



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

STATEMENT

BY

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

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Honorable Chairman,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to express my personal content that today I witness the beginning of a new "Chapter" in the long path for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights.

In this very first inaugural session of the Human Rights Council, I would also like to show my highest appreciation for the work done so far by United Nations in general and all its agencies and employees who have so often given their lives for the protection of human rights in different parts of the world. A special remark goes also to the Secretary General of the United Nations, the President of the General Assembly, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as to the representatives of all countries present in this hall.

Albania has supported the founding of the Human Rights Council – as a stronger international body, devoted to the protection of human rights, guided in its work by the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity, constructive international dialogue and cooperation. In this field the Republic of Albania supports the stand of the European Union on the Human Rights Council, aligns with the statement made by Her Excellency Ursula Plasnik the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria on behalf of European Union and encourages other countries in the world to adopt this agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The founding of the Council, following the UN Secretary General Report "In Larger Freedom" and the Summit of September 2005 have clearly indicated that the UN system reform can be translated into a reality and, given our political will, it could have great success.

The establishment of the Human Rights Council presents one of the first steps in view of the aspiration of international community to make UN a more vital, a more efficient and a more transparent organization. While counting on the improvement of the quality of the Council's agenda, we are convinced that the protection and observance of human rights will assume a new dimension, in regard both to the common actions and to the aspect of a more efficient monitoring. Hence, we are expecting more transparency and legitimacy from this Council, in the decision – making process and more cooperation on the part of the member countries. Albania will also offer its cooperation for the successful fulfillment of the Council's mandate.

On this occasion, I cannot fail to commend and praise the work performed by the Commission of Human Rights since 1947. The commission has had significant achievements for almost six decades, in defining norms and standards on the protection and promotion of human rights world-wide. As a result, we are of the opinion that the Human Rights Commission did not dissolve due to the lack of its success during its existence, but because today's world order demanded a different set up of rules and standards for the protection of human rights in line with the new developments worldwide.

We believe that the Council for Human Rights will succeed in taking advantage of the Commission's achievements to date and by eliminating the deficits it would accomplish the expectations of millions of people, who have turned their eyes and ears and lay their hopes on the United Nations, its mandate, mission and work.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the last 15 years, Albania has made a considerable progress for the protection of human rights by changing the old system which gravely violated the rights of the people of Albania to enjoy freedom and democracy. In stead Albania today has fully managed to build up a state, where the fundamental freedom and human rights are the foundation of the society.

Minority rights have also enjoyed a new dimension where by they have been fully integrated into society regardless of nationality, race or religious beliefs.

Today Albania is working hard to improve the lives of Roma minority as the most vulnerable part of our society. New education and professional training programs are being implemented in Albania with the only aim to integrate them fully in the affairs of the country.

Mr. President,

The new democratic Government is totally committed to take concrete action to safeguard the human rights and improve the lives of Albanian citizens. Our commitment under the Millennium Development Goals have been fully incorporated in the principles and priorities of the Government; the underlying pillars of these objectives are rule of law, fight against corruption and organized crime, fight against trafficking of all sorts, the consolidation of institutions and democracy by providing a better standard of life for all citizen in the society. We believe that the right of the restitution of properties is also one of the most important and a fundamental right for peace and democracy in the world.

Albania recognizes that the fight against terrorism will continue being one of the most important elements on the protection of human rights worldwide. We will continue our fervent stand and support to all those states, bodies and institutions that will carry on their fight for the eradication of this anti-humane phenomenon.

Albania has already signed and is a Party to various international conventions on human rights; in this context, we pay attention to the reporting process. From the beginning and periodically, Albania has drafted and submitted to the relevant committees, reports on six of these conventions. Parallel with the reporting, the Albanian Government is taking into consideration all recommendations of these committees, in order to reflect them in its future work. Such recommendations have resulted in preparing National Strategies on (1) On Children Rights; (2) Women's Rights; (3) Anti-Trafficking Strategy; (4) Strategy on the Roma Minority and (5) National Migration Strategy. Likewise, special attention is being attached to the observance of minority rights, in full compliance

with the Convention of the Council of Europe and other instruments in this field.

In the regional and international affairs Albania moves swiftly towards integration to EU, regional cooperation and believes that the recognition of the free will and self determination of the people of Kosovo could be the key to stability and peace in the Balkans.

By giving our outmost support to the United Nations, Security Council, UNMIK, and the Special Envoy on the Kosovo talks Mr. Marti Ahtisari; as well as by strongly supporting the rights of all people to live freely in Kosovo, regardless of ethnicity, race or religious background; by encouraging and demanding from the Kosovo government to land the hand of peace and reconciliation to the Serbs in Kosovo; by respecting the borders and sovereignty of all countries; Albania believes that independence of Kosovo will also result in the better application and protection of human rights in this part of the world.

Mr. President,

I would like to express my profound gratitude to the work done so far by the United Nations in improving the conditions of women around the world. Yet I admit that a lot remains to be done especially in the area of gender equality, the empowerment of women in society and in giving a better leverage to women in politics. I thus take the opportunity to request to the new Human Rights Council to do more for the improvement of life of women and children around the world in order to avoid effectively any gross *violations* of their rights onwards.

Mr. President,

At this end I would like to greet the Ambassador Luis Alfonso De Alba, for his work done hitherto on the preparation of the first year sessions; it is my belief that under his leadership, the provisions of the Resolution 60/251 would be fully enforced, within the time limits set to this end.

Let me express my belief that the Council will achieve success in accomplishing its mission, as long as its member states will continue to share the same opinion on the necessity of a more efficient system for the promotion and protection of human rights, which would serve the goal of making a better and more qualitative life for all in the world.

I would like to close up with a sentence from a great human rights activist, the famous born Albanian Mother Theresa ***"Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough, give the world the best you've got anyway"***. Let's do then the best we can for a better world.

Thank you for your attention!