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UN Human Rights Council, 51<sup>st</sup> regular session (12 September – 7 October 2022), Item 2

## Statement on Afghanistan

The report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan<sup>1</sup> is another reminder of the ever-worsening human rights situation in Afghanistan, especially for women, girls, minority groups, and human rights defenders, at the hands of the Taliban. It is another reminder of why the Human Rights Council must act decisively to address the situation and why it must strengthen accountability measures.

The Taliban are not feeling outside pressure. When I addressed this Council in June, I asked: are you state delegations really listening to us, Afghan activists? Expression of concerns is not enough. The Taliban's actions show without a shadow of a doubt that they have no intention of respecting and protecting human rights, including the rights of women and girls, minorities and of human rights defenders. They keep giving reassurances to the international community that they will ensure women's rights, including the right of girls and young women to return to school, but their actions speak louder than their words.

The Special Rapporteur has reported that in meetings with him, "the *de facto* authorities acknowledged that, from their perspective, the great majority of international human rights norms are compatible with their understanding of Sharia and are committed to Afghanistan's international obligations." They must now show how they intend to uphold them and be held accountable for their delivery.

We recommend that this Council:

- strengthen and renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur;
- establish an additional mechanism with a robust and gender-responsive investigative mandate;
- urge UNAMA to better implement its human rights and political mandate with the input and guidance of Afghan women, in particular the requirement to support community-based systems on human rights and resilience and the need for better gender analysis particularly on social and economic rights;
- recommend transparency and accountability for funds being transferred into Afghanistan by the UN and urge that support is being received by the intended beneficiaries, in particular women in the education and health care sectors;
- ensure regular reporting on the human rights situation in Afghanistan, including intersessionally.

The dire human rights situation in the country warrants no less.

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/51/6, 6 September 2022