

Agenda item 4: Situations that require the High Commissioner's attention

Comments by the Netherlands, Geneva, 11 December 2007

Follow-up to resolution S-5/1

Ambassador Doustou, van Terenrooy

Thank you, Mr. President.

These comments are in alignment with the statement made by Portugal on behalf of the European Union. I would like to take this opportunity to raise our concerns about the human rights situation in Burma.

We welcome the decision of the Burmese Government to authorise the recent visit of Special Rapporteur Pinheiro. At the same time, it is a failed opportunity that the Burmese authorities did not allow his visit to be a full-fledged fact-finding mission.

We understand from Mr Pinheiro that, regrettably, the Burmese authorities have not taken significant steps to implement the recommendations made by this very Council. Like other speakers, we strongly urge the authorities of Burma to do so with no delay and to allow an independent international investigation into the violent crackdown of peaceful demonstrations by the Burmese security forces.

Despite repeated calls from the international community, only 10 political prisoners were released. We repeat our call to free without delay all political prisoners, including Ms. Aung Suu Kyi, and those arrested and detained as a result of the recent repression of peaceful protests. The authorities should also allow unhindered access for independent observers, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, to all

places of detention and to ensure that conditions of detention meet international standards and include the possibility of visiting any detainee.

It is against this background that the Council should continue to monitor the human rights situation in Burma and ensure that the Burmese authorities live up to the Council's expectations.

Thank you, Mr Chairman