



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

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STATEMENT
BY

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1st Session of the Human Rights Council

20 June 2006

Geneva

Mr. President,
Madam High Commissioner for Human Rights,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you Mr. President and the other members of the Bureau, on your election. My delegation wishes you all the best in performing your important duties.

As a candidate country the Republic of Croatia aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights drafted by the former Commission on Human Rights is still awaiting its real and universal implementation.

For that reason, Croatia believes that the establishment of the Human Rights Council provides us with a unique opportunity to further promote the implementation of human rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and core UN human rights treaties. We sincerely hope that this Council will encourage states to accept and to abide by established human rights standards.

In particular, the introduction of a universal periodic review should provide a transparent and objective tool for the assessment of the protection of human rights, at the national level, in all UN member states.

The new Human Rights Council should address the gap between adopted human rights standards and their implementation and continue its work on standard setting.

It is also important that an effective relationship between the Council and treaty bodies be created.

The credibility of the Human Rights Council will, to a very large extent, depend on its determination to provide effective follow-up of recommendations of its various procedures.

In the process of the elaboration of the Council's working methods, it is extremely important to preserve the constructive participation of human rights defenders and NGOs.

Mr. President,

We believe that the Human Rights Council will be able to successfully integrate women's human rights in all its agenda items, as well as to:

- focus its attention more closely on the violations of women's rights;
- retain and reinforce the mandates of gender-related special procedures;
- integrate the gender dimension in the mandates of all existing special procedures;

- strengthen synergies between the Council and the Commission on the Status of Women.

I trust that the Declaration on Women's Rights and the Reform of the United Nations that is under elaboration will highlight the need to focus on women's rights within the UN human rights machinery and the ongoing UN reform process.

Mr. President,

In order to substantively contribute to the work of the Human Rights Council my delegation has initiated elaboration of the Statement on the Participation of Women in political life.

Yesterday, on the margin of the first session of the Council women ministers and other high ranking women officials who participated at the traditional dinner have unanimously adopted the Statement on the Participation of Women in political life that calls governments to:

- remove all the barriers in order to achieve the practical realization of gender equality in political and public life;
- address the persisting gap between women's *de jure* and *de facto* equality;
- implement effective temporary special measures for accelerating the achievement of women's *de facto* equality, in line with General Recommendation No. 25 of the CEDAW Committee;
- prevent and eliminate gender-based discrimination and all forms of violence against women;
- involve men in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women;
- develop strategies to eliminate gender stereotypes;
- establish a statistical system for monitoring the progress of equality between women and men in all public sectors.

Mr. President,

Allow me now to turn to the specific experience of the Republic of Croatia with respect to the work of the former Human Rights Commission in the case of human rights violations in the former Yugoslavia.

The first Special Session of the Commission was convened in 1991. At that session, the mandate of a Special Rapporteur for the Former Yugoslavia was established.

Following the resignation of the Special Rapporteur who was disappointed with the inability of the established procedure to prevent genocide or change the course of events, his successors have produced numerous reports that have not provided an efficient response to such a situation.

Based on that experience, we expect that this Council will be empowered to quickly and efficiently respond to all gross and systemic human rights violations around the globe.

Croatia particularly supports the adoption of the Convention on Enforced Disappearances at this first session of the Council that among other affirms the right to know the truth about the circumstances of an enforced disappearance and about the fate of the disappeared persons.

My delegation also supports a full examination and strengthening of all special procedures. As a country that has extended a standing invitation to the thematic procedures, we believe that mandate holders should be selected among independent, highly qualified experts through a transparent process of their appointment or even election by the Council, and strongly supported by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Mr. President,

Croatia, as a newly elected member of the Peace Building Commission supports the idea of developing and strengthening the key governance institutions which should also include the acceptance and implementation of core human rights standards.

In this respect, strong links between the Peace Building Commission and the Council should be established.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to call upon everyone to work together on the detailed elaboration of the Council's mandate that will justify its establishment as a new body, dedicated to the stronger promotion and protection of human rights.

Thank you.