

**Joint Statement on the Promotion of Universality of the Standing  
Invitations to all Special Procedures**

**39<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council**

**Item 5. Human rights bodies and mechanisms  
General debate**

**21 September 2018**

**Delivered by Latvia**

Thank you Mr President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of more than 60 countries.

Mr President,

This year marks 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action that asks states to cooperate fully with UN human rights mechanisms in performing their tasks. Meanwhile the latest annual report of the special procedures, presented to the 37<sup>th</sup> Human Rights Council session, concludes that one of the serious challenges is non-cooperation or selective cooperation by States.

While representing different regional and legal traditions, States subscribing to this statement are united in their resolve to fully cooperate with all special procedures thus demonstrating tangible contribution to the strengthening of the UN system of protection and promotion of human rights in which the special procedures are an integral and important part.

Since the launch of this initiative 15 years ago to promote universality of the standing invitations to all special procedures, the number of countries that have extended standing invitations has reached 118 Member States and 1 non-Member Observer State.

A standing invitation to the special procedures provides an unambiguous signal of a country's readiness to cooperate fully with the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms. The issuing of a standing invitation should result in genuine cooperation with the special procedures whereby states respect the independence, expertise and the working methods of the mandate holders, and take appropriate steps for continued cooperation after the country visit and when addressing their recommendations. Covering all human rights worldwide special procedures can offer crucial advice that if acted upon in a timely manner could help countries to improve their human rights situation and prevent further human rights violations. In this context, we encourage all States that have received visits to engage with special procedures and this Council about how they have addressed the recommendations received.

Whilst we are aware that the commitment to receive special procedures is voluntary, we continue to encourage all countries, especially current members and candidate countries of the Council that have not done so, to extend a standing invitation to the Council's mechanisms, and once this commitment is made, to honour it.

Finally, we invite all states to continue to cooperate with and assist the special procedures mandate holders in the performance of their tasks and to promote an open, constructive and transparent dialogue in the Council.

I thank you!

Countries subscribing to the statement:

**Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, the Bahamas, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, State of Palestine, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uruguay.**