

The following statement was read by Madame Bente Angell-Hansen, Norway's representative to the Human Rights Council on June 15, 2010.

Mr. President, the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action (VDPA) declares that "human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthright of all human beings" and "their protection and promotion is the first responsibility of governments." It also recognizes that "the promotion and protection of all human rights is a legitimate concern of the international community." Our Governments reaffirm our solemn commitment to the full implementation of the VDPA, which establishes the universality, indivisibility, interrelatedness and interdependence of all human rights.

Mr. President, a core function of this Council is to pursue the goals set out in the VDPA by providing a forum for an honest and open dialogue among States, where we can share concerns and work together in a spirit of constructive engagement and cooperation to meaningfully address those concerns. This process must always be premised on the need to give voice to and fully protect the rights of individual people wherever they may live.

Mr. President, it is in that spirit that the States that have joined in making this Statement wish to express their concern at the lack of progress in the protection of human rights in Iran, particularly since the events surrounding the elections in Iran last June-- including the violent suppression of dissent, detention and executions without due process of law, severe discrimination against women and minorities including people of the Bah' ai faith, and restrictions on freedom of expression and religion. We cannot let this Human Rights Council session go by without marking the one year anniversary of these events this month.

We call on the Government of Iran to live up to the commitments it has undertaken through the Vienna Declaration, and to fulfil its obligations and its acceptance of human rights recommendations made by the international community during its Universal Periodic Review, including "to fully implement its standing invitation to the Special Procedures and to allow for a visit by OHCHR; to allow freedom of expression, freedom of the media and of assembly; to take all measures necessary to ensure the protection of religious minorities; to respect the human rights of prisoners and detainees; to ensure equal treatment of women and girls in law and practice; and to conduct an independent investigation regarding killings, arrests and detentions following the demonstrations following the 2009 elections."

Mr. President, all those States that have joined this Statement have done so out of a wish to see an improvement in the human rights situation of individual people in Iran. All those whose universal human rights have been violated must know that their voices are being heard by this Council and that we in the international community are working together to try to respond to their needs and to improve their lives. With this in mind we urge the Government of Iran to respect different social and political groups, to allow these groups to express themselves freely, and to engage in a respectful dialogue with them.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Countries supporting the HRC statement on Iran:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Tonga, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ukraine, United States of America, Vanuatu.