**33rd Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council**

**on the grave human rights situation in Ethiopia**

*17 December 2021*

**Statement by the Czech Republic**

Madam President,

The Czech Republic aligns itself with the EU statement.

We wish to underline our commitment to stability, unity and territorial integrity of Ethiopia. As a country with deep historical ties to Ethiopia, long-term development cooperation and active presence in the country, we remain ready to work towards peace and respect for international humanitarian and human rights law.

We have sought to address the human rights and humanitarian situation in Ethiopia at the 46th, 47th as well as 48th Session of the Council. In the meantime, the situation has continued to worsen. Hostilities in Tigray have expanded to the Amhara region. Three million people fled their homes. More than five million people are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, impacting also regions of Afar and Amhara.

Last month, we were informed about the conclusions of the Joint Investigation undertaken by the OHCHR and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. The Czech Republic was deeply concerned about the alleged serious violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict in Tigray. These included targeted killings of civilians, widespread sexual and gender-based violence, possibly crimes against humanity and war crimes.

We commend the work of the OHCHR and EHRC. Concrete steps are now urgently needed. We call on all parties to immediately cease hostilities and other actions that hinder humanitarian access and to engage in political negotiations. All parties to the conflict must fully respect international humanitarian law, including protection of civilians and humanitarian workers. We encourage all parties to implement the recommendations by the Joint Investigation. We welcome the establishment of the Ethiopian Inter-Ministerial Taskforce. We encourage the Taskforce to closely cooperate with the international mechanism established by the Special Session.

The Czech Republic strongly supports the mediation efforts led by the High Representative of the African Union, Mr. Obasanjo. An Ethiopian-led inclusive national dialogue, within the framework of the Ethiopian Constitution, should follow.

At the same time, we believe that the Human Rights Council has a complementary role to the national and regional efforts. Therefore, the Czech Republic fully supports the draft resolution on the human rights situation in Ethiopia and calls for its full implementation.

Thank you.