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Country visits by the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council
Joint Oral Statement by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Amnesty International, Canada HIV/AIDS Legal Network and FoodFirst Information and Action Network (FIAN) the International Service for Human Rights
Item 5 - General Debate

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Madam President,

The ICJ, Amnesty International, ISHR, Canada HIV/Aids Legal Network and FIAN support the work and functioning of the Human Rights Council's Special Procedures as integral to the promotion and protection of human rights for all, everywhere. Noting that 90 States have extended standing invitations to all thematic Procedures, we call on all States to do the same and to otherwise accept requests for country visits; and to extend all reasonable cooperation and assistance to facilitate timely and effective country visits.

We note with alarm that some country visits have not always been characterised by the level of respectful engagement that would be expected. Issues of substance will not always be agreed on; they should be dealt with on their merits. Failures to observe protocol will at times occur; they should be addressed to prevent their reoccurrence. But it should never be an adequate response to say that other countries have similar or worse problems. It should never be satisfactory for a country to question the very undertaking of a country mission, also bearing in mind that missions are always convened with the consent of the receiving State. And it should never be acceptable for officials of a country to launch personal attacks on a mandate-holder.

Madam President,

Just as the Special Procedures must abide by certain rules of conduct, should it not be accepted practice that States should deal with all human rights concerns raised by the Special Procedures on their merits? No country has a perfect human rights record. Every country must be open to scrutiny of its promotion and protection of human rights in all areas.

I thank you Madam President.