Statement by Ambassador Robert King, Special Envoy for DPRK Human Rights, during a Dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Robert R. King

Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Issues

New York, NY

October 22, 2010

AS DELIVERED

The United States congratulates Mr. Marzuki Darusman as he assumes his role as the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the Democratic Peoples’ Republic of Korea. Mr. Darusman comes to the position with an already distinguished career advancing human rights in Indonesia and in East Asia. We hope that the government of the DPRK will recognize the Special Rapportuer’s mandate, grant him access to the country and work with Mr. Darusman to improve human rights in the DPRK. It was lamentable that the previous SR was not permitted to visit the country during his two terms.

The United States would like to focus on just a few key areas that the new SR could address as he begins his work. The people of the DPRK continue to suffer from human rights abuses. Moreover, the November 2009 currency revaluation and subsequent clampdown on markets greatly restricted the population’s ability to provide for their own basic needs.

· We would ask the new SR for his thoughts on what more can the international community do to help the people provide for themselves and what more the donor community can do to ensure resources reach the most vulnerable parts of the population.

The United States is particularly concerned about the plight of North Korean refugees and asylum seekers. We call on the DPRK to end the punishment and imprisonment of returned asylum-seekers and their families.

· Improving conditions in the country requires an integrated and collaborative approach. The United States would be interested the in SR Darusman’s insights on how countries can cooperate to advance human rights issues in the DPRK.

The United States values the Universal Periodic Review process and was encouraged by the DPRK’s active participation in the December 2009 review. We note the DPRK’s willingness to consider 117 recommendations from the international community, but discouraged by the DPRK’s lack of specificity on which recommendations they accepted and rejected.

· The United States would be interested in the SR’s insights into how the UPR can be better utilized so that the DPRK improve its human rights record.

I would like to conclude by saying that the United States looks forward to working with you on this important mandate