

Oral Intervention on Item 6 – The Kingdom of Bahrain

Mr President

The Next Century Foundation notes the issues raised and / or commented on by Sweden, the United States of America and Canada in regard to the suspension of political parties in the Kingdom of Bahrain and related issues in regard to democratic progress on which other nations also expressed concern. The Next Century Foundation expresses its sadness that the main opposition political societies failed to take advantage of the political dialogue with the government prior to the last national elections in Bahrain in 2015. Their failure to take advantage of the power sharing agreement on offer at that time was nothing short of astounding. One could argue that the opposition leader subsequently provoked his own arrest to restore his crumbling popularity.

Perhaps the fact that the Wefaq political society is now suspended is an inevitable consequence of this chain of events.

However, we have another set of parliamentary elections around the corner in Bahrain in 2018 and the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain has made it clear that it wishes everyone to participate in this process. A fully functioning opposition is a prerequisite of a fully functioning democracy.

We appeal to the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain to now resume their effort at a national dialogue outside of parliament.

Disputes are not resolved when one or both sides merely assert that they are right. What we seek, and must always seek, is reconciliation. We must always seek to repair any broken relationship. The next step must now come from the government.

Thank you.