

Mr. President,

Alsalam Foundation together with Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain, BIRD and BCHR would like to express our disappointment in the continued absence of technical cooperation between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. We are particularly disappointed with Bahrain's longstanding lack of commitment in this regard.

Recalling a joint-statement made by 47 states during the 26th session of this Council one year ago, we regret that no substantive steps have been taken by the Government of Bahrain to facilitate cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner and the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council, as requested. We further regret that this lack of commitment has not been conducive to facilitating technical assistance and capacity building programs through the establishment and administration of an OHCHR country office with a full reporting mandate. We are also concerned that no alternative terms for technical cooperation have been accepted by the government.

Noting an increased deterioration in the human rights situation this year evidenced by the wide range of human rights violations documented in the latest Joint Communications report; we are extremely concerned that without external assistance, the situation in Bahrain can only continue to deteriorate. At present, Bahrain is in need of reforms within the criminal justice system, the Ministry of Interior and the penal code in order to reach even minimal international standards of human rights.

We therefore call on the Government of Bahrain to expedite a formal cooperation agreement with the Office of the High Commissioner. This agreement should refer to concrete benchmarks like the release of political prisoners, alignment of national legislation with respect for international human rights obligations, and an independent investigation into all allegations of violations since the conclusion of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry in 2011. We likewise call on Bahrain to accept standing invitations by the various mandates of the Special Procedures.

Thank you.