

**Statement made by Mrs. Mukta Tomar, Counsellor, at the 58<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly while introducing the biennial resolution on "National Institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights" on November 19, 2003**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Mr. Chairman,**

**It is my privilege and honour to introduce on behalf of the co-sponsors draft resolution contained in document A/C.3/58/L.55 entitled "National Institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights" under agenda item 117(b). Apart from the co-sponsors listed in the document, I have the pleasure in informing the Committee that the following member States have joined as co-sponsors:**

- 1. Ecuador**
- 2. France**
- 3. Honduras**
- 4. Italy**
- 5. New Zealand**
- 6. Panama, and**
- 7. Thailand**

Mr Chairman,

National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights have emerged over the years as an important and effective instrument to promote and protect human rights in an increasing number of countries in all regions of the world. Convinced of the significant role that national institutions can and do play in the promotion and protection of human rights, the General Assembly in its 48<sup>th</sup> session, welcomed the Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions. These "Principles", also called the "Paris Principles," provide the framework for the establishment of national institutions. Plurality, independence, freedom of operation and a broad-based mandate and powers to effectively protect and promote human rights are envisaged in these principles. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has offered assistance in the establishment or strengthening of national human rights institutions in some 30 countries, according to information contained in report A/58/36.

The draft resolution being presented today is a biennial one. It *welcomes* the rapidly growing interest throughout the world in the creation and strengthening of independent, pluralistic national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights; *recognises* that the United Nations has an important role to play in assisting the development of national institutions, and that its activities and programmes should be reinforced to meet the requests for assistance from States. The resolution also *notes* the valuable role played and contributions made by national institutions and the importance of their continued appropriate participation in UN meetings dealing with human rights.

In operative paragraph 2 and operative paragraph 3, the continued importance of the development of effective, independent and pluralistic national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, in keeping with the Paris Principles is *reaffirmed* and the value of further strengthening their application, where appropriate, is *recognized*.

The resolution also reflects the welcome development of the establishment of a website for national institutions as an important vehicle for the delivery of information relating to national institutions and for sharing best practices, and expresses *appreciation* for the additional resources contributed by

**Governments for the purpose of the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions.**

**Mr. Chairman,**

**We would like to thank all co-sponsors and interested delegations for their support and contributions in the drafting of this resolution. It is the hope of the cosponsors that as in the past, this draft resolution will be adopted by this Committee without a vote.**

**Thank you, Mr. Chairman.**

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