

US

Open-ended Working Group, Human Rights Council 2011 Review  
Item 4.1 – Universal Periodic Review Process  
Statement by the Delegation of the United States of America

October 26, 2010

Mark Cassagre

Thank you Mr. President.

The United States believes the Universal Periodic Review is a positive contribution to the international human rights agenda and an essential component of the Human Rights Council. The UPR process can be improved to fulfill its potential to promote and protect human rights. The United States proposes several improvements to the UPR process.

First, the Council must reform the speakers' list modalities. We propose that all states that wish to speak at the UPR be allowed to do so. This could be done by adjusting the duration of each review session, depending on the number of countries wishing to speak. This would require establishing an advanced speakers list to allow the Secretariat to extend sessions when necessary or balance the scheduling of shorter and

longer reviews. In order to save time, purely laudatory statements lacking recommendations should be disallowed.

Second, the focus of the second round of the UPR should be on implementation of recommendations as well as ongoing or new human rights situations in the country. In this regard, we propose that OHCHR develop a new, additional report for the second round that assesses country responses to recommendations from the first round. Moreover, that report should list obstacles to implementation of accepted recommendations.

Third, we propose modifying the information requested in the national and stakeholder reports. Basic information on constitutional structures should no longer be needed, unless a country's governing system has changed substantially since its previous report. We propose that states' national reports provide updates on their human rights situations and discuss progress in implementing accepted recommendations and pledges made in the first round. Similarly, we

propose allowing stakeholder reports to include information on implementation of accepted recommendations from the first round.

The Council should also consider innovative mechanisms that allow countries to provide reports on important developments in the implementation of pledges and accepted recommendations. In all of this, the Council and the state should not overlook important recommendations from the first round that did not enjoy the support of the state.

The Universal Periodic Review has in many regards been a success and an invaluable exercise for the great majority of governments committed to human rights. Preparing for our own UPR session next week was an important opportunity for our government to engage with civil society. We conducted unprecedented consultations in more than ten cities across the country, examining practical human rights issues facing our citizens and reflecting on our own accomplishments and challenges. Despite such successes, the UPR must improve and evolve in the second round to retain its integrity and relevance.

Thank you, Mr. President.