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**Joint Statement at the Panel on the Promotion and Protection of
Human Rights in the Context of Peaceful Protests**

(September 13th, 2011, Geneva)

Madam President,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the following countries: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Congo, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mauritania, Myanmar, Namibia, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Uganda, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe and my own country China.

Currently, the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests causes much attention. We thank His Excellency Mr. Nasheed, President of Maldives, Ms. Pillay, High Commissioner for Human Rights, and distinguished panelists for their statements.

Peaceful protests are mainly related to the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone has the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. At the same time, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights stipulates that the exercise of the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly may be subject to certain restrictions imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interest of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. Moreover, exercising human rights and fundamental freedoms can not be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of human rights, as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The responsibility of promoting and protecting human rights in the context of peaceful protests lies in the governments of countries where peaceful protests occur. Governments should earnestly listen to and address people's legitimate aspirations, as well as protect human rights of all under their jurisdiction. There is a need to continue to develop

constructive interaction between governments and people. Meanwhile, governments also have duties to take necessary measures to maintain public security, public order and social stability, in accordance with domestic law and international law obligations by which they are bound.

International cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights should continue to be carried out in full conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and international law and, inter alia, with full respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence, the non-use of force or the threat of force in international relations and non intervention in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State.

Recent events in different parts of the world have proven that protests that start peacefully may unwittingly turn violent. If some protesters conduct violence, is the protest still peaceful in nature? How can governments safeguard social stability by taking necessary measures while avoiding excessive use of force? How to prevent protesters from violating human rights while governments are required to promote and protect human rights? Reflecting on these issues is essential to our study on how to promote and protect human rights in the context of peaceful protests.

As a new type of communication tool, social media plays an important role in facilitating people's daily exchanges, and promoting freedom of expression. However, in recent social turmoil in many countries, misuse of social media may become problematic. How to address the negative impact of social media while making the best use of it is a common problem faced and considered by all countries. We take note of the announcement of the British Prime Minister David Cameron, essentially saying that the British Government is working with the police, the intelligence services and industry to consider suspending relevant web services when people are plotting violence, disorder and criminality by using social media.

Madam President,

The promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests is a complicated issue. It is our hope that all countries can make full use of this panel, to discuss in depth, in a pragmatic and constructive manner, on how to enable people to exercise the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly while maintaining public safety, public order and social stability, share experiences and promote common understanding, so as to play a positive role in advancing healthy development of international human rights cause.

Thank you, Madam President.