



**Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina
to the United Nations
at Geneva**

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**STATEMENT BY
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Mr. President of the Human Rights Council,
 Excellences,
 Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to address you today on the United Nations Human Rights Council's first session. At the outset I would like to congratulate you, Your Excellency, on your function as the President of the new body and wish you the success in performing your duties.

Following the historical adoption of the General Assembly resolution to establish the Human Rights Council, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the first Member States to sit on the Human Rights Council and to wish them successful commencement of the work for developing the highest standards of human rights.

I would like also to emphasize that my delegation fully aligns itself with the statement given yesterday on the High Level Segment by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. President,

The human rights protection is reaffirmed by the Millennium Declaration and is one of the most important tasks of the Organization. In recent six UN decades, under the leading role of the Commission of Human Rights, we recognized our responsibilities in conformity with the Charter, to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction of any kind as to race, color, sex, language or religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. The Commission drew attention to many human rights issues and debates, creating the culture of defending human rights in the world.

Mr. President,

Bosnia and Herzegovina follows with great interest the whole United Nations reform process. We are aware that the reform of the Commission of Human Rights was necessary to make system more efficient in performing and fulfilling its mandate and functions. With this regard, it is needed to remind on the efforts, given by the President of the 60th UN General Assembly, in conducting negotiations, as well as in securing the broadest possible international support for the establishment of the Human Rights Council.

I would like to express my conviction that the Human Right Council will be able to fulfill its mandate in promoting universal respect and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, to respond quickly to human rights crises, to address situations of violations of human rights, and to make recommendations thereon.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the High Commissioner for Human Rights for her commitment in helping the international community to develop strategies in supporting universal human rights in the world, as well as for her active engagement in the whole human rights reform process.

Bosnia and Herzegovina fully supports the process of strengthening the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as well. Thereafter, Bosnia and Herzegovina understands its duty to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, bearing in mind various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds of its peoples and citizens.

In raising the awareness of the importance of human rights I have to underline that we have had significant assistance from the international community, especially from the United Nations, as well as other international, regional and non-governmental organizations.

Mr. President,

The situation of human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina today is evidently more favorable than two or three years ago, but still there is a great deal to be done in years to come. First of all it is to underline that we have achieved significant progress in establishing more effective governance and basic legislative framework especially in the process of harmonizing laws with *acquis communautaire*, in strengthening the State institutions capacities - all with the aim to establish durable, sustainable and visible system, particularly in the field of the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country.

Mr. President,

In all this efforts to fulfill our international obligations we have significantly strengthened the state level capacities for fighting all forms of organized crime, as well as developed cooperation with other countries in this field.

The implemented project for the establishment of the War Crimes Chamber within the State Court is one of our achievements in strengthening the capacities of judicial system, especially in fulfillment of our obligations to the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). In conformity with the legislative framework of Bosnia and Herzegovina the State Court and the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina became operational in transferring of cases from the ICTY to the Prosecutor's Office using of evidence collected by the ICTY in proceedings before the Courts in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. President,

I would like to emphasize the fact of the largest national minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina that is the Roma minority and, at the same time, the most vulnerable one regarding the social, scientific and technical criteria. This fact obliges BiH authorities at all levels to take a range of actions and measures, in accordance with their competences and actual possibilities, which will improve their social and economic status.

A powerful weapon that authorities in BiH should use in fighting for improvement of the situation of national minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, primarily Roma, are international legal documents and instruments on protection of human rights, especially the rights of national minorities, as well as the Constitution of BiH, entities and cantons, statutes of District, cities and municipalities, as well as domestic legislative.

Mr. President,

The authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina made great efforts in resolving the problems of refugees and internally displaced persons in the country, particularly the activities that are undertaken in close cooperation with the UNHCR's Office in BiH on reducing the level of displacement in the country. At this point, I would like to point out the concrete assistance articulated in the project on collective centers management for persons with refugee status or temporary admission status in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The process of re-registration of the internally displaced persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina is finalized in the second part of 2005 and throughout the first three months in 2006. In that light, the BH authorities gave permanently open invitation to the refugees and IDP-s, interested in reconstruction of their damaged housing units, to submit requests for assistance. At the same time, we are carrying out the activities to find solutions for the refugees that want to return to their pre-war place of residence, as well as to solve problems of the IDP's collective centers.

In order to facilitate the process of return and local integration of refugees and internally displaced persons, and recognizing certain open questions caused slowing down the process of return on the

regional level, the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina have made great effort on regional level to implement conclusions and tasks of Sarajevo Declaration.

And finally, Mr. Chairman, let me inform you that Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the analytical – reporting sphere related to human rights, has fulfilled numerous important international obligations so far. I would like to conclude by emphasizing determination and commitment of Bosnia and Herzegovina to persist in developing human rights standards that are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated.

I thank you for your attention.