

STATEMENT BY MR. GOPINATH PANDURANG MUNDE, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, ON
AGENDA ITEM 63 – REPORT OF THE HUMAN RIGHT COUNCIL AT THE 65TH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON NOVEMBER 03, 2010

Mr. President,

My delegation would like to thank the President of the Human Rights Council (HRC) for his presentation as well as report under the agenda item 63 titled "Report of the Human Rights Council".



Mr. President,

Since its creation in 2006, the Human Rights Council has played a commendable role. This has helped the Council to achieve its pre-eminent, legitimate and premier position in dealing with human rights issue in the international scene.

We are encouraged by the broad consensus that the Council has been a considerable improvement over its predecessor, the Commission on Human Rights, and has addressed human rights issues in a more constructive manner.

This has been possible mainly owing to the Council's basic shift in emphasis on principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and capacity-building that underlie its mechanisms, agenda and programme of work, and methods of work.

Mr. President,

The Council's strength also lies in its emphasis on dialogue, cooperation, transparency and non-selectivity in the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedom for all.

In substantive terms, the enthusiastic participation of Member States in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process till date is a pointer in this direction. This also underscores the success of this innovative mechanism, which has provided a platform for sharing of national experiences and best practices in consultation and with the consent of the country concerned.

It is also worth noting that the UPR has generated a new momentum towards ratification of core international human rights instruments, submission of periodic reports to treaty bodies, better cooperation with special procedures, greater openness towards human rights complaints procedures, and enactment of national measures in line with the obligations of a State Party under relevant human rights instruments.

Mr. President,

I am happy to note the proactive attitude of the Human Rights Council in examining and reacting to several emergent human rights situations. Since its creation, the Council, in addition to its fifteen regular meetings, has also convened thirteen special sessions to deliberate on issues of special concerns. This has helped in further reinforcing and strengthening the Council's credibility internationally and also provided an appropriate forum for Member States to raise human rights issue.

Mr President,

We are in the fifth year of the establishment of the Council. This has given us an opportunity to ensure that we learn from the current functioning and practices of the Council and formalise them in the on-going review of the Human Rights Council. We hope that our review efforts are based on an inclusive approach, which respects diversity in historical national experiences, cultures and development.

In this regard, we would like to welcome the discussions which took place last week in first meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Review of the Work and Functioning of the Human Rights Council.

During the review process, we feel that the Council should consider streamline its programme of work by meeting in two regular sessions for a total of eight weeks every year, with the remaining third session of two weeks be added to the existing programme for Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

In addition, in order to give necessary focus on the intergovernmental nature of the Council, we would support preserving the procedural and organisational role for the President of the Human Rights Council and the Bureau.

We would also like to reiterate that the Complaint Procedure with the Council should be retained while exploring the possibility of streamlining its functioning. We believe that it serves a useful purpose and its effectiveness can be judged from the relatively high rate of both quality and timely responses from States.

Mr President,

Having created the Human Rights Council as the subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly, we appreciate the current practice of the presentation of the report of the Council in the General Assembly directly, with the understanding that all its recommendations are considered and acted upon by the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly.

We would also call for putting in place mechanisms and procedures by which the decisions of the General Assembly, especially those with financial implications, on the report of the Council can be acted upon quickly by shortening the time of consideration of financial implications by ACABQ and the Fifth Committee, so as to minimize the time-lag being experienced currently.

Mr. President,

India attaches considerable importance to the promotion and protection of human rights. India remains committed in making the Human Rights Council a strong, effective and efficient body capable of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

I would also like to say that a spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding should guide the work of the Human Rights Council. We reiterate our firm commitment to continue to engage constructively with all Member States, and strive to ensure that the Council retains its preeminent place in the international human rights arena.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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