

GoF ESCR statement – draft 1.2

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Paraguay, Spain, Uruguay and my own country, Portugal. The Group of Friends of ESCR is a broad association of States, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as well as civil society institutions, which have coalesced around a shared commitment to the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights.

This is the first statement made on behalf of the Group of Friends, and we will endeavour to make it become a feature of Human Rights Council sessions, as well as on other relevant occasions.

Mr. President,

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights does not distinguish between civil, cultural, economic, political or social rights, and neither should we. While seeking to develop and deepen the promotion, understanding, and realisation of the human rights that relate more directly to the “freedom from want”, as President Roosevelt put it, the Group of Friends reiterates the words of the outcome Declaration of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, that human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. All human rights should be addressed with the same emphasis and on equal footing.

We share the belief that the inherent dignity of all persons cannot be promoted unless we also actively design and implement policies and laws, and adopt tangible measures that acknowledge and address the lack of realisation of economic, social and cultural rights, including inequality and discrimination in the enjoyment of these rights. From this fundamental understanding, we propose to engage and cooperate with all States, United Nations and other multilateral institutions, treaty bodies and mandate holders, as well as with stakeholders in civil society.

The celebration in 2016 of the twin anniversaries of ICESCR and ICCPR is a reminder to us all of how universality overcomes division, of how the inherent dignity of the human being is the driving force for achieving the ideal of the United Nations. The recently-adopted 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals therein are intricately linked to the promotion, protection and fulfillment of a broad range of human rights. A clear and inclusive human rights perspective in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda will be particular for their fulfillment.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, the Group of Friends of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights wishes you the best in your chairmanship of the Human Rights Council and remains ready to cooperate with you and to enhance the Council’s understanding of, and engagement with, ESC rights. I thank you.