**The Human Rights Council’s fifth intersessional meeting for dialogue and cooperation on Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

**19 January 2022 (3 p.m. – 5 p.m. CET)**

**Opening remarks by Mr. Václav Bálek, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the United Nations Office in Geneva and President of the Human Rights Council**

Excellencies, dear guests, ladies and gentlemen,

In my capacity as President of the Human Rights Council, I would like to welcome you all to the fifth intersessional meeting for dialogue and cooperation on human rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I would especially like to extend a warm welcome to the Honourable Ms. Antonia Urrejola, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Volker Türk,

Let me also congratulate my distinguished colleague, H.E. Mr. Galib Israfilov, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan on his appointment as Chair of this meeting.

Ladies and gentlemen, 75 years ago, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was designed with the vision to secure freedom from fear and freedom from want. With only seven years left until the 2030 target date, it is time to recapture the spirit of the Declaration, tackle the root causes that provoke the world’s multiple crises and re-ignite SDG’s implementation.

At each of its Sessions, the Council is asked to act on these interlinked crises such as climate change, war and conflict and COVID-19, that are putting the 2023 Agenda in danger. The Council has responded by calling on States to ensure that national and international sustainable development efforts include a human rights perspective. In that sense I really appreciate that this Intersessional Meeting underlines the need for integrating human rights into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to overcome the impact of the current crises.

I wish you all a productive meeting and the Council looks forward to receiving the summary report and its recommendation.

Thank you.