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Item 7: General Debate

Statement by the Delegation of the United States of America

Human Rights Council 22nd Session

Geneva

March 18, 2013

Thank you, Mister President.

The United States remains extremely troubled by this Council's continued biased and disproportionate focus on Israel. As we have said previously, the Human Rights Council must treat all countries by the same standards. This standing agenda item exemplifies the blatantly unfair treatment that one UN member state receives in this body.

The legitimacy of this Council will remain in question as long as one country is unfairly and uniquely singled out under its own agenda item. The absurdity and hypocrisy of this agenda item is further amplified by the resolutions brought under it including, yet again, a resolution on the "human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan" motivated by the Syrian regime, at a time when that regime is murdering its own citizens by the tens of thousands. The United States implores Council members to eliminate these biased resolutions and permanent agenda item seven.

Our goal remains a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. Ending the underlying conflict is vital to addressing human rights issues in Israel and the Palestinian territories. The only way to achieve a two-state solution is

through the difficult and painstaking work of direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. The United States will continue to work toward this goal, and is engaging both parties and international partners on the way forward.

Let there be no doubt, the United States believes that the Palestinian people must govern themselves and reach their full potential, in a sovereign and contiguous state living side by side in peace and security with Israel. That is why the United States has invested so much time and effort in the pursuit of peace. The U.S. remains committed to supporting the efforts of humanitarian agencies, including the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which addresses the critical needs of five million Palestinian refugees, including those facing increasingly dire circumstances in Syria, and we urge our fellow Council members to join us in doing so.

We call on this Council to take a balanced, objective and constructive approach to the human rights situation in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. It is our sincere hope that this Council will eliminate this agenda item so that it can more productively focus its time and energy where they are most needed.

Thank you, Mister President.