

**Open-ended Working Group, Human Rights Council 2011 Review
Item 3
General Discussion on the Work and Functioning of the Council
October 25, 2010**

Thank you Mr. President.

The United States is pleased to take part in this review of the work and functioning of the Council. We view this as a genuine opportunity to look closely at the Council's work and to develop ways to better fulfill the mandate, to promote "universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all" as set out in resolution 60/251. As we embark on this process, our own assessment of the Council's work and functioning will be measured against the mandate in 60/251.

The overall goal of this review should be to ensure that the Council is able to live up to its potential as the UN's primary organization for promoting universal respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is critical to the United States that this review strengthens the Council's ability to fulfill its mandate to "address situations of

violations of human rights, including gross and systemic violations.”

We also must look for ways to enhance our ability to work cooperatively to achieve that goal, and reduce polarization in the Council.

The United States will be presenting a number of proposals throughout the week, a few of which I will mention here. We look forward to discussing all recommendations made by both States and NGOs. Specifically, we will be proposing some adjustments to the Universal Periodic Review to make this mechanism even ^{more effective,} ~~better~~ as it enters its second round – by expanding the speakers list as needed, and by focusing on implementation of recommendations from the first round of the UPR, from reports of the Office of the High Commissioner, and from Special Procedures.

We will also be proposing ways to improve the independence and work of the special procedures, which are widely recognized as one of the Council’s best tools. These proposals include encouraging more cooperation with the special procedures, providing more support for their work, and ensuring better follow-up on their recommendations.

Because addressing situations of violations of human rights is one of the most important mandates of the Council, we will also propose ways to better address both crises and chronic situations. Many of our proposals involve better utilization of tools that already exist within the Institution Building Package, but others involve expanding the time allotted to discuss country situations and adding new tools to ensure more regular dialogue on these important issues.

To ensure we are working as efficiently as possible, the United States will also propose rationalizing the agenda to make it more predictable, to make it possible to focus more time on the most important human rights issues, and to address all countries in an even-handed manor. Steps like ensuring that draft resolutions are submitted well in advance, and consolidating agenda items 4, 7, and 10 to improve the quality of debate, will allow all members, especially smaller delegations, to more fully participate in the discussions. We will make proposals that will help ensure that the council is guided by the

principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity, and help inspire constructive international dialogue and cooperation.

As we move forward in this review, we must ensure that all proposals considered ~~for improvement to the work and functioning of the Council~~ actually strengthen the Council's ability to protect and promote human rights. We will oppose any proposals that we believe would ~~unhelpfully~~ limit the work of ~~the~~ Council or its Special Procedures, threaten the independence of the Office of the High Commissioner, or reduce or otherwise constrain the tools available for meaningful action to protect victims and human rights defenders on the ground.

Thank you, Mr. President.