

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

Let me start by expressing Norway's sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President and the facilitators, for your personal engagement, the hard work and the efforts that have been put into this compilation of contributions. We have come a long way since the first session of the Working Group and we believe your combined proposals present us with an interesting basis for the remaining work. It should be possible to conclude this review by the end of the month.

Norway's starting point for the review process was to increase the relevance, effectiveness, transparency and predictability of the work of the Council. Furthermore, we expressed the need to address the persisting selectivity in dealing with urgent situations. We wanted to preserve the almost standing nature of the Council, at the same time as we wanted to improve the conduct of regular sessions and ensure an adequate mix of tools and clearly defined thresholds for action. We cannot reduce the number of regular sessions from three to two without finding other ways to maintain the Council's ability to react to human rights situations. Reducing the number of sessions from two to three is neither, in our view, a limited finetuning.

One way to address this concern would be to include item 2 Update by the High Commissioner on the Agenda also of the proposed UPR plenary sessions.

We also find the proposal under Methods of Work and Rules of Procedure, paragraph B Special sittings interesting. We note that the compilation remains unclear on whether this would apply to UPR plenary sessions.

By including item 2 in the POW and applying the proposed procedures for Special sittings to both the regular sessions and the sessions for the adoption of the UPR outcome, the Human Rights Council will be in a situation to deal with urgent situations anywhere on a regular basis.

As a first reaction to the compilation we would also like to highlight the following:

It is important that the State under review clearly state its position, preferably in writing, on all recommendations received during the interactive dialogue. Without such a clarification, the follow up of the first UPR cycle will practically speaking have no value or meaning. We therefore hope for support to strengthen the language in this regard.

We would also seek clarification as to what is implied by OHCHR acting as a clearinghouse for financial and technical assistance.

Regarding the focus and documentation for the UPR we again question the need to enter into yet another negotiating process to agree on the general guidelines for the national report for the subsequent cycles. In our view only minor adjustments to the present guidelines are needed, and it should be possible to agree to these within the framework of this review. We find the proposals already included in the compilation to be an important step in the right direction.

Likewise, it should be possible to solve the issues around the list of speakers within the framework of this review. Much work has been put into this already.

Regarding the annual cycle of the Council, we support efforts to bring it in line with the calendar year. However, we see need for further work regarding the calendar of meetings. We see little merit in organising a Human Rights Council session in July every two years and look forward to further discussions regarding this and the scheduling of the UPR Working Group and the UPR plenary.

In closing, we would like to highlight the important role played by National Human Rights Institutions compliant with the Paris principles throughout the work of the Council. We are pleased to note several specific references to National Human Rights Institutions in the compilation. However, we believe there is scope for further strengthen their contribution, specially with regard to the UPR.

We look forward to a continued constructive dialogue with all on the above and other proposals presented in the compilation during the days and weeks ahead.