.

50th session of the Human Rights Council.
Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty
Joint statement by the Friends of the Special Rapporteur's mandate

President,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of a group of X States.

Special Rapporteur,

We renew our full support for your mandate. As the international community continues to grapple with the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, hundreds of millions of people could be pushed into extreme poverty this year as a result of the combined effects of the health crisis, the climate crisis, and of the war in Ukraine and its impact on global food and energy markets.

Once again, women, children, and older persons, as well as persons in vulnerable situations, are likely to pay the highest price. States must strengthen their commitments and cooperation if we are to achieve the goal of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030.

A response based solely on economic development is not enough, because situations of extreme poverty can hinder the realization of all human rights, civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural.

Non-take-up of rights, the theme of your report, is in this sense a particularly insidious and devastating phenomenon for the cohesion of our societies. It concerns all countries, whatever their level of development.

It is therefore essential to put in place policies to promote access to rights, to fight all forms of discrimination against persons living in poverty, and to guarantee their consultation and participation in decision-making processes that concern them. Only a human rights-based approach to fighting inequality can break the vicious circle of marginalization and build truly inclusive, just and resilient societies.

I thank you.

Liste des co-signataires (Alphabetical order in French):

1. Albanie
2. Allemagne
3. Andorre
4. Australie
5. Autriche
6. Belgique
7. Bosnie-Herzégovine

8. Bulgarie
9. Chili
10. Chypre
11. Colombie
12. Costa Rica
13. Côte d'Ivoire
14. Croatie
15. Danemark
16. Estonie
17. Etats-Unis
18. Finlande
19. France
20. Grèce
21. Guatemala
22. Haïti
23. Honduras
24. Irlande
25. Islande
26. Italie
27. Liechtenstein
28. Lituanie
29. Luxembourg
30. Macédoine du Nord
31. Malaisie
32. Malte
33. Mexique
34. Monaco
35. Montenegro
36. Norvège
37. Paraguay
38. Pays-Bas
39. Pérou
40. Philippines
41. Portugal
42. République de Corée
43. Roumanie
44. Sénégal
45. Slovaquie
46. Slovénie
47. Suède
48. Suisse
49. Tunisie
50. Turquie

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

50th session

**Interactive Dialogue on the oral update by the High Commissioner on Ukraine and on
the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in Crimea**

05 July 2022

Joint Statement delivered by the European Union

Mr. President,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of

As a result of Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine, millions of people around the world are being pushed into extreme poverty or severe food insecurity, with serious implications on the enjoyment of their human rights.

This global crisis affects in particular women, girls, children, older persons and persons in vulnerable situations. It requires a swift, comprehensive and human rights based response.

The immediate priority is to provide emergency relief. We must also step up existing efforts to support countries to boost their production capacity, strengthen the resilience of their food systems and make markets more sustainable.

Trade routes and markets need to remain open. Russia continues to block Ukraine's ports, and has limited and taxed its own exports of food and fertilizer, thus disrupting supply chains and pushing food prices even higher. We call on Russia to enable free and safe passage of agricultural shipping from Ukrainian ports and to cease its attacks on Ukraine's grain silos and food storage facilities.

Lastly, our collective response must be well coordinated and tailored to the increasing needs. We applaud the mobilisation of the UN system and commend the work of the Global Crisis Support Group.

Mr. President, the sanctions imposed on Russia following its aggression against Ukraine do not extend to food or fertilizer exports from Russia to the rest of the world, not even when carried by Russian-flagged vessels, nor do they prohibit payment for such exports.

Let us join efforts in addressing this crisis and protecting those in vulnerable situations from poverty and hunger. We cannot let disinformation distract us. Hunger must not be used as a weapon of war.

Thank you.

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
50th session
FULL Joint statement regarding speakers from Crimea

I have the honour to deliver this joint statement on behalf of the 27 EU Member States, Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

We are reacting to the statement on behalf of the Russian Federation delivered by a representative of the administration in illegally annexed Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

We would like to recall the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions (68/262, 71/205, 72/190, 73/263, 74/168, 75/192 and 76/179), which define the status of the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol as an integral part of Ukraine.

We reaffirm our commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters. We condemn in the strongest terms the ongoing aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine in violation of the UN Charter and other fundamental principles of international law. We condemn and do not recognize the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation.

We therefore urge the Russian Federation to refrain from letting any representative of the administration in this illegally annexed territory intervene on its behalf within the Human Rights Council, as well as in any other international fora.

Thank you.

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
50th session
Urgent Debate on human rights of women and girls in Afghanistan
1 July 2022
EU Statement

Thank you, Mr. President.

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union.

The EU thanks the speakers for their statements.

Allow me to begin by reiterating our deepest sympathies with the people of Afghanistan following last Wednesday's devastating earthquake. The European Union stands in full solidarity with the people of Afghanistan and will continue to provide assistance to those in need.

Esteemed speakers,

The information you have provided proves how necessary and timely it was to ask that the Human Rights Council focus on the situation of the human rights of women and girls in Afghanistan.

With great concern, the EU has noticed that, since 15 August 2021, women and girls in Afghanistan have been suffering systematic violations of their rights, directly resulting from the wilful adoption of measures and policies by the Taliban, aiming at erasing them completely from all spheres of public life. Examples of this process are, among others: the recent measures requiring women and girls to wear the full veil in public along with new arbitrary punishments for family members to enforce compliance, are particularly shocking and unacceptable. These measures as well as the recent announcement requiring women only to leave home when necessary are but examples of this process. The reports of abuse towards women human rights activists and women journalist are distressing.

The European Union has a long-term commitment to support the people of Afghanistan. Its action on empowerment of women and girls aims at building resilience and promoting the academic, economic and social empowerment of Afghan women and girls by enhancing their capabilities, employability and future prospects through education and training.

The EU wants to underline that the full, equal, effective and meaningful participation, inclusion, and empowerment of all women and girls in all spheres of life is essential for lasting peace and sustainable economic and social development. It is also a condition for the realization of all human rights of all persons in Afghanistan.

To achieve this, among other human rights, the right to education and justice for victims of sexual and gender-based violence are basic needs for women and girls.

All victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence must have access to justice and to an effective remedy and reparations.

Afghanistan must implement its commitments to ensure the enjoyment of all human rights of all women and girls, in accordance with the State's obligations under international human rights law.

Mr. President,

The Taliban stands at a crossroads. The risks of further instability and human suffering in Afghanistan can be mitigated if action is taken swiftly to address the violations and abuses suffered by women and girls in Afghanistan. But Afghanistan will only be in a position to overcome the challenges it is facing if it fully respects all human rights of all women and girls and allows their effective empowerment as well as full, equal and meaningful participation in all spheres of life, including in decision making processes.

Thank you.

STATEMENT

Human Rights Council 50th Session. Statement delivered by Ambassador Tine Mørch Smith, Permanent Representative of Norway on behalf of a group of countries

Check against delivery
8 July 2022

Mr President,

I deliver this statement on behalf of a cross-regional group of countries.

During this Council session, we have adopted key resolutions related to gender equality and reinforcing the importance of promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls globally.

[We are pleased to see the adoption of resolutions on important topics such as discrimination against women and girls, violence against women and girls, discrimination and violence on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, and female genital mutilation.]

[We continue to commend and strongly support the leadership of all those delegations, civil society organizations and UN bodies that have, and continue, to bring these important issues to forth front of the Council's work.]

It is with these initiatives that we can demonstrate the importance and relevance of the Human Rights Council in moving forward towards a world that respects human rights.

Regrettably at this session, we have seen moves to retreat from human rights protections that this very Council has previously supported and acknowledged. We believe that we collectively have a duty to promote progress to ensuring human rights for all, including to protect human rights on the basis of gender.

During the last weeks, we have spent countless hours defending these rights and the accepted language.

We have heard States describing this session with words such as retrograde, backsliding, weakening, narrowing and watering out existing rights.

As the main UN human rights body, we believe we can strive to do better.

We come from a multitude of cultural, social and economic backgrounds. But as UN Member States and signatories to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we all share the same commitment to the equality of all individuals as rights holders, and the universality of these rights.

As States have said before me today, we cannot deny that women and girls are both rights holders and key agents of change. All of us have different identities. This diversity should not be seen as a threat, but as a resource that can contribute to further development of our societies.

We hope that we can learn from our experiences this session, and be ready to bridge differences through open dialogue and to achieve more when we meet again in September.

I thank you.

-
1. Argentina
 2. Australia
 3. Austria
 4. Belgium
 5. Canada
 6. Chile
 7. Cyprus
 8. Colombia
 9. Croatia
 10. Czech Republic
 11. Denmark
 12. Ecuador
 13. Estonia
 14. Fiji
 15. Finland
 16. France
 17. Georgia
 18. Germany
 19. Greece
 20. Iceland
 21. Ireland
 22. Israel
 23. Italy
 24. Latvia
 25. Liechtenstein
 26. Lithuania
 27. Luxembourg
 28. Malta
 29. Marshall Islands
 30. Mexico
 31. Montenegro
 32. Netherlands

33. New Zealand
34. Norway
35. Panama
36. Peru
37. Portugal
38. Romania
39. Slovenia
40. Spain
41. Sweden
42. Switzerland
43. UK
44. Ukraine
45. Uruguay
46. US