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**Statement**

**by**

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**Minister for Foreign Affairs of  
the Islamic Republic of Iran**

**before**

**the High Level Segment of  
the Fourth Session of the Human Rights Council**

**Geneva, 12 March 2007**



**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the outset I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to H.E. Ambassador Louis De Alba for the exemplary, transparent and impartial manner in which he steered the work of the Council at this highly decisive and historical juncture.

**Mr. President,**

Allow me to commence with the fact that, we are all here to contribute to and facilitate the difficult process of institution-building within the Human Rights Council, and further, assist the successful completion of the mandate of Council for its first year.

The Human Rights Council has arrived at crucial juncture of first year of its existence. Indeed, to achieve human right's noble goals, it has before it 60 years of experience, considerable achievements together with known shortcomings and also deficiencies of the Commission on Human Rights.

The Commission on Human Rights, in its long journey and gradual development, provided invaluable lessons to be learnt. Lessons that must be taken into consideration in the making of the Council should the next generations of mankind be proud of our work today.

We must heed the lessons from its weaknesses and shortcomings emanated from the political manipulation on the different process both in the field of standard-setting and international monitoring system. Overcoming these shortcomings is obviously a heavy responsibility which requires commitment and cooperation from all countries. It also requires a change in the culture of those involved in the promotion and protection of human rights.

The widely diagnosed maladies of the human rights machinery have been politicization, selectivity and double standard. Any condoning or failure to deal promptly with these deficiencies will indeed take us back to the same challenges experienced by the Commission.

**Mr. President,**

Now the question arises as to what should we do differently in the Council?

1- We should discard a confrontational approach by targeting countries on arbitrary basis which had become the insidious manifestation of politicization and double standard in the past.

2- We need to emphasize that human rights, democracy and freedom per se are basic principles and values but not good excuses to cover up illegal or unilateral wrong – doings.

3 – Based on internationally recognized norms and values, mechanisms of Human Rights Council should be able to address violation of all human rights in particular the right to life of innocent people living under foreign occupation with the disguise of defending democracy.

4- We need to take this opportunity in finding sound and decent solutions to the existing challenges, as well as, generating and strengthening the political will required for the objective promotion and protection of all human rights on an equal basis with due regard to national and cultural particularities.

5-We should further underline that partnership, cooperation, dialogue, encouragement, and burden- sharing will best serve the promotion and protection of human rights all over the world. And that mutual trust, uninterrupted communication and understanding are amongst the essential elements of any meaningful undertaking aimed at attaining the common goal.

Therefore if we manage to ensure the smooth and efficient functioning of the Human rights Council and its mechanisms by embracing and adopting the above – mentioned approach, our collective endeavor shall be crowned with success. Good will, good offices, and Almighty's support will lead us to achieve it, and we can accomplish, when we work together.

**Mr. President,**

Taking into account the said principle and approach, the Islamic Republic of Iran has actively and wholeheartedly participated in all deliberations and discussions of the Intergovernmental Working Groups on reviewing mandates and institution - building process. We add our voice to all those who have so far spelt out their desire for the principles of objectivity, impartiality, transparency and consensus – building in the work of the Council. By the same token, we rise together with all those who call for a Council free of politicization, selectivity and double standards.

Furthermore, the Islamic Republic of Iran as a responsible, and active member of the United Nations and based on divine teachings of Islam, has continuously pursued the promotion and protection of human rights. Our commitment to human rights flows our firm belief to realizing the goal" inherent dignity of man".

To this end, we have embarked on series of initiatives to help our institutions to stand up to current human rights challenges. These initiatives include inter- alia concrete measures in capacity building, reviewing the existing legislations and consolidating the civil society with the aim of creating a comprehensive and broad based structure to further promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this context we have managed to maintain and further develop the bilateral and multilateral dialogue with various countries in different regions, the latest round of which successfully took place with one of the European Partners in Tehran last month.

International cooperation and dialogue has always been the strategic approach in our foreign policy. We are of the firm view that pursuing such a policy by Human Rights

Council can go a long way in strengthening our collective strive for achieving the common objectives of promotion and protection of human rights worldwide .

**Mr. President,**

Turning to the new trends and developments within the institutional -building process for Human Rights Council, I should like to emphasis on the following points:

- The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism should be an important tool to strengthen the existing human rights machinery. We commend the positive achievements of the Working Group on UPR and emphasize that the scope of its activities should cover all countries without any exception in a balanced and universal approach. Nevertheless, we are concerned over the relatively slow pace of progress with regard to the work of the other working groups, in particular the one on rationalization and reviewing of the mandates. For the sake of more transparency and predictability, a structured and well – defined agenda, as well as comprehensive rules of procedure is required.
  
- We are of the view that a predictable, transparent and balanced agenda requires inclusion of the concerns such as foreign occupation, further threat to occupy territory of independent Member States of the United Nations, rise in Islamophobia, stereotyping the Muslims and finally defamation of religions. The Human Rights Council has an enormous responsibility to take necessary and prompt steps to ensure that those issues find its proper place in the agenda of the Council.
  
- Gross violation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories remains a matter of deep concern for the international community. The Council should continue to be seized of the consideration of the issue till the end of occupation. The Human Rights Council, through effective and permanent consideration of the issue should live up to its responsibility towards the elimination of the suffering of the Palestinian people by reiterating the condemnation of Israeli gross and systematic violation of human rights of the Palestinian People.
  
- The right to development and appropriate ways and means of its practical realization should find its rightful place in the United Nations protection system, on equal footing with other rights in terms of both standard setting and implementation. We certainly need to take more concrete actions in this area.
  
- After nearly one year of its inception, the Human Rights Council has shown its maturity by acting quickly on the most urgent situations. However, it is a cause of concern that the Human rights Council has not been able to implement its decisions. Decisive implementation of Human Rights Council's decisions and resolutions such as those addressing the gross violation of rights of Palestinian people by Israeli occupying power will certainly lead to further enhancement of credibility of the Council.

**Mr. President,**

We are convinced that the best approach to the timely fulfillment of the task entrusted upon the Council and avoiding the ambiguous circumstances which may prevail if the mandate is not accomplished prior to 18 June 2007, is to ensure that the remaining time would be utilized in the most efficient manner towards the completion of the Council's mandate as was underlined by the Member States at the time of the adoption of the establishing resolution.

I would like to conclude by reiterating the Islamic Republic of Iran's determination to continue its constructive cooperation with all international actors and all relevant United Nations human rights institution for the promotion and protection of human rights all over the world. To this end, and as stated earlier we deem genuine dialogue and cooperation as the most appropriate and viable approach for its realization.

**Thank you.**