



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

37th Session – Item 3 General Debate

Statement by Ghana on behalf of the Convention against Torture Initiative

Thank you, Mr. President,

I have the pleasure of speaking on behalf of the Governments of Chile, Denmark, Indonesia, Morocco and my own government, Ghana, as part of the Convention against Torture Initiative, or CTI.

When we started the CTI in 2014, there were 154 States parties to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, one of the lowest ratified of the human rights treaties. Today, we have reached an impressive **162 States parties; while 33 States** have yet to ratify the Convention. We are getting closer to reaching our goal of universal ratification of this fundamental treaty, a treaty which deals with the core relationship between the State and its citizens and that ensures appropriate checks and balances on State authority are in place.

In 2017, we were pleased to welcome two new UNCAT States parties: **Comoros and São Tomé and Príncipe.**

We also congratulate **Australia, Madagascar, Sri Lanka** and **the State of Palestine** as new States parties to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.

We commend ongoing efforts being taken by a wide number of governments towards ratification and the CTI was pleased in 2017 to have engaged with a growing number of States interested in ratification. In particular, we commend the **Commonwealth of the Bahamas** for announcing to the UPR this January that they have Cabinet approval to ratify, as well as **President Barrow of the Gambia** for informing the African Commission on Human Rights at their October session that his Government intends to ratify the Convention very soon.

Mr. President,

Apart from promoting ratification, the CTI is working actively to help States implement the Convention. Ratification and implementation must go hand-in-hand.

Over the course of 2017, the CTI continued to create platforms for constructive dialogue where States can share their experiences and good practices. More than **80 States** participated in CTI events in 2017, involving countries from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the OSCE region, and the Middle-East. This doubling level of the participation tells us that the global commitment to rid the world of the crime of torture is strong and growing.

Teaming up with experienced partner organisations, this year CTI released a number of new tools to assist officials to understand and implement the Convention more effectively. These tools capture good practices from over 30 countries, from all regions of the world. All CTI tools are available for free download at cti2024.org. CTI's Annual Report, which is available at the back of the room, provides more information.

Mr President,

There remain many challenges and worrying practices around the world. At the same time, there are more and more good practices or steps being taken towards reform each year. We congratulate governments on their actions. As we all know, ratification is an important first step towards a process of implementation.

We are thankful for the excellent collaboration for our shared goals with many partners this year. Special mention is given to the UN Committee against Torture and the Sub-Committee on the Prevention of Torture, and the OHCHR. I would also like to extend thanks to our strategic partner, the Association for the Prevention of Torture, and in particular to the Secretary General, Mr. Mark Thomson, who has announced his retirement to take effect in July this year. We thank him for his valuable advice and guidance over the past years and wish him well.

Let me end by encouraging Member States to join the CTI Group of Friends, which is active both in Geneva and New York. Please get in touch with the CTI Secretariat, or any of the five core States, to learn more.

I thank you, Mr. President