

Explanations of Position on Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children and Human Rights in Sudan

United States Government Human Rights Council, 11th Session Geneva, June 18, 2009

Thank you, Mr. President.

We would like to comment on two resolutions. With respect to resolution L.13 on the Guidelines for Alternative Care of Children, the United States strongly believes in creating healthy, supportive, and safe environments in which children can thrive and grow, particularly those children who lack parental care. We welcome the spirit embodied in the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children and believe that the Guidelines offer useful policy orientations for the protection of children without parental care. We would particularly like to thank the Government of Brazil for taking the initiative to craft this document, as well as the group of Friends, UNICEF, and NGOs for their contributions towards these Guidelines.

We remain concerned, however, about the seemingly overbroad scope of the Guidelines, and while we appreciate efforts to come to consensus on the content of the Guidelines, we regret that the timeline for consultations prevented us from fully consulting within our government for views. In addition, we would like to underscore the purpose and nature of the Guidelines, as stated therein, is to set out desirable orientations for policy and practice. As such, they are not obligatory or binding upon States, but rather reflect useful recommendations to shape the formation of domestic policy affecting children without parental care. In the coming months, we hope to gather more insight from our domestic agencies and work with other Member States on ways in which to further concentrate and refine these Guidelines to improve practicability.

With respect to resolution L.17 on Sudan, while the United States does not agree with everything in the resolution, we strongly support its creation of an Independent Expert to carry forward the monitoring mandate and to enhance assistance.

Thank you, Mr. President.