



**PERMANENT MISSION OF REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS, WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION AND  
OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

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**Statement by**

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**At the High-Level Segment  
of the 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council**

**Geneva, 4 March 2008**

**Mr. President,  
Madam High Commissioner,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**It is always a great pleasure for me to be here in Geneva, especially when I come here to work for the cause of human rights, a cause to which, over the years, I have become personally devoted.**

**I am greatly honoured to address this august assembly as we mark this year the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that seminal document, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. It becomes doubly significant that we observe the historic event just as the Human Rights Council finally spreads its wings.**

**After intensive work at institution-building in its first five sessions, the Council has fulfilled its mandate to carry out a complete overhaul and reappraisal of every single structure,**

**mechanism and function of the erstwhile Human Rights Commission. The process was convoluted and tedious but it was completed through an enormous collective effort powered by the will to overcome obstacles and differences and to achieve consensus.**

**Humankind owes a debt of gratitude to all those who were involved in this difficult but essential process. In this regard, I wish to especially thank the High Commissioner and her Office for their staunch support for the institution-building process.**

**We therefore have every reason to be optimistic that in the next 60 years we will see as many breakthroughs for human rights as we saw in the first six decades of the Declaration.**

**We are particularly pleased to see the successful completion, last year, of the architecture for the building of the Council's institutions. In this regard we are also pleased to see the adoption**

**of the Code of Conduct for special procedures which will add weight and legitimacy to this architecture.**

**These efforts are all the more remarkable for the fact that they were pursued in the midst of several human rights crises that required the Council's prompt and robust response.**

**Thus, since it was established just 20 months ago, the Council has convened, apart from its regular sessions, six *Special Sessions*, three involving Palestine and one each concerning Lebanon, Darfur and Myanmar. The Council has thereby shown that it is ready at all times to respond swiftly to emergencies. What we need now is to ensure that the outcomes of those Special Sessions are implemented.**

**Under pressure of these crises and various constraints, including a severe time constraint, the construction process, moreover, had to meet the strict requirement that sufficient safeguards must be built into the Council to prevent the old**

**failings of the Commission from creeping back into its fabric and workings.**

**At the same time, it had to be ensured that the baby is not thrown out with the bathwater: the key achievements of the 60 years of the Commission's work had to be retained to serve as the framework of the Council.**

**Mr. President,**

**The Council's founding resolution, GA Resolution 60/251, stipulates that the Council's institutions and mechanisms work on the basis of the principles of *cooperation* and *dialogue*. Every effort was taken to comply with this requirement.**

**On the basis of these principles, the Council's architecture has been designed to promote a frank and transparent interaction as well as cooperation between States and the Council's mechanisms. Countries are thus able to fully state their cases and**

**to receive capacity-building assistance upon their request and consent, in a spirit of collaboration and respect rather than one of inquisition.**

**This encourages governments to be more open about their human rights record and efforts. They need not be defensive. There is no finger pointing as the Commission used to do.**

**We in Indonesia welcome this groundbreaking change. In this new spirit of dialogue and collaboration, my Government last year consulted and worked with two treaty mechanisms: the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). Our dialogues with these two committees were held in the context of our periodic reports under CEDAW and CERD in July and August respectively.**

**Moreover, the Council has established an innovative Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism that reflects the Council's will to achieve equity and equality. This mechanism reviews the obligations, commitments and performance of all countries without exception, placing them all on an equal footing.**

**The UPR will start reviewing the first group of countries next month. Indonesia is honoured to be part of this first group. We see this as a tremendous learning opportunity and a chance to test the efficacy of the mechanism.**

**Mr. President,**

**Equipped with new and improved systems and mechanisms crafted by the numerous stakeholders involved in the institution-building process, the Human Rights Council is now ready to assume all the tasks for which it was created. At this point, one vital factor must come into play, without which the Council will fall short of its mission: political will.**

**All parties must now adopt a positive and mature attitude and abide by the rules. Otherwise these fine new institutions of the Council will amount to a dead letter. And the ghosts of the Commission's failures will haunt the Council and its work. It would be tragic for that to happen after all the toil and sweat poured into the institution-building process. And it would have dire consequences on the cause of human rights.**

**Mr. President,**

**After this High-level Segment, the Council will have to address a full agenda of substantive issues. We have a lot of work to do.**

**I look forward to the discussion on the reports of the visits of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders, Ms. Hina Jilani, and the Special Rapporteur on**



**Torture, Mr. Manfred Novak. Both visited Indonesia last year in June and November at the invitation of my Government.**

**We in Indonesia appreciate the importance of their work. We will sustain our dialogue with them. And we hope they will produce balanced and fair assessments as well as tangible recommendations. We trust that they will take into account both the initiatives we have taken and the challenges that a country like Indonesia—with its vast ethnic, religious and cultural diversity—must confront.**

**We can expect the workload of the Council to increase. Every year, new aspects of the issue of human rights emerge from the pressure of events and the vagaries of the human race. This is an issue with an unlimited future. And its future concerns us all, regardless of whether our countries are developed or developing. In today's globalized world, what concerns one concerns all others.**

**And in a globalized world, developing countries have a role to play. We in the developing world cannot remain passive in the face of challenges and opportunities. We must be proactive. We must strive to influence events.**

**That is why we in Indonesia have vigorously pursued a policy of active involvement in the promotion and protection of human rights even beyond our national borders. We have thus initiated and participated in a wide range of regional and international initiatives on human rights.**

**In this regard, we acknowledge that the vision, strategy and initiative of ASEAN over the years have made an important contribution to the maintenance of peace, security and stability in the region. We also recognize that the global and regional economic and political environment has changed and is constantly changing thereby requiring ASEAN to evolve and adapt to these changes and challenges.**

**Therefore, at the ASEAN Summit in Singapore last November, Indonesia and the rest of the ASEAN family endorsed**

**an ASEAN Charter. At its preambular paragraph, purposes and principles, ASEAN member countries politically and legally commit themselves to strengthen democracy, enhance good governance and the rule of law and to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.**

**To that end, ASEAN shall establish an ASEAN human rights body. This body shall operate in accordance with the terms of reference to be determined shortly.**

**We also believe that regional and sub-regional arrangements can complement and reinforce national and international human rights promotion and protection systems. Hence, last July in Bali we hosted the 14<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Workshop on Cooperation in the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.**

**And we are very mindful of the intimate linkage between the issues of human rights and climate change. We had that linkage in mind when he hosted in Bali last December the United Nations**

**Conference on Climate Change. We are grateful that this initiative with huge implications on the human rights of a large part of the planet's population, concluded successfully with the adoption of the Bali Roadmap, with all countries on board.**

**Some special procedures have indeed pointed out the links between human rights and climate change. However, in view of the sensitivity of the issue of climate change, which is a burning issue in many forums, we should for now take a carefully measured approach in dealing with it on the Council.**

**At the national level, we attach great importance to cooperating with UN mechanisms. We are faithful to all our pledges and commitments as a member on the Council. Hence, we invited three special procedures to visit Indonesia in 2006 and 2007.**

**Just as important to us is our dialogue and partnership with our national human rights institutions. We do have several**

**eminent and active national human rights bodies that play a significant role in the national drive to promote and protect the human rights of all our citizens.**

**Among them is a National Commission on Human Rights that has, among its mandates, the task of undertaking pro-justicia investigations of serious human rights violations. Created by presidential decree in 1993, it has been strengthened by subsequent legislation. It has regional offices in various parts of Indonesia and by law is one of the most powerful Commissions in the world.**

**We have a National Commission on Women, a Commission on the Protection of Children and various other bodies designed to boost the implementation of our human rights legislation and to monitor, investigate and report on cases of human rights violations. Indonesia is thus addressing the issue of human rights on a very broad front.**

**Mr. President,**

**The cause of human rights is a vast subject, and getting vaster. But every small step counts in the effort to serve it. All of us, whether we come from the developed or developing world, must take to heart that no issue today can be addressed in isolation from other problems. And all of us are called upon to be part of the solution.**

**We must mobilize, not against one another, but in common cause with all humankind. And when it comes to human rights, this Council is the place to do it.**

**I therefore wish this Council Godspeed as it takes up the torch passed on by its predecessor, the Human Rights Commission. Let us join hands in making it strong, united and cohesive. Let us make it the ultimate instrument of justice, human enlightenment and progress.**

**For we are under the gaze of history. Future generations will judge us on what we make of the Council.**

**I thank you.**