**Statement by Slovenia**

**at the**

**52nd Session of the Human Rights Council**

**Interactive Dialogue with the with the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders**

***Geneva, 15 March 2023***

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders for her presentation today.

We welcome the report taking stock of the 25 years since the adoption of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. It is time to reflect on achievements, best practices and challenges. A progress has been achieved, but much more remains to be done.

I express my appreciation to the civil society representatives that are here with us today and honour the often difficult and challenging work of human rights defenders around the world.

Madame Special Rapporteur,

We can all build upon the positive lessons. Human rights defenders must be able to carry out their activities in safe environment. Any attacks or reprisals against them, including their families, must be strongly condemned and thoroughly investigated.

In the report you note that international and national laws and policies are not enough to enable the work of human rights defenders, and that legal provisions without political will to enforce them can give a false impression of progress. What kind of mechanisms can be used in situations like that to protect and empower human rights defenders to be able to work in safe environment?

Finally, allow me to reiterate Slovenia’s full support for your work and your mandate

Thank you.