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Statement by Finland on behalf of the Nordic Countries
(Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) at the
UNGA71 Sixth Committee 2016
Consideration of effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety
of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives (Agenda item 82)

Statement by

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(check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country Finland. This item was originally included in the agenda of the General Assembly on the initiative of the Nordic countries. We continue to pay particular attention to this topic. It is a matter of great concern for us that diplomatic agents and premises keep falling victims of attacks in the receiving States despite the general recognition of the special duty to protect them.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report, contained in document A/71/130, as well as for his efforts in assisting the Member States to respond to the reporting request contained in paragraph 10 of resolution 69/121 adopted two years ago. We would also like to extend our thanks to the Member States that have provided information pursuant to this resolution.

In our view, such reporting is important as it raises awareness in the world community about violations encountered by the sending States and about measures taken in response to these violations by the receiving States. Furthermore, we believe that the reporting promotes efforts to prevent such violations from taking place. We also wish to note with great satisfaction the reported increase in the number of States Parties to the international legal instruments relevant in this field. We continue to appeal to all States that have not yet done so to become parties to the instruments relevant to the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives. Full implementation of such instruments by all States Parties is also of great significance.

Mr Chairman,

As the Nordic countries have noted before, an obligation to protect foreign emissaries has existed in the legal systems of all cultures. It is one of the cornerstones of international relations and aimed at protecting the channels of communication between States. Universally recognized rules and principles of international law, as reflected in the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations, place upon the receiving States a special duty to take all appropriate steps to protect the diplomatic and consular premises and to prevent any attacks on the diplomatic and consular representatives. In a situation where the receiving State fails to offer the required protection in accordance with its obligations under the Vienna Conventions, the injured State is entitled to claim prompt compensation for loss or injury suffered as a result of such failure.

As required by international law, the special duty of the receiving State to protect and to prevent attacks extends also to foreign missions and representatives to international intergovernmental organizations and officials of such organizations. Effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of these missions, representatives and officials are crucial for the fulfillment of their mandates.

We also wish to underline the need for close cooperation and information sharing on security matters not only at the international level, but also at the national level between the missions and the competent local authorities, in order to prevent violations of the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite all the efforts undertaken, the Secretary-General's report documents serious violations that have taken place and we have also learnt about other attacks against diplomatic and consular missions and representatives. We express our sincere condolences on the loss of life and injuries suffered in such attacks and condemn all acts of violence in the strongest terms. The Nordic countries wish to emphasize that such violations and attacks can never be justified and must not go unpunished.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman