**UN Human Rights Council**

**52nd Session**

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Situation of Human Rights Defenders**

*March 16, 2023*

**Statement by the Czech Republic**

Mr. President,

The Czech Republic aligns itself with the EU Statement.

We welcome the report of the Special Rapporteur Ms Mary Lawlor on the situation of human rights defenders (HRDs).

Madam Special Rapporteur,

For us, it goes without saying that the work of HRDs is irreplaceable and crucial for every society where democracy is to thrive. We agree with you that apart from the need to express concern about the severe risks that they are facing, it is also important to highlight their successes and that States should be their allies in achieving these successes.

The Czech Republic strives to be an ally of the HRDs. As an example of best practice we can share the residence facilitation programme called “Civil Society” which, since last year, the Government implements in close partnership with NGOs. Its aim is to provide safe refuge to endangered HRDs and journalists.

We continue funding civil society and HRDs through the Transition Promotion Programme and paying particular attention to individual cases which we mention in the human rights fora. Within the Summit for Democracy process, the Czech Republic together with Norway leads a cohort on civic space.

**Based on your experience, how can we better use the achievements of HRDs to prevent threats and attacks against them?**

Thank you.