



Asamblea General

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Consejo de Derechos Humanos

23º período de sesiones

Tema 3 de la agenda

**Promoción y protección de todos los derechos humanos,
civiles, políticos, económicos, sociales y culturales,
incluido el derecho al desarrollo**

Nota verbal de fecha 4 de junio de 2013 dirigida a la Oficina del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos por la Misión Permanente de la República de Singapur ante la Oficina de las Naciones Unidas y otras organizaciones internacionales en Ginebra

La Misión Permanente de la República de Singapur ante la Oficina de las Naciones Unidas y otras organizaciones internacionales en Suiza saluda atentamente a la secretaria del Consejo de Derechos Humanos y tiene el honor de referirse a la declaración que figura en anexo, formulada el 4 de junio de 2013 durante el debate general de los temas 2 y 3 en relación con el informe analítico cuatrienal de la Oficina del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos sobre la objeción de conciencia al servicio militar (A/HRC/23/22).

La Misión Permanente de la República de Singapur agradecería que se hiciese distribuir la declaración* como documento del Consejo de Derechos Humanos en su 23º período de sesiones, en relación con el tema 3 de la agenda.

* Se reproduce en el anexo como se recibió, en el idioma en que se presentó únicamente.

Anexo

[Inglés únicamente]

General debate on items 2 and 3 following the presentation of thematic reports of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Secretary-General at the twenty-third session of the Human Rights Council, on 4 June 2013

Quadrennial Analytical report of the OHCHR on Conscientious objection to military service (A/HRC/23/22)

Mr President

My statement refers to the quadrennial analytical report of the OHCHR on conscientious objection to military service (A/HRC/23/22) which was prepared in pursuant to resolution A/HRC/20/2.

As stated in our statement at the end of the 20th Session of the Human Rights Council, Singapore does not recognise the universal applicability of the right to conscientious objection to military service. The premise of the resolution 20/2, and by extension the OHCHR report 23/22, goes beyond what is prescribed in international law and applicable human rights instruments. Conscientious objection to military service has been referred to in the resolution and report as a legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as laid down in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). However, what they failed to highlight is the important fact that Article 29 of the UDHR and Article 18 of the ICCPR recognise that the exercise of the rights and freedom of an individual is subject to the necessity of ensuring public order and the general welfare of the society.

National defence is a fundamental sovereign right under international law. Where individual beliefs or actions run counter to such a right, the right of a State to preserve and maintain national security must prevail.

Whereas some States may choose to establish a standing army, for a small country like Singapore, compulsory military service is the only way to build up a credible national defence force. This system is only viable under the principle of universality where every male Singapore Citizen and Permanent Resident, regardless of race or religion, is required by law to fulfil compulsory military service to defend our country. Under such a system, allowing any individual or group, for whatever reason including on the basis of conscientious objection, to be excused from military service will fundamentally undermine the concept of collective responsibility for national defence, compromise national values and violate the principle of equal application of the law.

Thank you, Mr President.
