



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
G E N E V A**

**Statement by
H.E. Mr. Gordan Markotić
Ambassador, Permanent Representative**

**4th SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
Special Event: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

Geneva, 26 March 2007

Mr. President,

At the outset I would like to thank you for organizing this special event dedicated to the International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities. We believe that this Convention merits special attention since it focuses on one of the most vulnerable segments of the population today.

We commend this Convention which is the first human rights treaty adopted in the 21st century and which has been drafted with unprecedented participation of civil society in general and persons with disabilities and their respective organizations in particular. The expectations are very high regarding the Convention itself since it should enable the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the society and make them active members of their communities.

It should be pointed out that the Convention addresses the needs of millions of disabled persons around the world. But, the adoption of the Convention is just the first step. It is equally important that the whole process be continued through signing, ratifying and most importantly implementing the Convention itself.

I am very proud to inform you that the Convention will be signed on behalf of the Republic of Croatia by our deputy Prime Minister Ms. Jadranka Kosor as was already announced in her speech delivered during the High Level Segment early last week. I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that the first document in Croatia based on the principles of the Convention which is the National Strategy for Equal Possibilities of Disabled Persons for the period 2007-2015 is currently in the process of adoption.

Croatia established the National Commission for Disabled Persons, in which more than half of the membership are the representatives of disabled persons. The main goal of the Commission is to raise awareness and understanding about disabled persons as well to enable their inclusion in everyday social life. Due to time constraints I will only briefly mention that a number of improvements have been achieved with regard to better inclusion of this vulnerable segment of Croatian society in areas such as education, housing, employment, social and health protection etc.

Finally, Mr. President, allow me once again to welcome the discussion within the framework of the Human Rights Council on this issue which concern some 650 million disabled persons around the world. We hope that the Convention will enter into force soon and that it will be implemented properly. This is the responsibility that all of us must share.

Thank you Mr. President.