**48th session of the HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**General debate on the oral update by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**

**14 September 2021, Statement by the Czech Republic**

Thank you, Madame President.

The Czech Republic aligns itself with the EU statement and has some additional remarks.

Madame High Commissioner,

we wish to thank you for your presentation which reminds us of serious human rights challenges in many parts of the world. As a member of the Human Rights Council, the Czech Republic takes very seriously the Council’s responsibility to ensure a timely and adequate response to all human rights violations and abuses.

Rest assured, Madame High Commissioner, that my country will continue to support and defend the independence and impartiality of your mandate even beyond our membership in the Council which concludes at the end of this year. We also commit to continue engaging constructively with you and your Office and call on other states to do likewise.

My country remains determined to support the OHCHR by voluntary financial contributions that have been gradually increasing throughout the recent years. At the same time we reiterate the need to strengthen the funding of the OHCHR by regular budgeting.

**Madame High Commissioner, we thank you also for your oral updates on Afghanistan, Nicaragua and Sri Lanka.**

**We are concerned about the reports of serious violations and abuses of international humanitarian law and human rights in Afghanistan. We are particularly worried about the situation of Afghan women and girls. As we have stated during the Special Session, this Council must act to prevent further atrocities. We welcome OHCHR’s dedicated attention to the situation and express our full support to its work as well as to the activities of other UN agencies in the country.**

**We took good note of the update on Sri Lanka in accordance with the Council resolution 46/1.  The Government’s approach to the reconciliation process would be significantly reinforced by re-committing to the resolution, which continues to provide a solid framework for promotion and protection of human rights for all in Sri Lanka and the pursued accountability.**

In **Nicaragua**, we are worried about the continued repression against political opponents, journalists and civil society in the run-up to the November elections. We call for the immediate release of dissidents and political contenders. We urge the government to authorise the return of the OHCHR and other **international human rights bodies to the country.**

Our serious concern relates also to the human rights situation in **Cuba**, particularly in light of the Cuban State’s response to the nationwide protests that began on July 11, including the use of Internet restrictions. We join the High Commissioner’s call on the prompt release of all those who have been arbitrarily detained for exercising their rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of opinion and expression.

**Our delegation will address other serious human rights situations in the general debate under item 4 and in the respective interactive dialogues of this session.**

**I thank you.**