



SLOVENIA

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

STATEMENT

BY

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

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GENEVA

(following the statement delivered on behalf of the Human Security Network)

Mr President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my national capacity, I would like to underline that Slovenia fully aligns itself with the statement made earlier by Austria on behalf of the European Union. In addition I would like to emphasize a couple of other issues.

We should keep in mind that the implementation of international standards, commitments and obligations at the national level is the prime responsibility of States themselves; as a result, implementation activities and national initiatives will contribute essentially to turning words into deeds. We, nevertheless, see the importance of the supplementary role of the civil society, NGOs and international or regional bodies in these endeavours. Taking into account the important contribution the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights is giving in the area of the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms the Government of Slovenia has recently decided to contribute financially to the realisation of the priorities outlined in the Strategic Management Plan of the High Commissioner for the work of the Office in the current biennium.

I am proud to announce that 90 % of this contribution is not earmarked. The other 10 % will be used to assist the victims of torture in obtaining the needed medical, psychological, social and legal assistance. On this occasion I reiterate our position that the use of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment is a most vicious attack on human dignity and is unacceptable under any circumstance.

Mr. President, I would like to welcome the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and announce that Slovenia has undertaken relevant procedures to ratify the Optional Protocol in the near future. We would also like to encourage other States to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol with a view to provide unhindered and unconditional access to independent monitoring and preventive mechanisms at the national and international levels and to examine regularly the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty.

Mr. President, the GA resolution establishing the Human Rights Council mandates it, *inter alia*, to work in close co-operation in the field of human rights with Governments, regional organizations, national human rights institutions and civil society. The basis for this co-operation should stem from the fact that human rights are the emanation of our universally shared values. We need to build on respect and mutual understanding bearing in mind different cultural and religious backgrounds of our peoples.

Mr. President,

To conclude, Slovenia was, during the negotiations on the establishment of the Human Rights Council in New York, among the supporters of having the Council set up as a Principle Organ of the United Nations. We therefore take this opportunity to strongly support the call of the Secretary-General, Mr. Annan, at the opening ceremony on 19 June, to elevate its status in five years time.

Thank you.