

²CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY ²

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country, Sweden.

Thank the Secretary-General for his annual report, and the contributions received from states and observers. We look forward to a robust discussion in the Working Group during this seventy-seventh session.

The Nordic Countries recognise universal jurisdiction as an established principle of criminal law both within national jurisdictions as illustrated in the past reports of the Secretary-General and at the international level.

The Nordic countries have all incorporated the principle of universal jurisdiction into our respective domestic legislation, by allowing domestic prosecution of the most serious crimes of international concern, regardless of where the conduct occurred and the nationality of the perpetrator.

We encourage states that have not yet done so to incorporate universal jurisdiction over serious international crimes into their domestic legislation to ensure that there is no safe haven anywhere in the world for perpetrators of the most serious international crimes.

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In the context of the debate, the working group, some delegations have expressed concerns as to the potential abuse of the principle of universal jurisdiction.

The Nordic countries recognize that there may exist challenges to the effective exercise of the principle of universal jurisdiction. We continue to urge caution against developing an exhaustive list of crimes for which universal jurisdiction should apply. Conditions attached to the application of universal jurisdiction to serious violations of international law must not unnecessarily restrict the possibility of bringing suspected offenders to justice. Nordic countries