

26th Session of the Human Rights Council

Item 2 – Interactive Dialogue with the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Statement by the Czech Republic

Mr. President,

The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Madam High Commissioner,

We greatly value the impartiality and openness, which have marked the six years of your tenure of the office. Legitimacy of the office vis-à-vis States, but even more so vis-à-vis the people on the ground suffering from human rights violations and abuses, stands and falls with the fundamental principles of independence, impartiality and non-selectivity. We agree that for the OHCHR - to be a positive force bringing about tangible human rights improvements - it must not be afraid to speak the truth, however unflattering and disturbing it is. Independence of the OHCHR must be preserved. We acknowledge the OHCHR prerogative to develop its strategic plan based on its own impartial assessment of the situation and needs on the ground. In this regard, we welcome the Office's renewed priorities for 2014-2017 as well as the draft human rights plan (Programme 20) of the SG's Strategic Framework for the 2016-2017 period.

Madam High Commissioner,

Over the last months, we have witnessed the outbreak of new crises with serious human rights ramifications. We commend your swift reaction aimed at de-escalation of the situation in Ukraine through a monitoring mission. In this regard, the Czech Republic welcomes Ukraine's full cooperation with the OHCHR and the Government's efforts to enact reforms to strengthen the human rights protection of all citizens and promote national dialogue. In South Sudan, more should be done to stop the spiral of violence. We welcome that the situation in the country is to be discussed in the Council. As we believe that the OHCHR field presence has a preventive and stabilizing effect, we are concerned about continued delays in the establishment of the regional office in Cairo and the country office in Myanmar/Burma. On the other hand, we very welcome the agreement on the opening of a field-based structure in Seoul to collect further evidence on human rights violations in the DPRK.

Madam High Commissioner,

We cannot but reaffirm our concerns about the threat posed to human rights defenders and independent civil society in many countries. The UN must strengthen its mechanisms to tackle reprisals.

To conclude, the Czech Republic would like to thank you, Madam High Commissioner, for your tireless service for human rights. Under your leadership, the OHCHR has reinforced its position as a major force for dignity for all people. We wish you all the best in your future endeavors and hope that your voice will continue to be heard in the Human Rights Council and beyond.

Thank you.