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**UN Human Rights Council  
49<sup>th</sup> Regular Session, March 2022**

**Item 3 – D with the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights**

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Mr. President,

Israel congratulates the Special Rapporteur for assuming her position.

Israel also thanks her for her report, emphasizing the importance of the enjoyment of cultural rights for the empowerment of the individual through the identity, or overlapping circles of identities, that they chose to adopt.

As a diverse multicultural society, Israel recognizes the importance of nurturing the cultural heritage of various communities, and has implemented cultural initiatives, locally and nationally, to perpetuate cultural expressions of groups as diverse as Arabs, Circassians, ultra-orthodox Jews, persons of Ethiopian descent, and LGBTQI persons.

Last month, Israel's Council for Higher Education recognized "Sephardic Jewish Studies" as an official field of academic study. This step corrects a historical injustice, affording recognition to Jews from Arab and Muslim countries, whose cultural expressions were sidelined and disregarded for decades.

Israel welcomes the Special Rapporteur's intention to focus on the enjoyment of cultural rights by members of minorities, and would like to ask her to delineate concrete steps that states could take in that regard.

Finally, Israel thanks the Special Rapporteur for her joint News Release, celebrating the International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The memory of the Holocaust reminds us what levels of barbarity can be generated by racism and antisemitism, and must continue to guide us in the struggle for a world where anything similar to it will be inconceivable. Therefore, it is disappointing that only four mandate holders saw it fit to join such a vital message.

Thank you, Mr. President.