

STATEMENT BY NORWAY

ON THE REVIEW OF THE SYSTEM OF SPECIAL PROCEDURES

My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the three facilitators for having conducted very useful informal consultations i.a. on the review of the system of special procedures, the complaint procedure and expert advice.

We would like to make a few comments regarding both procedure and substance for the review of the system of special procedures.

We see the Special Procedures as an integral part of the UN Human Rights System and an important part of the Human Rights Council. We have greatly benefited from their inputs at this second session of the Council, both with the updates of reports and to the very useful interactive dialogues. We welcome the fact that adequate time was allocated to the inter-active dialogues and that these have included both States and other stakeholders. This has set a good example for the future.

My delegation views the "draft outline of relevant issues" paper produced by the facilitator on special procedures as very useful to facilitate our debate. It contains a list of the main elements that we will have to address. Most importantly, it spells out very clearly the objective of the review process: "to improve and rationalise all mandates in order to maintain a system of Special Procedures, building on the legacy of the CHR and to define the Special Procedures and improve their relation with the other UN human rights mechanisms". Without such a clear and shared understanding of the desired outcome of the review process, the debate on all the other elements would lack direction.

We welcome all initiatives aimed at the strengthening and empowerment of the Special Procedures, their mandates as well as their activities. A key feature and fundamental strength of the system of Special Procedures must be preserved in the review process: to be effective and credible, it is critical that the Special Procedures remain independent, impartial and autonomous. This should guide our deliberations on the nomination and appointment procedures, as well as on their working methods and their relationships with Governments and the UN system.

In our view the Special Procedures are best placed to look critically and constructively at their own working methods. ~~The mandate holders are best positioned to identify practical steps to enhance their own effectiveness and to encourage better cooperation with States.~~ We need their input and will welcome their participation in the inter-sessional working group. Civil society, non-governmental organisations and human rights defenders work closely with the Special Procedures and actively support them in the fulfilment of their mandates. It is important that their voice is also heard in any dialogue on how to make the Special Procedures more effective – including in the inter-sessional working group.

We have a collective responsibility to ensure that the Special Procedures are adequately financially supported to carry out their mandates. Each mandate holder should be ensured an adequate level of support staff and sufficient budget allocations for country visits. This underlines the need for increased allocations from the UN regular budget.

One important element in the process ahead is in our view to put emphasis on the follow-up of recommendations, including by states, by follow-up reports on visits undertaken by special procedures and by the UN in general.

Finally, we believe meaningful review and improvements of the system of special procedures need to build on constructive cooperation and be based on consensus.