



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

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**Statement
by
H.E. Dr N. Hassan Wirajuda
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at the High-Level Segment
of the First Session of the Human Rights Council**

Geneva, 22 June 2006

Mr. President,

Madam High Commissioner,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address this assembly on this historic occasion, the launching of the new Human Rights Council, opening a new chapter in the UN's work on human rights.

Let me congratulate all participants to this historic moment, especially you Mr. President and all members of the Council's first Bureau.

Today, we begin a new mission to fulfill our vision of human rights and the principles that inspired the establishment of the Commission on Human Rights in 1946. That Commission had many shortcomings, but let us not forget that it was successful in international standard-setting, and in forging a

dynamic and multi-faceted international human rights community.

It has not only formulated major human rights instruments, it has also produced specific instruments that respond to the emerging needs of the international community, such as the rights of women, children and migrants. The Council need to continue promoting awareness of the standards and norms created by the Commission.

However, although the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action of 1993 is universally accepted, there is much contention on how it is applied, including on the notion of the indivisibility of all human rights -civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights- contributing to politicization and selectivity. We still do need to develop a common understanding on what human rights are.

The Council has achieved a breakthrough with the adoption of monitoring as the rationale of its universal public review (UPR). This concept places all States on the same footing. All are equally subject to review. This should address the problem of selectivity. Certain states should no longer be able to indulge in judging the human rights performance of others. No State should be issuing unilateral reports on other States. We will all share responsibility on human rights matters.

The Council must serve as the impartial catalyst for the promotion of human rights values. But we need to do more in terms of technical assistance and advisory services. Since it is the basic goal of the Council to enhance the capacity of UN member countries to meet their human rights obligations, it is only logical that technical assistance becomes a large and important aspect of the Council's work. We must therefore strengthen the resources—human, financial and material — needed to carry out that work.

And we must now take a correct view of this mandate. On the Commission, technical assistance and advisory services were regarded as alternatives to political sanctions or naming and shaming. This was an unfortunate distortion of an essential work, which relegated it to being an instrument of politicization and selectivity.

We want the Council to be good at unleashing the home-grown strengths of countries to develop their own capacity and to fulfil their human rights obligations. We want it to be effective in pre-empting human rights crises through education and assistance, by enhancing local awareness and commitment.

The work of the Council should therefore be based on genuine dialogue and cooperation among all its members. We should strive to create an environment in which member countries can work comfortably together. Should any

disagreement arise, constructive and gradual approaches should be taken to resolve it.

The Council can and should be a better forum. But let us not be extravagant in our hopes and expectations, for in the long run that would be unhealthy for the Council.

For no matter how capable is the Council and how hard it works, it does not operate in a vacuum. External factors have an impact on its efforts. Without an enabling environment, the operation of the Council and the outcome of its activities will suffer.

Human rights with democracy and development are inter-related. Governments or authorities without accountability tend to violate human rights since they have a monopoly of truth in their societies. They allow no free play of public opinion. Without democracy, therefore, the implementation of human rights is hobbled.

In the same vein, without an enabling environment, the human rights standards and norms espoused by the Council are barren. Thus poverty is an obstacle to the full enjoyment of human rights. If we are committed to human rights, we should also be committed to promote democracy and the eradication of poverty.

At the same time, we must give priority to non-derogable rights. The right to life, as enshrined in the international bill of rights, is without doubt non-derogable and should be strictly upheld by all nations. We must do away with extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. Rights against torture is also non-derogable, even for security justifications. We must uphold judicial independence and fair administration of justice. And extreme poverty is inhuman and therefore a violation of human right.

We must not allow our citizens to be dehumanized by poverty, or to be deprived of their economic, social and cultural rights: the right to food and adequate shelter, as well as access to health services and to education. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were put in place because of rising human rights aspirations. By ensuring the promotion and protection of these rights, the Council will be playing a significant role in the attainment of the MDGs.

Mr. President,

We in Indonesia do not believe the world is in any danger of a “clash of civilizations.” But enduring misperceptions and misinterpretations of that notion can aggravate disputes on how human rights are to be implemented.

A recent example is the controversy on the caricatures that have infuriated the Muslim world. Thus, it is essential that the

Council promote dialogue among civilizations and religions, particularly in the application of human rights.

We must also see to it that information on the work of the Council is widely disseminated. The more widely standards and norms of the Council are known and appreciated, the more support it will gain from its global constituency.

Since the Council meets at least three times a year, we could hold one of these outside Geneva—as a way of spreading awareness and appreciation of its important work. Entrusting the task of hosting that meeting to a particular country will encourage the promotion and protection of human rights in that country and its region.

The old Commission was deemed isolated from reality and its sessions sterile because of its physical distance from actual human rights events. Holding sessions outside Geneva from time to time will solve that problem.

Mr. President,

Indonesia is proud to be a member of the first Council. Our emerging and robust civil society and other stakeholders are proud of our involvement in its work. Indonesia's previous participation on the Commission focused our national awareness on human rights and its implementation. Conversely, a strengthened human rights foundation at our national level would enhance our contributions to this forum. We hope to sustain this virtuous cycle.

I wish the Human Rights Council a fair wind as it embarks on its important mission. Let it be worthy of the hopes and aspirations of a world hungry for greater justice, equality and compassion. Let it start serving at once so that the continuity of the various human rights mandates is not broken and that no momentum is lost in advancing the major international

human rights-related projects, including the Millennium Development Goals.

May its members prove worthy to the splendid mission and vision of the Council.

Thank you.