



Assemblée générale

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Conseil des droits de l'homme

Vingt-troisième session

Point 3 de l'ordre du jour

Promotion et protection de tous les droits de l'homme, civils, politiques, économiques, sociaux et culturels, y compris le droit au développement

Note verbale du 4 juin 2013 de la Mission permanente de la République de Singapour auprès de l'Office européen des Nations Unies et des autres organisations internationales à Genève, adressée au Haut-Commissariat aux droits de l'homme

La Mission permanente de la République de Singapour auprès de l'Office européen des Nations Unies et des autres organisations internationales à Genève présente ses compliments au secrétariat du Conseil des droits de l'homme et a l'honneur de se référer à la déclaration ci-jointe, prononcée au cours du débat général sur les points 2 et 3, le 4 juin 2013, et relative au rapport analytique quadriennal du Haut-Commissariat aux droits de l'homme sur l'objection de conscience au service militaire (A/HRC/23/22).

La Mission a l'honneur de demander que la déclaration* soit distribuée en tant que document de la vingt-troisième session du Conseil des droits de l'homme, au titre du point 3 de l'ordre du jour.

* Distribuée en annexe telle quelle, dans la langue originale seulement.

Annexe

[En anglais seulement]

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.
