

FINAL
(as delivered)

Permanent Mission of India to the UN
Geneva

Human Rights Council
18th session (12 -30 September 2011)

Item 4: Interactive Dialogue on the Oral Report of
the High Commissioner for Human Rights on Belarus
(20 September 2011)

Statement by India

Madam President,

The delegation of India takes note of the oral report of the High Commissioner on Belarus. We also take note that the report acknowledges the co-operation displayed by the Permanent Mission of Belarus in Geneva to meet with the OHCHR. The report further acknowledges the constructive manner in which the Government of Belarus has engaged in the UPR mechanism of the Council, including seeking expertise from the OHCHR regarding the implementation of UPR recommendations to further the promotion and protection of human rights in the country. In addition, it is very encouraging to learn that recently, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus has issued an invitation to the High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit the country, reflecting the Government's intention to co-operate with the OHCHR in a transparent and constructive manner.

As the OHCHR does not have an office in Belarus, the human rights situation in the country has been monitored from the Geneva headquarters of OHCHR for the preparation of this report. Therefore, as acknowledged in the report itself, the collection and verification of information has been challenging. The report further acknowledges that significant sources of information have come from secondary sources, and some of the allegations remain unverified. Therefore, while the information collected, as claimed in the report, may have allowed the OHCHR to distil a pattern of violations of human rights in Belarus since December 2010, we are of the view that it necessitates a more detailed

examination, corroborated by substantiated evidence and verification of the alleged violations.

It is encouraging to note that the Government of Belarus has recently pardoned and released persons who were detained with regard to the December 2010 events. Further, the President of Belarus has recently announced that all remaining persons in detention would be released by October 2011. The President has also indicated his desire to launch a dialogue with the political opponents, which is a welcome development. We sincerely hope that all sides concerned will foster an enabling environment for such a dialogue to take place, by abjuring all violence and use of force, with the aim of achieving a lasting peaceful political settlement, based on true respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

Thank you, Madam President.