



**REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

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Address

**by H.E. Mr. Antonio Milošoski, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the
Republic of Macedonia, at the high level segment of the 7th
Session of the Human Rights Council of the United Nations**

Geneva, 3 March 2008

**Madam High Commissioner,
Mr. President of the Council,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my great honor and privilege to address you today and share with you the views of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia on our common goals in the area of the protection and promotion of human rights and freedoms and our expectations in respect of the work of the Human Rights Council, a body with primary responsibility of upholding and advancing our commitments in the area of human rights. The Republic of Macedonia aligns itself with the Statement made by the Slovenian Presidency of the European Union.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Less than two years ago we embarked on a new path with the goal of establishing an effective body covering all human rights for all and making a genuine contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. The goal we set on the new body and ourselves was ambitious and challenging, but we had no other option.

The Council reflects the importance of human rights protection and promotion, as one of the UN pillars. We have achieved much, most notably in the area of institution building process. On the other hand, the intensity of work proved to be rather challenging and demonstrated some of the old weaknesses and divisions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is a year in which we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which laid grounds to our common work on human rights agenda. This is also a year in which we celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration of Human Rights. And as long as there are individuals and peoples victims of human rights abuses and violations, we need to recommit ourselves to the obligations arising from these historic documents.

Mr. President,

The Republic of Macedonia has always sought, as a matter of policy, to contribute constructively to the universal promotion and protection of human rights. Protection of human rights is one of the fundamental values of the Macedonian Constitution and, moreover, one of the key pillars of the Macedonian foreign policy. Let me mention in this context, that human rights issues are among top priorities of the Macedonian Presidency of the current session of the UN General Assembly.

Considering that dialogue among religions and civilizations is key to peaceful cohabitation and interaction on a global level, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, in October 2007, organized the world conference entitled "Contribution of religion and culture of peace to mutual respect and cohabitation". The Conference gathered religious leaders, intellectuals and representatives of governments from all over the world and adopted the Ohrid Declaration, which recognized crucial contribution of dialogue among

religions to enhancing mutual understanding, respect, promotion and protection of human rights and of social inclusion and integration.

On a national level, my country has proven itself as a functioning multi-ethnic society which resolves all outstanding issues through political dialogue. There were ups and downs in the process, but we continue to make steady progress. The reforms in the country are additionally motivated by our aspirations for membership in the EU and NATO.

Mr. President,

International cooperation on human rights issues must be based on constructive, open and frank cooperation. We must not shut our eyes to problems. On the contrary, we must address them seriously and in a timely manner, identify the genuine causes of human rights violations and work on their elimination. That is how people may regain confidence in the UN human rights machinery. In this context, we must underscore the importance of treaty bodies in regard to human rights advocacy.

The Universal Periodic Review process must be approached in a constructive manner, based on mutual understanding and respect. The UPR must be built as a genuine mechanism for cooperation with individual countries, based on inter-active dialogue and understanding. It must tackle human rights problems of countries under review with the aim of their resolution. Individual countries must be open to dialogue on problematic issues. Furthermore, the UPR must not be reaction but prevention-oriented.

This will be another, very strong element in restoring the shaken trust in the overall UN human rights machinery.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This forum, a home of human rights, is expected to be a place of interactive dialogue. There is an unlimited space for the Council to act as guardian of human rights and protector of victims of various forms of human rights violations. We should not allow our differences undermine and jeopardize this unique opportunity.

In the year that we are celebrating 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on behalf of the people of the Republic of Macedonia, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the vast majority of the member states of the United Nation that recognized my country under the Constitutional name - Republic of Macedonia.

I would also like to use this opportunity and this distinguished forum, to encourage the sole state that has objected the recognition of Macedonia, to join the vast majority of the UN member states and to recognize my country under the Constitutional name - Republic of Macedonia.

I do believe that we agree that the right on National name and its national identity is the sovereign and inherent (unalienated) right of every member state of the UN.

I thank you for your attention.