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**Promotion and protection of human rights: human
rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs
and representatives**

**Letter dated 8 October 2013 from the Permanent Representative of
Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit the non-paper on the position of the Republic of Belarus on the mandate of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in Belarus (see annex).

It would be appreciated if you could kindly circulate the present letter and the annex thereto as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 69 (c).

(Signed) Andrei Dapkiunas
Permanent Representative of Belarus



Annex to the letter dated 8 October 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

The position of the Republic of Belarus on the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus

At the twentieth session of the Human Rights Council of the United Nations in July 2012, the European Union initiated a resolution on human rights in Belarus. The relevant position of Belarus was published as an official document of the twentieth session of the Council ([A/HRC/20/G/9](#)). The resolution, adopted by a minority of votes, contained a decision to appoint a Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council in order to step up political pressure on Belarus.

For some years now, the European Union has made it a tradition to accuse Belarus of human rights violations. While Belarus lays no claim to perfection in the area, it rejects allegations that it has breached its international human rights commitments. Belarus is working on an ongoing basis to improve legislative and law enforcement practices.

Belarus supports the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council, considering it an important element of cooperation to enable an objective and reliable assessment of the human rights situation in each and every country.

Belarus successfully completed the first cycle of the universal periodic review, adopting 75 of the 93 recommendations made. An inter-agency work plan to carry out the recommendations was devised. Belarus has fulfilled two thirds of the recommendations and voluntarily submitted to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights an interim review on progress in fulfilling the recommendations. The interim report has been posted on the website of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Belarus is now deeply engaged in preparations for the second cycle of the universal periodic review.

In this connection, Belarus deems it unacceptable to substitute for the universal periodic review a practice involving double standards and selective country resolutions for purposes of political pressure and blackmail, in violation of the principles of universality and objectivity.

Belarus is of the view that the human rights situation worldwide is an ongoing process that remains far from ideal. A report on human rights violations committed in 2012 in various countries, issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus in January 2013, only confirms this.

At the twenty-first session of the Human Rights Council in September 2012, the Council confirmed Mr. Miklós Haraszti for the post of Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus. This nomination was not reached by consensus, however. A number of States members of the Human Rights Council opposed establishing the post of Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, noting that no basis for such a mandate existed.

Belarus reaffirms its non-acceptance of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, a position it has taken publicly on a

number of occasions in international forums and in its contacts with the European Union. It declines to engage with the mandate in any way.

The Special Rapporteur's mandate, the alleged purpose of which is to aid the Government of Belarus in the field of human rights, was not negotiated with the Government and thus cannot receive its support.

The Special Rapporteur ignores the human rights achievements of Belarus, which include achievements in the economic, social and cultural spheres, as well as the country's internationally recognized success in meeting the Millennium Development Goals, including meeting some of them ahead of schedule.

The Special Rapporteur's readings of Belarusian law are biased. At times, he does not take the trouble to provide accurate citations of specific provisions of legislative acts.

The Special Rapporteur asserts that he receives first-hand human rights information from civil society sources in Belarus. In fact, he engages only with a limited number of Belarusian non-governmental organizations, with which he finds it advantageous to be in contact.

The Special Rapporteur's presentation of information in the report cannot, therefore, be characterized as either impartial or independent.

Belarus is open to cooperation with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council. It is not, however, prepared to engage with those special procedures that are politically motivated.

The establishment of a special procedure for Belarus runs counter to the Council's institution-building package, under which the post of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus was eliminated in 2007, based on General Assembly resolution [62/219](#).

Belarus has always noted the ineffectiveness of country mandates, whose work is duplicated by the thematic mandates. What is more, country mandates have major financial implications for the budget of the United Nations. For example, more than 500,000 dollars was allotted for implementation of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Belarus from funds designated for the Human Rights Council. That money could have been used to address issues of pressing concern.