

54th session of the Human Rights Council

General Debate 3

Joint statement of the core group on the question of the death penalty
(Belgium, Benin, Costa Rica, France, Mexico, Mongolia, Republic of
Moldova, Switzerland)

Mr. President,

I have the honor to make this statement on behalf of the core group on the question of the death penalty (Belgium, Benin, Costa Rica, France, Mexico, Mongolia, Republic of Moldova, Switzerland).

We thank the High Commissioner for his presentation of the Secretary-General's latest report on the Question of the death penalty.

The report analyses the relationship between articles 6 and 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, focusing on the right to seek pardon or commutation of sentences and the right to have one's conviction and sentence reviewed by a higher tribunal according to law, in accordance with the safeguards guaranteeing the protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty as set out in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1984/50. The Secretary-General's report serves as basis for the new resolution that we are introducing at this session for the Human Rights Council's consideration.

The resolution aims, as its previous alliterations, to analyse the human rights dimensions of the imposition and application of the death penalty on the one hand, but also to advance human rights by ensuring that criminal justice systems are compatible with international human rights obligations in relation to capital punishment. We look forward to the constructive engagement of all delegations.

Mr. President,

We share the Secretary-General's analysis that there is steady progress towards the universal abolition of the death penalty, such as the adoption of national laws abolishing the death penalty for all crimes, establishing judicial discretion by removing mandatory death penalties, and the adoption of laws authorizing the ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

We are however also concerned that the imposition and application of the death penalty has resumed or increased significantly in a number of countries.

Also, as was highlighted during the Biennial high-level panel discussion on the question of the death penalty at the 52nd session of the Human Rights Council, the death penalty continues to be extensively used for crimes that do not meet the "most serious crimes threshold", i.e. crimes not involving intentional killing. Pending further steps towards a moratorium or abolition, we call on all States that have not yet abolished

the death penalty to reduce the list of offences for which the death penalty is provided and to conform to international law.

We thank you for your attention.