



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

STATEMENT

BY

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ON BEHALF OF THE HUMAN SECURITY NETWORK**

**AT THE 1ST SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

22 JUNE 2006

Mr President,
Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to address the first session of the Human Rights Council on behalf of the Human Security Network, namely Austria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, Thailand, Slovenia and the observer country South Africa. Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Mr President, and other members of the Bureau on your election and wish you wisdom, courage, strength and success in performing your tasks in this challenging period of transition and development of the Human Rights Council.

We find ourselves at a historical turning point. This session is held just days from the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Commission on Human Rights under Economic and Social Council. The establishment of the Human Rights Council presents a major step in strengthening the UN machinery in the field of human rights. It is our common responsibility that the new body becomes a strong, effective and transparent one.

Mr President,

(On the Human Rights Council)

We, the members of the Network, consider the commitment to human rights, humanitarian and refugee law to be the foundation for building a better and safer world for our people. The Human Rights Council has a very important contribution to give in this regard. In order to contribute effectively it must deal with the transition process in an efficient and timely manner. We express our hope and expectation that it will do so. The Human Security Network members stand ready to jointly and individually contribute to the efforts in this direction, to promote concrete implementation and fresh approaches to addressing human rights issues and situations of concern. We also welcome the fact that the work of the Council shall be guided by the principle of

dialogue and cooperation, which we believe would effectively contribute to enhancing the promotion and protection of all human rights for all.

The aim of fully implementing UN General Assembly resolution 60/251 lies at the core of all the Human Security Network Member States' objectives. As such, we will participate actively in the elaboration of an effective and efficient universal periodic review mechanism. Indeed, we are all aware that once this mechanism is created, we will all individually be subject to the examination process, which demands from each and every State a constructive spirit and openness. We are convinced that this exercise will help us to improve our own human rights situation. When reviewing the mandates inherited from the Commission on Human Rights, we will work thoroughly towards the strengthening and reinforcement of the UN system of promotion and protection of human rights, in particular with a view to strengthening the system of special procedures. We will also advocate for an improved participation of the civil society in the works of the Council. We are all aware that this new body must prove that our common will is to fulfill the expectations of victims of human rights violations and to implement the commitments taken in the World Summit Outcome Document.

(On People Centred Approach)

The World Summit Outcome Document stressed "the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair". We further recognized, that "all individuals, in particular vulnerable people, are entitled to *freedom from fear* and *freedom from want*, with an equal opportunity to enjoy *all* their rights and fully develop their potential".

This is a holistic vision of the protection of individual, a vision that takes into account the changed threats to the security of people in the modern world. The Human Security Network countries will strive to contribute to furthering this goal of "people-centred approach" in the newly established Human Rights Council. In our efforts to make the Human Rights Council a credible, consistent and coherent body, we need to keep in mind that it is being created to stand up for human life, dignity and freedom of every

man, woman and child. Human rights need to be effectively addressed in *all* of their spectrum, ranging from civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, including the right to development. The new Council is responsible for the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms in every country, large or small, rich or poor, and for every person, regardless of their particular condition. This is indeed a heavy responsibility for the Council and the Network countries are willing to contribute to this high standard.

(Responsibility to Protect)

The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document affirms the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, including in this regard the responsibilities of individual Member States as well as the international community acting through the United Nations, including the Security Council, and in conformity with the UN Charter and international law. The world leaders agreed in this context, for the first time, that states have a primary responsibility to protect their own populations and that the international community has a responsibility to act when these governments manifestly fail to protect those most vulnerable among us. The Network is committed to further promoting the understanding of the notion of "responsibility to protect".

Mr President,

Let me now briefly highlight just some of priority issues from the Network's agenda which are also linked to the mandate of the Council.

(On Human Rights Education and Learning)

Human Rights are the emanation of our universally shared values, they have the capacity to build bridges among us, rather than divide us. For this, however, it is necessary, that people know their human rights: *to know rights is to own rights*. Having in mind that promotion of human rights education and learning is part of the Human Rights Council mandate, the Human Security Network is looking forward to

providing future contributions to that effect, building also on the relevant parts of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document in support of the human rights education and learning at all levels.

(On Fighting against Transmissible Diseases / Health Epidemics)

Global health problems, such as HIV/AIDS, avian influenza, TBC, SARS, malaria etc., pose a serious threat to human security and to the full enjoyment of human rights for many people around the world. Their extent is starting to undermine the efforts to achieve social and economic development and to fight poverty in many developing countries and economies in transition. Among other things the Human Rights Council could contribute to raising attention to the elimination discrimination and stigma of people living with HIV/AIDS. This should be an integral part of any comprehensive HIV/AIDS strategy. The rights of people living with HIV and with other deadly transmittable diseases must be assured. In this regard, the Network welcomes the adoption of the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS by the High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS that took place on 2 June 2006 in New York.

Mr President,

(On Fighting Violence against Children)

The Network supports the preparation of the UN Study on violence against children and is looking forward to the presentation of a report by Mr Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, the independent expert of the UN Secretary-General, to be presented later this year.