**HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**45th Session**

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Cambodia**

1st October 2020

**Statement by the Czech Republic**

Madam President,

The Czech Republic aligns itself with the EU statement.

We thank the Special Rapporteur, Ms. Rhona Smith, for the update provided in her latest report, including detailed information on individual cases.

The Czech Republic notes the difficult situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in Cambodia and deeply appreciates that the cooperation between the Government of Cambodia and the Special Rapporteur as well as other UN mechanisms and Treaty Bodies has been maintained despite the current circumstances. We would like to encourage the Government to continue providing the mandate and the OHCHR Country Office with further opportunities for engagement.

Madam Special Rapporteur,

Last year, we called for a meaningful dialogue with political opposition, unrestricted space for civil society, trade unions and free media and for protected right to freedom of peaceful assembly. Based on the latest report as well as information by the OHCHR, we must reiterate our statement with stronger emphasis. We are also concerned about the reports of excessive use of force by security forces against demonstrators. Despite certain positive steps, we continue to closely follow the situation of persons connected to the Cambodia National Rescue Party and of other activists, human rights defenders and journalists.

The COVID-19 pandemic will have a long-lasting impact on human rights in all countries, *encompassing the situation of persons belonging to marginalized groups or areas such the labour situation, access to health and administration of justice*. Addressing the challenges also represents a unique opportunity to advance sustainable development based on human rights for all. The Czech Republic stands ready to support Cambodia in this regard. Accompanying laws and policies must be in line with international human rights obligations.

Madam Special Rapporteur,

In your latest report you present a set of new or updated recommendations to the Government. How can other States assist in this regard?

Thank you.