



CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE INITIATIVE  
CTI2024.ORG

## Welcome Remarks

**Delivered by Ambassador Morten Jespersen of Denmark and Ambassador Juan Eguiguren of Chile**

**CTI State Group of Friends' lunch**

**for International Day in Support of Victims of Torture**

**Palais des Nations**

**25 June 2019**

*Check against delivery*

Delivered by Ambassador Jespersen, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations in Geneva

On behalf of the six Core States of the CTI – Chile, Fiji, Ghana, Indonesia, Morocco and my own country, Denmark, I am so pleased that you were able to join us today.

Your attendance demonstrates the continuing strong support within the international community for our collective efforts to rid the world of the menace of torture and other ill-treatment.

Your willingness to participate so actively in the work of the Convention against Torture Initiative – or CTI, reinforces this aspiration we all share ... that we should all be able to live in fair, safe and peaceful countries. As diplomats here in Geneva we have a special role in upholding these ideals.

We are also here to mark one of the most important days in the human rights calendar, the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

Why do we mark International Days? According to the UN's website,

International days are occasions to educate the public on issues of concern, to mobilize political will and resources to address global problems, and to celebrate and reinforce achievements of humanity.

On 12 December 1997, by [resolution 52/149](#), the UN General Assembly proclaimed 26 June the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The resolution explains that the Day was to support the total eradication of torture and the effective functioning of the UN Convention against Torture.

It is a day that reminds us of some of the worst excesses and cruelty that people and authorities can inflict on others, and so we may take measures to prevent them in the future. These are harms that

can be enduring, felt not just by individual victims but also by families, communities and societies. Torture denigrates us all, and undermines trust between the State and her citizens.

While there are many reasons to be pessimistic these days, the 26 June should also be a day where we recognise the amazing work of those supporting victims, communities and societies to rebuild and recover from such traumas. These include, among others, first responders, medical personnel, trauma counsellors, rehabilitation service providers and lawyers.

I now have the pleasure to hand the floor to Ambassador Juan Eguiguren.

Delivered by Ambassador Juan Eguiguren, Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations in Geneva

Thank you Ambassador Jespersen.

I, too, wish to welcome you to this lunch.

Like Denmark, there are important reasons why Chile is a strong supporter of the CTI and our efforts to prevent and respond to torture and other ill-treatment, including through reaching universal ratification by all UN Member States, by 2024 – in just five years' time on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention.

Looking at the few States still to ratify, we are energised that we will meet our targets.

Why wouldn't we be hopeful? There are only 29 States left to join the Convention. There have been 12 new ratifications of UNCAT since CTI started in 2014; an additional 12 or so have accepted recommendations to ratify in their last review before the UPR. Over the same period, there have been 20 new ratifications of the Optional Protocol. More than 140 separate States have participated in CTI events and activities addressing various implementation themes, and more than 80 good State practices are documented in CTI's implementation tools. There are many reasons to congratulate ourselves for the action taken in this field, including most importantly, in our own countries.

As you know, the experience of my country Chile is a dramatic one, in which too many of our citizens were subjected to horrendous violence including torture and enforced disappearances during a dark period in our history in the 1970s and 80s. For the Chilean government and for Chileans, the UN Convention against Torture has been a guiding light, helping us restructure our legal and institutional frameworks to ensure that such violence is never repeated. In addition to these changes, we also embarked upon an ambitious process of truth and healing, with a focus on giving the victims a voice.

That is why we are here today. I encourage you to take part in the discussions at your tables on how we can take further the torture prevention agenda.

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