

Co-facilitators and distinguished delegates,

I am speaking on behalf of the Baha'i International Community, the International Service for Human Rights and Amnesty International.

Our groups and others have previously expressed disappointment at the outcome of the review process in Geneva as not responding to the hopes and expectations of victims and human rights defenders. Alas, the "zero draft" as it stands leaves little reason to feel encouraged about the prospects of the NY part of the process.

It is telling of how low the bar has been set for this exercise that the most controversial part of the "zero draft", namely OP 11 on presentation of pledges and commitments is such a toothless provision. Indeed, as it has been pointed out, what is described in OP 11 is what already exists.

We have always maintained that the ultimate objective of any review of the work and functioning of the Human Rights Council should be an improvement in the promotion and protection of human rights of people everywhere. By that standard, we believe the review process so far – in Geneva and New York -- is falling very short. One would be hard pressed to translate the overwhelmingly technical and procedural preoccupations of the "zero draft" into better enjoyment of human rights on the ground.

It has been made clear that the review process is not a reform and should not stray from resolution 60/251. What we have been calling for is nothing more and nothing less than giving full expression to resolution 60/251. We have urged States, among other things, to:

- support the establishment a public mechanism to improve Council members' accountability in relation to their pledges and the standards in the election-related provisions of Resolution 60/251.
- endorse a means by which the General Assembly reviews and assesses the state of cooperation with the Council and the special procedures of candidate countries and members of the Council.
- support measures to guarantee that elections are genuinely competitive and contested by prohibiting 'clean slates' and requiring election pledges to be concrete, credible and measurable and submitted well in advance of the elections.

We have also encouraged governments to support the creation of an unforeseen and emergency mechanism for financing of Council decisions.

The “zero draft” is disappointing to us as it excludes any practical proposals to genuinely improve the functioning of the Council. We hope, however, that in the coming weeks Member States will be motivated to work for a review process that results not only in the streamlining of technical processes, but also in real positive change in human rights around the world