

**ITEM 58:**  
**REPORT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President

We welcome this opportunity to discuss the report of the Human Rights Council in this Assembly to which the Council is a subsidiary body – as we welcome the interactive exchange in which the President of the Human Rights Council engaged with the Third Committee past Friday. This is a pragmatic arrangement that is fully in accordance with the letter and spirit of resolution 60/251, by which the Assembly created the Human Rights Council. We hope that this debate will contribute to the awareness of the work of the Human Rights Council here in New York, and that our colleagues in Geneva can benefit from it in tackling the challenges ahead. We would also wish that the schedule of the General Assembly plenary can in the future be arranged in such a manner that this debate does not coincide with Third Committee meetings. We also believe that a more energetic relationship between the General Assembly and the HRC is desirable and that it should not necessarily be limited to the consideration of the HRC report in the fall.

Mr. President

The third report of the Council to the Assembly illustrates the steady progress made in the area of institution-building. After the adoption of the relevant package of measures last year, the Council has now gone through the first round of Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR), an instrument that we hope will make an important contribution to the dialogue on human rights issues and the implementation of human rights standards worldwide. While it is of course too early to offer a final view on the value of the UPR, there are nevertheless a number of observations we can already offer at this point. We certainly welcome the emphasis on the implementation of human rights standards in the framework of the UPR. This is both essential for addressing the implementation gap that still exists 60 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in accordance with the mandate of the Council. The first experiences gathered also show additional potential. In particular, the relationship between the UPR and the treaty body processes needs to be addressed. UPR and the presentation before treaty bodies are of course very different in nature, both as far as their legal foundation is concerned as well as their application in practice. Nevertheless, they are the two essential mechanisms through which States present their human rights record, and we

must therefore explore synergies between the two. The treaty body mechanisms can and should be strengthened through the UPR. In particular, the outcome of the UPR and the voluntary commitments of States should be fed into the treaty body processes and should become part of the dialogue between States and treaty bodies, as far as they are relevant for the treaty under discussion. This would make the two mechanisms mutually beneficial, while preserving their distinct characteristics. It might be useful to also get consolidated input from treaty bodies themselves on this question, as a result of the ongoing discussions held at an Inter-Committee meeting.

Mr. President

The Council has almost concluded its complex and challenging review of the special procedures. The results are generally satisfactory. While we support finalizing the task by reviewing one mandate that is still outstanding, we also believe that we must now shift our focus to the cooperation by States. The cooperation by States with the Special Procedures offers a lot of room for improvement, and we expect those States who serve on the Council to exercise leadership and set a positive example in this respect. All States that are members of the Council have pledged to fully cooperate with it, and issuing a standing invitation to special procedures is one of the best ways of living up to this pledge in practice. We hope that the imminent conclusion of the review will lead a significant number of States – especially those who put their names forward for membership on the Council – to issue such standing invitations.

Mr. President

As a novel development during the reporting period, the Council has for the first time held a Special Session on a thematic issue. We strongly welcome this development and hope that the Council will continue to explore the potential of such ad hoc thematic meetings. We believe that they could greatly contribute to the relevance of the work of the Council, also outside of Geneva, and put a renewed emphasis on its thematic work.

I thank you.