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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

5 October 2010

Excellency,

Pursuant to the General Assembly resolution 60/251, the General Assembly shall review the status of the Human Rights Council within five years (OP 1) and the Council shall review its work and functioning five years after its establishment (OP 16).

In order to further clarify the complementarity and sequencing of the review processes in Geneva and New York, I have the pleasure to forward to you herewith the Joint Understanding reached following the meetings I had with the President of the General Assembly and the two facilitators of the HRC review process in New York during my trip there last month.

This Joint Understanding has also been circulated by the President of the General Assembly to all Permanent Representatives in New York.

As we are approaching the 1st meeting of the open-ended intergovernmental working Group on the review of the work and functioning of the Human Rights Council which will take place from 25 to 29 October 2010, I will continue to consult with all delegations and stakeholders, including through open-ended informal consultations, to finalize the programme of work and pave way to our substantive discussion at the 1st working group meeting.

In this connection, I would also like to remind you that all delegations and relevant stakeholders are encouraged to provide inputs on concrete ideas and proposals with regard to the review by 15 October 2010 in order to facilitate the preparations for the discussion at the Working Group. Written contributions may be submitted by email to hrcpresidency@ohchr.org or by fax to +41 22 917 04 90.

I look forward to your valuable inputs and cooperation throughout the review process.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Phuangketkeow'.

Sihasak Phuangketkeow
President of the Human Rights Council

Coordination between the HRC Review Processes in New York and Geneva

General Assembly Resolution 60/251 provides for two processes, one in Geneva and one in New York, as part of the review of the Human Rights Council: The Council itself is mandated to review its work and functioning, while the General Assembly is given the mandate to review the status of the Human Rights Council. It is understood that these two processes will be conducted in accordance with Resolution 60/251 and in a manner that fully reflects the authority of the two bodies in their respective areas of work.

Given the complementarity of these areas of work and the thematic overlap of some of the topics under discussion, it is of the utmost importance to ensure close coordination and coherence between the review processes in Geneva and New York. In order to align the two processes and to facilitate both formal and informal channels of communication between Geneva and New York, we intend to keep each other informed of the ongoing discussions and to contribute to each other's work.

It is understood that the formal process in Geneva will commence first and that the discussions in New York will build on the progress made in Geneva. The review process in New York will be finalized only after the review process in Geneva is concluded and should be brought to a conclusion by July 2011.