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Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

I like to begin by expressing my most profound thanks and appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman, and through you, to the Government and people of the Kingdom of Morocco, for hosting this important seminar on Human Rights Education and Training. I should also like to seize the opportunity to congratulate you on your Chairmanship, and to express my delegation's, confidence and trust in your ability to steer these deliberations to a concrete and successful outcome. I must also applaud the excellent arrangements and facilities that have been put in place for this meeting, all of which attest to the unwavering commitment of the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco to the promotion and protection of all Human Rights

2. On 25 June 1993, the world conference on Human Rights affirmed the importance of human rights education, training and public information by consensus in recognition that these are essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations among communities and for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and peace. In taking that momentous decision, the World Conference, which was marked by an unprecedented degree of participation by governments and international human rights community, advocated for the proclamation of a United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education in order to promote, encourage and focus on human rights educational activities.

3. The General Assembly, in a bold move, seized this challenge when, on 23 December 1994, it proclaimed the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education. This singular intervention was to set in motion the framework for the implementation of the provisions of international human rights instrument, particularly Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights pertaining to the obligations of

States to undertake human rights education, training and public information programmes.

4. Fundamentally, the proclamation provided the impetus for all educational work undertaking in the context of the Human Rights Decade by affirming that human rights education should involve more than the provision of information. Its stresses, for instance, that it should constitute a comprehensive life-long process by which people at all levels of development and in all strata of society learn and imbibe respect for the dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring that respect in all societies.

5. The affirmation of a comprehensive concept of human rights education and training is not just a supplement to the global agenda for the promotion and protection of human rights, but a means of integrating and advancing all human rights, both within the community and in society as a whole. The achievement of this objective necessarily requires utmost recognition of the universality and indivisibility of human rights for everyone, without distinction as to race, sex, language and religion. Thus, human rights education and training is the foundational pillar for the sustainability of a democratic, pluralistic and tolerant society, at once sensitive to the fundamental rights and dignity of everyone, while at the same time promoting respect for cultural and religious diversities and to legally constituted authority of the State.

6. We are here today to review the obligations that apply to States in relation to human rights educational training. States are obliged to respect the right to human rights education without prejudice to social and cultural preferences of individuals and social groups. Indeed, States are especially obliged to enforce these rights through legislation and by guaranteeing effective respect for the principle of non-discrimination and equal treatment, including by ensuring equal access to human rights education and training for boys and girls, vulnerable groups, and especially national minorities.

7. As the new era in the elaboration of the structures of the human rights work of the United Nations progresses, the international community rightly looks eagerly on the Human Rights Council to see how it is able to integrate human rights education and training in its machinery so as to promote awareness of human rights and duties, including the challenge of addressing impunity and systematic violation of human rights anywhere in the world. There is therefore no pressing time than now for the world to spread human rights awareness and to address impunity anywhere they may occur. This is the overriding challenge for human rights education.

8. This seminar is therefore well-conceived, as it provides an inclusive platform for governments, civil society and the international human rights community to hold an honest dialogue on how best to deploy educational activities in the service of human rights globally. Once again, I will like to congratulate the government of the Kingdom of Morocco for its commitment to human rights, and for hosting this important seminar.

9. I wish you success in your deliberations and hope that you arrive at very fruitful outcomes.

10. I thank you.