
UN Human Rights Council
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General Debate

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Thank you, Mr. President.

The Vienna Declaration calls “to develop and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all”, with no distinction. Moreover, it reminds us that

“While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

In 2015, the International Community ratified this commitment, with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. There, our leaders said that they “We envisage a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination”.

However, sometimes all these look like empty words.

Mr. President,

At the beginning of this year we find out that Malaysia, who was supposed to host the 2019 World Para Swimming Championship, decided to deny the participation of a Paralympic swimming team from Israel. The only reason: their nationality.

This was a blunt denial of the work of this Council, which just last year in its resolution 37/18 encouraged States to promote sport as a means to combat all forms of discrimination.

Moreover, that resolution acknowledged the potential of sport and major sporting events to educate the youth of the world and to promote their inclusion through sport practiced without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires human understanding, tolerance, fair play and solidarity,

Thus, we celebrate the example given by the decision of the International Paralympic Committee of rejecting this discriminatory action and move the celebration of the games to another country.

The political use of human rights, and the opportunistic denial of the rights of persons with disabilities, should call upon the states in this room for an energetic condemnation and a strong stand to ensure that “no one is left behind”.

I thank you Mr. President.