

**Joint Statement by the Human Rights / Conflict Prevention Caucus New York**

**Informal Meeting of the General Assembly to hear a briefing by the Secretary-General on the Call to Action for Human Rights**

**24 February 2021**

**10:00am – 12:00pm**

Mr. President,

I am delivering these remarks on behalf of the members of the Human rights/Conflict Prevention Caucus New York, co-chaired by Germany and Switzerland, and its members Albania, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Gabon, Guatemala, Japan, Mauritius, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Uruguay.

Mr. Secretary-General,

We welcome this meeting and thank you for your comprehensive briefing. We attach utmost importance to the implementation of your Call to Action for Human Rights.

Over the past year, the Covid-19 pandemic has brought tremendous challenges, which are by far not limited to public health. The pandemic and some of the measures adopted in its wake have long-lasting effects on human rights: Gender inequalities have been deepened with a spike in sexual and gender-based violence, including domestic violence and intimate partner violence, as well as the increased burden of unpaid care shouldered by women and girls. Civil and political rights have been restricted, the right to education has been limited due to lockdowns worldwide and the uneven enjoyment of the right to health becomes strikingly clear. In this situation, it is persons in marginalized and vulnerable situations who suffer the most.

How can we ensure that we “build back better” in a way that human rights are not only protected, but strengthened? This is a vital task for the UN and something your Call to Action addresses.

For one, it requires to put human rights at the heart of all UN actions and the strengthening of the cross-pillar collaboration: We strongly encourage closer cooperation between the different UN bodies and mechanisms to mainstream human rights and work toward conflict prevention. The international human rights framework provides a critical foundation for sustaining peace. Respect for human rights is essential to building resilient and inclusive societies and in protecting all individuals. This recognition needs to be translated into concrete action, institutionally and on the ground. The UN system should use the full potential of its tools from joined-up analysis, shared objectives to common operational programming, decision-making, due diligence, and implementation. We encourage all UN bodies to collaborate more closely with the UN human rights system and to promote stronger links between Geneva and New York. This enables us to strengthen operational and policy coherence, in particular as we seek to recover from the pandemic and to prevent future crises.

However, this also requires sufficient funding for the human rights pillar. Our delegations are committed to ensure that the human rights pillar receives the necessary resources from the regular budget to fund all mandated activities.

Thank you.