



## 39th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council, 10 - 28 September 2018

### Item 2: Oral update by the High Commissioner on Human Rights

Oral statement delivered by: Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23)

*Check against delivery*

Mr President,

APG23 welcomes and congratulates Madame Bachelet on her appointment as the new High Commissioner for Human Rights at the United Nations. We also pay tribute to the former High Commissioner, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein for the work carried out during his outstanding mandate.

Madame High Commissioner,

2018 marks the seventh anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on human rights defenders. It is, indeed, a significant year for you to take this new position with great challenges ahead of you.

In fact, you take up your role in a time when civil society space is shrinking at the UN; in a time when human rights defenders face hostility and reprisals from governments all around the world because of their engagement with human rights mechanisms. You take your role in a time when populisms, racism and xenophobia are raising and multilateralism is at stake. Moreover, the Human Rights Council is increasingly politicised and polarized at the expenses of the consensual approach and the budget available for the UN and your office has been reduced.

We are confident that you and your office will continue to raise your independent, impartial voice denouncing the violation of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development, wherever they occur and speak out on cases of threats, attacks and reprisals against civil society demanding accountability.

We also appeal to you to preserve and expand the space for civil society and raise your voice fearlessly in favour of the most vulnerable and marginalized such as migrants, persons with disabilities, vulnerable children and ethnic minorities.

Your office has the specific mandate to mainstream the right to development! The challenges of our present world such as increased inequalities, climate change, recurrent economic crises require urgently the implementation of this right. We confide in you to become a champion on mainstreaming the right to development and calling for its implementation. We also call on you to mainstream the recently recognised right to enjoy peace whose respect and fulfilment is so necessary for the enjoyment of the other human rights.

Finally, we look forward to the opportunity to engage directly with you as High Commissioner and would like to reiterate our support to the work of your office.

Thank You!

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