*HRC52 – Item 3: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders*

*Geneva, 15 March 2023*

Thank you, Mr. President.

Madam Special Rapporteur,

Albania welcomes your report and let me reassure you of our full support for your mandate.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, which for the first time recognized the specific right to defend human rights. However, 25 years after the adoption of the Declaration, human rights defenders, advocates for gender equality, journalists and other civil society representatives continue to face many challenges due to their ongoing efforts to defend their – and our rights.

It is unacceptable that to this day human rights defenders are subject to attacks, intimidation and other repressive measures that aim to drown out their voices. These are the voices that we all need to hear, and any efforts to suppress them must stop.

Despite the persistent challenges that they face, human rights defenders have achieved significant successes over the past 25 years, and we appreciate that the Special Rapporteur dedicated this report to the success stories.

Albania recognizes the crucial role of human rights defenders. They are important partners in what is, in essence, a joint endeavor – promoting and protecting human rights. We welcome the recommendations in the report and the impact that something as simple as recognizing and celebrating the achievements of human rights defenders can have on strengthening this partnership. And we look forward to exploring the role of children who work peacefully for the rights of others and their right to be defenders.

I thank you.