**Comments by Belarus for the Exchange of Views with Special Procedures Mandate Holders at their 27th Annual Meeting**

3 September 2021

Belarus welcomes this opportunity to exchange views with special procedures. We hope that this event could contribute to strengthening the continued dialogue between States and mandate holders.

Belarus joints the statement to be delivered by China on behalf of the Like-Minded Group. In addition, we would like to make the following comments in our national capacity.

As well known, Belarus has taken a consistent and firm position against country mandates.

On the other hand, Belarus has a long history of good cooperation with thematic special procedures and considers their role to be significant in the promotion and protection of human rights. We always consider their requests carefully and make every effort to respond to each of them. We remain open to professional and non-politicized dialogue.

In this cooperation, we have always relied on mandate holders to be guided by the principles of impartiality, objectivity and dialogue with Member States.

Unfortunately, some special procedures have either departed from these principles or have never adhered to them at all. We see evidence of this in the numerous examples of special procedures being played up to one political group of countries - Western countries - and actively pressuring on other countries.

Moreover, there is little or no public reaction of special procedures to events in Western countries or it is hidden behind very common language.

Despite the existence of well-known human rights institutions in Europe, their shortcomings are abundant and serious, and citizens in US, Canada and Europe still face many human rights challenges. This July Belarus in partnership with China, Russia and Venezuela organized an online side-event on the margins of the session of the Human Rights Council. The discussion focused on the lack of international monitoring and the UN response to human rights violations in Western countries. Belarus intends to make such events regular, for each session of the Human Rights Council. As one of the outcomes of this discussion, we draw attention of special procedures to the fact that your silence creates a gap in the monitoring of the human rights situation in Western countries and contributes to an entrenched impunity and a lack of accountability for human rights violations.

We therefore call upon mandate holders to ensure equal treatment of the UN Member States and equal monitoring of human rights situations. We encourage you to make active use of the standing invitation to visit Western countries where long-standing human rights concerns are known.

Furthermore, we want to encourage special procedures to crosscheck the information they receive from so-called “credible sources” on developments in countries before making rampant allegations. Such situations have repeatedly led to the creation of fake news emanating from OHCHR and the United Nations. Obviously, this undermines the credibility not only of the human rights mechanisms but also of the UN as a whole.

Last but not least, we call on the special procedures to use in their statements and news releases only respectful language towards the UN Member States and not to down to the level of the tabloid press when using language such as “black hole” or similar.

I thank you.