



**Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina
to the United Nations
at Geneva**

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ADDRESS BY

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Mr. President,

It is my great pleasure and honour to address you today at the Seventh Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council. At the same time, my pleasure is even greater for addressing the Council for the first time since Bosnia and Herzegovina became the member of this esteemed body.

Allow me to express the sincere gratitude to the President of the Council for his outstanding work and leadership.

Also, I would like to take this opportunity to express appreciation on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Mrs. Arbour for her exceptional work, both previously as the Prosecutor General of the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia as well as now as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

One of the central missions of the United Nations is to protect human rights of every individual and the rule of law in general, offering at the same time the best basis for global peace and security. With the establishment of the Human Rights Council, we started the new era in the field of human rights work. We all have to acknowledge that the Council has made great steps during the Institutional Building process. Positive results in implementation have already been achieved. However, there is still much work to be done.

The system of the Special procedure is the mirror of the Human Rights Council's work which shows its functional ability to protect and promote human rights in the world. I believe that the Council will satisfy our highest expectations and be able to approve most qualified and competent candidates to serve as mandate holders of this important mechanism.

Before us is the process of election of highly qualified experts to the Advisory Committee which should secure functioning of this subsidiary body, serving at the same time as the best possible expertise available to the Council.

It is now clear that the Council is keen to prioritize the Universal Periodic Review in its work. The UPR process is a big challenge for the Council's future work. It is my genuine hope that this innovative mechanism will be objective, impartial and inclusive in addressing human rights violations with full cooperation of States concerned.

As for the revised Complaint procedure, I expect that it will be in itself more "victim-oriented".

The newly established Working Group on situations secured its functioning. Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a member this Working group, contributes greatly to its achievements.

Celebrating the Sixtieth Anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, gives additional impetus for the promotion and concrete implementation of the Declaration and the other international human rights instruments, which are of paramount importance for affording "all human rights for all".

However, we remain concerned that the international human rights standards are not fully respected worldwide. Many people are deprived of full enjoyment of their civil, political, cultural, economic and social rights. Therefore we must all continue our activities in strengthening the United Nations genuine efforts in improving the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The intercultural and inter-religious inspiration of the Declaration is also very important, as well as the fact that it constitutes foundation to advance and ensure human rights dignity world-wide. Bosnia and Herzegovina as a truly multiethnic and multicultural State has a genuine interest and commitment, deeply rooted in its distinctive nature, to promote and protect human rights.

Mr. President,

Bosnia and Herzegovina has always supported different initiatives on dialogue among cultures and civilizations. The value of those initiatives is of specific importance for creation of the atmosphere of tolerance and understanding, as well as for promoting culture of peace and dialogue.

In order to secure credible and sustainable human rights system we should continue to fully support further strengthening of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. In addition, the Office needs genuine and comprehensive dialogue with all States in order to perform its duties.

It is important to emphasize that Bosnia and Herzegovina has ratified all major UN and other international Human Rights instruments. Full implementation of these instruments remains a priority to my country.

Mr. President,

Today the world is witnessing ever more increasing number of children involved and affected by armed conflict and all other forms of violence, including domestic violence, sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking. Bosnia and Herzegovina is committed to promoting rights and welfare of children. In that context, we have adopted a number of programs and plans of action relevant to the very promotion of children's rights.

We have also made significant progress in modification of the necessary legislative framework for protection of women, which prevents any discrimination based on gender. It has been additionally strengthened by the Law on Gender Equality.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has established various specialized bodies with the role of further promotion and advancement of human rights that exist within the governmental sector, such as the Council of Children, the Gender Equality Agency, the Council of Roma Minority, the Commission for Relations with Religious Communities.

Combating human trafficking remains one of the highest priorities for our authorities. We are implementing the National Plan of Action for Fight against Human Trafficking and Illegal Migrations on the basis of the Implementation Operational Plan.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is committed to the regulation of legal status of minorities through adoption of the Law on the Protection of the Rights of National Minority Members.

In order to guarantee the right of freedom of conscience and religious freedom to every person in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we adopted the Law on Freedom of Religion and on the Legal Status of Churches and Religious Communities. The freedom of expression is guaranteed by the Constitution. Also, we adopted the Law on Freedom of Access to Information.

Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to be an active participant in various regional cooperation initiatives. Regional cooperation and good neighborly relations are essential elements of our foreign policy. By transformation of the Stability Pact for South East Europe, the Regional Cooperation Council was established with Sarajevo, the Capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the Seat of its Secretariat. This new instrument of cooperation in the South Eastern Europe region will contribute greatly to the stability, prosperity and speedy democratization of the countries in the region.

Mr. President,

Bearing in mind the importance of the Council's mandate to address the situations on the ground and to enhance the protection of the people in need and the great significance of its work, I expect from all of us to uphold the credibility of the Council and to maintain a climate of confidence, dialogue as well as implementation oriented culture. The collective achievement of the necessary compromise is and should continue to be crucial element of our work.

Thank for your attention.