**Human Rights Council**

**33rd Session, item 10**

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Cambodia, Ms. Rhona Smith**

**Statement by the Czech Republic**

The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statement by the European Union.

Thank you, Ms. Smith, for your comprehensive report.

We welcome the fact that Cambodia is successful in meeting its development goals, that its economy is growing and the unemployment has been reduced. We share your opinion that the fruits of economic growth should be enjoyed more equally by all sectors of the Cambodian society, including women, children, minorities and other vulnerable groups.

On the other hand, we have concerns about the shrinking space for civil society in Cambodia through a number of legal restrictions. Based on our own experience, we are convinced that a flourishing civil society is a prerequisite of future social and economic development of the whole country and that the government should refrain from imposing undue restrictions on civil society organizations. The arrests, charges and detentions of members of civil society and political actors you describe in your report are a sign that Cambodian citizens cannot exercise their human rights freely and safely. In this regard, we would also welcome a prompt and independent investigation into the murder of Kem Ley.

We share your opinion that cooperation and mutual trust among all political parties and actors is essential for Cambodia to carry on with all necessary reforms. Therefore we very much welcome your recommendations concerning the fairness and freedom of electoral processes and voters’ registration and call upon Cambodian authorities to accept them.

Ms. Smith, the Czech Republic welcomes and shares your focus on marginalised groups and discrimination in Cambodia. Furthermore, we believe that recent developments have proven that civil society, political actors and human rights defenders are equally important for the well-being of Cambodian society and deserve their fair share of our attention as well.

Ms. Special Rapporteur, thank you for your important work.