



THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

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STATEMENT BY:

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA**

AT THE

**HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS
COUNCIL - SEVENTH SESSION**

**GENEVA
4 March 2008**

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

It is with great pleasure that I address you to give a statement on behalf of the Republic of Zambia.

Mr. President

Firstly, allow me to congratulate you on the way you have conducted the work of the Human Rights Council since your election as President and would like to thank Ms. Louise Arbour, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and her staff for the support rendered to the Council.

Zambia as a member of the United Nations and also as a member of the Human Rights Council joins all countries in support of the distinguished work of the Council. Since her election to the Human Rights Council in 2006, Zambia has actively participated in the work of the Council right through its institution building phase.

My delegation is happy to note that the Council concluded its institution building process which led to the adoption of an institution building text in June 2007. My delegation is committed to the institutions that have been set up for the Council and pledges to cooperate with them. The members of the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council for example will be elected this month and we are hopeful that work in this regard will start as soon as possible.

In particular, Zambia congratulates the Council in the initiative to create a Universal Periodic Review Mechanism which will enhance the promotion and protection of human rights, and also the sharing of best practices amongst UN member states. The Universal Periodic Review will start in April of this year. Zambia will be reviewed in May and I can assure you of my Government's full cooperation with the mechanism both during and after the review.

Mr. President

I am pleased to inform the Council that my Government is fully committed to the promotion and protection of human rights in Zambia and this can be seen from the measures taken in ensuring that Government meets its international human rights obligations.

Zambia is a party to six United Nations human rights treaties namely the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Zambia is also a party to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. My Government appreciates that true peace can only be achieved when fundamental freedoms and rights are fully promoted, protected and enjoyed by all within a state.

Mr. President

I am further pleased to inform this august gathering that Zambia is among a few number of states that is up to date with its international and regional state party reporting obligations. Although the process of state party reporting places strain on limited financial resources, my Government appreciates the role the process plays in assisting Government to take stock of its policies and weaknesses in the implementation of its obligations under international human rights law. My Government also appreciates the involvement of civil society in identifying gaps that might sometimes go unnoticed.

The Government of Zambia has also developed a Fifth National Development Plan for the period 2006-2010 which has prioritised the promotion and protection of human rights in the Governance Chapter. One of the activities that will be undertaken in order to achieve this objective is the domestication of international human rights treaty provisions which are not already part of Zambian legislation. This is a continuous process which we have been undertaking in Zambia. This activity, which falls within the mandate of the Ministry of Justice, will be continued during the implementation period of the Fifth National Development Plan.

Mr. President

The Government of Zambia has endeavoured to undertake human rights programmes that balance the different dimensions of human rights. For instance, Government programmes are targeted

towards the promotion and protection of civil and political rights, economic social and cultural rights, and also specific rights of vulnerable groups including women and children.

Mr. President

I wish to state that while Government is aware of the achievements it has made in its quest to fulfil its international human rights obligations, it is also alive to the challenges that it faces in areas such as congestion in prisons, poverty, and diseases like malaria, HIV and AIDS which have had a toll on the country's human and financial resources.

Government is making every effort to address the various challenges that it faces in the promotion and protection of human rights. It is also hoped that through the new Universal Periodic Review Mechanism, Government shall receive necessary technical and capacity building assistance to alleviate the said challenges.

Mr. President

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that this session will conclude with the adoption of decisions and/or resolutions that will further the promotion and protection of human rights.

I thank you Mr. President