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UN General Assembly set to endorse call for halt to executions

Amnesty International today welcomed the decision of 75 countries to co-sponsor a draft resolution at the General Assembly calling on all states worldwide to stop executions and called on all states to resist any amendments that could weaken the purpose of the resolution.

"Amnesty International is very encouraged that so many countries from all regions co-sponsored this draft calling for a global moratorium on executions," said Yvonne Terlingen, Head of Amnesty International's UN Office in New York. "It clearly demonstrates broad regional support for ending this cruel and inhuman practice."

"Amnesty International urges all UN member states to support the text and resist any amendments that would seek to alter the purpose of this important resolution."

No less than 130 out of 192 UN member states have already abolished the death penalty in law or practice and only 25 countries carried out executions in 2006.

Over 50 countries have abolished the death penalty for all crimes since 1990.

In Asia, 25 countries have abolished the death penalty in law or practice. In Africa, only six out of 53 states carried out executions in 2006. The worldwide trend towards abolition of the death penalty has been recognized by the UN Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights and both support the call for the moratorium on executions.

"We hope that more countries will join the co-sponsors of this resolution," said Terlingen.

The General Assembly has already adopted two resolutions on capital punishment, in 1971 and 1977, in which the General Assembly proclaimed it was desirable that the death penalty be abolished in all countries.

"A resolution calling for a moratorium on executions will be a significant step towards realizing the General Assembly's vision of a death penalty-free world," said Terlingen.

To see *Frequently Asked Questions* regarding the global call for a moratorium on the death penalty, please go to: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engior400232007>

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