

Check against delivery

**Committee on Enforced Disappearances**

**Eleventh Session**



**Opening Address by**

**Kate Gilmore**

**Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights**

**Geneva, 3 October 2016**

**Chairperson,**

**Distinguished members of the Committee,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

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This 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the Convention is an important year to reflect. The celebrations to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention started earlier this year with your discussion of the "Contemporary Challenges" of the Convention. Celebrations continue in October with the General Assembly's **high-level plenary meeting**. The President of the General Assembly is charged with identifying the modalities for the event. We are awaiting further clarifications and will update you during the session.

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Yet, notwithstanding all of our joint efforts, we should ask ourselves how much room for celebration exists as enforced disappearance continues to occur nowadays all over the world. Your annual report and that of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances include clear data in this respect. Only over the past year, the two mechanisms received approximately 600 requests by relatives to take urgent action to find persons who disappeared. This figure is just the tip of the iceberg of thousands of cases which are never reported: either because of the security conditions do not allow to do so or because of lack of knowledge of the existence of international mechanisms that can be addressed.

I therefore believe that, while taking stock of the impressive amount of work accomplished in the past ten years, we have now to look at the ten years ahead of us, devising new strategies to protect disappeared persons and their families and guarantee the respect of the rule of law.

Allow me to highlight two very practical challenges facing this Convention. To date only 52 States are party to the Convention. It seems to me that it is paramount to boost ratification by setting the bold objective of

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Another pressing priority, which I know is very much on your mind, is the improvement of the reporting rate. Almost 33% of States parties have not submitted their report yet within the two-year deadline provided for in article 29 of the Convention. The submission of the report by a State party is the first step in the constructive dialogue with the Committee, allowing for tailored, concrete and realistic recommendations which aim at redressing or improving the situation in the country. Also in this case a strategic approach of bilateral negotiations, coupled with the assistance that can be provided by the recently established treaty body capacity-building program, could lead to encouraging results.

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