STMTMENT
on the adoption of resolution A/68/L.3

Mr. President,

Distinguished co-facilitators,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Cross-Regional Group which includes the following States: Belarus, Bolivia, China, Cuba, Iran, Nicaragua, Syria and Venezuela and my own country the Russian Federation.

We have joined consensus on the adoption of draft resolution A/68/L.3 "Extension of the Intergovernmental process of the General Assembly on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system", and we are satisfied that this text is fully in line with the provisions of the founding resolution on the subject – the GA resolution 66/254.

Mr. President,

The Cross-Regional Group attaches great importance to the goal of strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system. We have been and continue to be committed to a constructive dialogue and fruitful negotiations aimed at reaching a successful consensus outcome of the intergovernmental process established in accordance with resolution 66/254 of the General Assembly. The Group is convinced that the end-result of the process should contribute to consolidating the capacity of the human rights treaty body system to fulfill its principal task under the relevant international treaties – assist States Parties to implement their obligations in accordance with the respective human rights instruments.

During the current session of the General Assembly we had numerous rounds of consultations on the issue of strengthening the treaty body system. The course of the discussion within the framework of the Inter-governmental process made it absolutely evident that the scope of problems regarding the functioning of
the treaty body system is deeper and more complex than it seemed before we started this process. The ‘Way forward’ document produced by the co-facilitators provides a useful overview of how they assess the current state of negotiations. We believe that this document should be treated as purely a vision of the two co-facilitators, since it doesn’t reflect all the views of Member States and in some places goes beyond the discussion we had.

The state of consultations clearly indicates that as for now it is absolutely impossible to reach consensus on all issues related to the functioning of the treaty body system.

Moreover the Cross-Regional Group has emphasized several times that it is premature to consider the issue of underfunding as the main challenge for the functioning of the treaty body system. The root causes of treaty bodies’ problems are deeper and the lack of funding is only one of them. No doubt that there is a need to improve the financing of the treaty bodies but it should be done only on the basis of the comprehensive assessment of their needs. Therefore, we welcome relevant provision of the resolution which was just adopted regarding the specific request to the Secretary General to provide a detailed cost assessment report.

As we mentioned during the Inter-governmental process there is a need to continue our discussions on the whole range of issues regarding the Inter-governmental process. Consequently, it requires more time, so that we can reach agreement on how to strengthen the system. And as a result there should be one single ‘package’ outcome/decision, rather than adopting case-by-case ad hoc fixes. Bearing this in mind we consider it important to extend the Inter-governmental process. At the same time we would like to express our doubts regarding the deadline of the first half of February 2014 for the finalization of the elaboration of an outcome of this process as set out in the resolution. In our understanding the determining factor should be a meaningful outcome but not an artificial timeline.
Mr. President,

The Cross-Regional Group would like to take this opportunity to express its sincere and profound appreciation to you, Mr. President, to the members of your team who have been engaged in the inter-governmental process, and especially, to the two co-facilitators, Ambassadors Gréta Gunnarsdóttir and Desra Percaya for all their efforts and hard work throughout the whole process. We look forward to their re-appointment by the President of the 68th session of the General Assembly.

Thank you.