

COUNCIL MONITOR

International Service for Human Rights



Human Rights Monitor Series

DAILY UPDATE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, 7TH SESSION 3 MARCH 2008

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Overview

The first meeting of the 7th session of the Human Rights Council (the Council) began with a brief introductory statement by the President of the Council, Ambassador Doru-Romulus Costea, and was officially opened by United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-moon, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Louise Arbour, and the Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Ms Micheline Calmy-Rey. The remaining time of the first day was dedicated to the High Level Segment of the Council, with 30 high level dignitaries taking the floor to address the Council. Many statements addressed the fact that the Council was nearing the end of its institution-building phase, and that much of the Council's credibility will now depend on its ability to respond urgently and effectively to the protection of human rights on the ground, in the spirit of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in this year of its 60th anniversary. Many States highlighted the particular importance of the effective functioning of the universal periodic review (UPR) mechanism for the Council's success.

A number of women ministers addressed the role of the Council to strengthen the human rights of women.¹ They emphasised that the Council provides a crucial framework to encourage the international community to pay systematic attention to the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination

¹ Switzerland, Nepal, Hungary.

against Women (CEDAW), to take a gender perspective into account in the UPR, and to request all special procedures and other mechanisms of the Council to systematically integrate a gender perspective in the implementation of their mandates.

Of particular note was also the statement by Serbia, which focused on the recent declaration of independence by Kosovo. Serbia dedicated the better part of its statement to this topic and in the strongest terms stated that it would never accept what it termed the ‘unilateral, illegal and illegitimate’ declaration of independence. It made it clear that Serbia would use all available diplomatic and political means to ‘hinder, obstruct and ultimately reverse’ the declaration of independence to ensure that Kosovo would ‘remain a part of Serbia forever’.

Opening statements by the UN Secretary-General and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

The President of the Council, Ambassador Doru-Romulus Costea, opened the 7th session of the Council by welcoming the attendance of the Secretary-General of the UN, Mr Ban Ki-moon, and requested permission to first share his own thoughts before the session got underway.² He declared that the present session was unique, as the Council would complete the principle items of the institution-building text while at the same time addressing substantive issues in its working form as a new institution. He stated that the recently approved increase in the budget of the Council responded precisely to its needs, and that this was good news. He therefore called upon States, in the 60th anniversary year of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR), not to lose sight of the most important responsibility of ensuring the protection of human rights on the ground. Now that the Council is in place, he concluded, its value will be measured through the extent to which it changes the situation on the ground.

The President then invited the Secretary-General to take the floor to address the Council.

Statement of the UN Secretary-General

The Secretary-General identified 2008 as a ‘decisive’ year for human rights as it was the 60th anniversary of the UDHR and the second year of the Human Rights Council. In the last 60 years, he stated, there had been remarkable progress, and even triumphs, in the field of human rights, but it had also been learned that in order to implement and enforce rights, it was necessary to have clear commitments and accountability for those commitments, requiring collective efforts, checks and balances, and relentless scrutiny.

The Secretary-General asked of the Council whether it had met the ‘high expectations of the international community’ in nearly two years of work, which he defined as ‘recognising and promoting the universal application of human rights values...without favour, without selectivity, without being impacted by any political machinations around the world’. He stated that the system of independent special procedures was ‘essential to the proper functioning of the Council’s machinery’ as a vanguard mechanism for early detection of human rights situations. He noted that the historical undertaking of the UPR would also expand the protection and promotion of human rights on the ground, but that it must be fair and transparent and States must be held accountable for progress or regression in the implementation of standards. It must also overcome the distrust of the previous Commission on Human Rights (the Commission) through the collective

² All opening statements and statements of the High Level Segment are available on the OHCHR extranet. The OHCHR extranet can be accessed (fill out the form on the page to receive the user name and password) at www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/form.htm.

commitment to the universality of human rights. He also pointed to the need for the Council to be vigilant and proactive in issuing early warnings and pushing for implementation, as well as addressing ‘situations of concern that are neglected or forgotten by the international community’.

The Secretary-General then noted that the task of implementing international obligations is difficult and often thankless, but it is not hopeless. He commended the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for the crucial role it has played, and called upon the Council to build on the ‘mutually reinforcing but independent and distinct mandates’ between itself and OHCHR. He also highlighted his efforts to mobilise the entire UN in the campaign for the 60th anniversary of the UDHR.

The Secretary-General summarised that the Council was responsible for States’ national integration of international obligations, which it should achieve through ‘cooperating rather than imposing mandatory measures’, as its ‘power stems from credibility, not force’. As the institution-building phase was now nearly over, the Council needed ‘to create an environment of trust’ and ‘spur greater accountability for action on human rights’, as this was the conviction of governments that created and supported the Council, and was ‘the spirit in which our predecessors drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights’. This was an outcome, he concluded, in which ‘all humankind has a stake’.

Statement of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Louise Arbour, noted that the Council had to date ‘rightly’ concentrated on its institution-building requirements in accordance with the principles of universality, non-selectivity, and non-politicisation. This transition also included a commitment not only to improve existing norms and to forge new ones, but also to ‘implement universally accepted norms that have been ignored or flouted in today’s world’.

The High Commissioner saw the present stage in the history of the Council as the ‘turning point’ away from institutional procedures and toward concentrating on substantive issues. Echoing the comments of the Secretary-General, she observed that the Council was now endowed with a broad spectrum of mechanisms that would allow it to address not only the most serious situations, but also situations that have not drawn the attention of the international community. She stated that a culture of open-mindedness and commitment to consensus was important, but that it was also important to maintain the independence of special procedures. She was also of the view that the new UPR process would provide focus on the true situation of human rights in the world.

The High Commissioner ended by drawing attention to the ‘gloomy picture’ of global human rights protection, contrasting the ratification of various human rights treaties by States with the reality of human rights protection on the ground. She stated that the common practice is a betrayal of the ideals of the UDHR, and that the members of the Council therefore bear a great responsibility in contributing to the realisation of this vision.

Statement of the Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

Ms Micheline Calmy-Rey, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, was the final speaker to open the 7th session of the Council as a delegate of the host country. She summarised the ‘salient aspects’ of the Council in its first two years, including the UPR as the ‘essence of the Council’s philosophy’ and the system of special procedures as a ‘cornerstone of human rights’, whereby the review process should aim at its maintenance and improvement. Ms Calmy-Rey also spoke about the need to ensure gender balance in the appointment of special procedures, and placed particular emphasis on the importance of gender integration in the work of the Council (including in the UPR process) and across the UN.

Ms Calmy-Rey then addressed particular countries of concern to Switzerland, including the failure of Burma/Myanmar to implement the follow-up Council *Resolution 5/1*, the escalating situation in Sri Lanka, the ‘unbearable civilian situation in Gaza’, and the welcome creation of a coalition government in Kenya. Returning to institutional issues, Ms Calmy-Rey addressed the present doubts surrounding the relationship between the General Assembly, the Council, and OHCHR by affirming that the General Assembly is a universal body that should be used as a normative framework, and the Council should serve as the operational body. It was ‘extremely important’ that OHCHR remain independent. The Council needed to continue to react quickly to situations and assert itself as a main actor the protection and promotion of human rights.

Rights of reply

At the end of the morning segment, Algeria and Morocco exchanged two rights of reply each, focusing on the usual point of contention, the situation in Western Sahara. Algeria exercised its right of reply, responding to the reference by Morocco to the plight of refugees in the Tindouf camps in Algeria. The Ambassador of Algeria claimed that Morocco violates Article 1 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) on the right of peoples to self-determination. Morocco replied, quoting figures provided by the World Food Programme to show how dire the situation in the refugee camps is.

The rights of reply arising from the afternoon segment will be exercised at the earliest opportunity.

Table on key issues raised during the High Level Segment – 3 March 2008

| State | Human Rights Council | UPR | Special procedures | Countries of concern | Thematic issues | Pledges/elections | Other |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|-------------------|--|
| African Union (AU) | | Drew parallels with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Peer-Review Mechanism; working closely with African Group members to increase awareness of this mechanism; transparency, confidentiality, and effective participation as key principles; selection of Troika members was smooth and open; call on the Council to make the two UPR voluntary trust funds operational; 'scrutiny of States must go hand-in-hand with support measures'. | There is a need to maintain a balance between mandates on civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights. There should be equal representation of mandate holders from different regions. Country mandates should be reviewed objectively. Need to establish regional balance among mandate holders; country mandates have to be considered and reviewed free of political undertones. | Call on the Council and international community to step up measures to decisively address the weaknesses inherent in implementation and monitoring of decisions on the occupied Palestinian territories (OPT). | There are many and diverse challenges in Africa, including conflict, poverty, fight against HIV/AIDS, and malaria. | | Fully supports activities of Working Group on right to development and High-Level Task Force on implementation of right to development; comprehensive definition of the relationship between OHCHR and the Council should be worked out at this early stage; supports initiative of the African Group in this regard; welcome reconvening of the Durban Review Conference in 2009. |
| Alliance of Civilizations (www.unaoc.org) | The Alliance of Civilizations and the Council could benefit each other and there should be senior political and secretariat level | | | | | | The Alliance was launched by the UN Secretary-General in 2005 under co-sponsorship of Spain and Turkey; reaffirms mutual respect between |

| State | Human Rights Council | UPR | Special procedures | Countries of concern | Thematic issues | Pledges/elections | Other |
|---------------|--|--|--------------------|----------------------|---|--|---|
| | consultations; the Council has the expertise and most relevant experience in human rights. | | | | | | cultures and religious traditions; respect for equal dignity is at the heart of the initiative; goals of the Alliance are closely linked to those of the Council; appealed to States to join the Alliance; urged members of the Alliance to turn promises into action; the Alliance has a role to play in building bridges between societies and addressing imbalances in the world; results- and action-oriented initiative that requires continued support by States. |
| Angola | Responsibility of the international community to protect human rights; still need to evaluate if the future will bring greater respect for human rights; need for impartiality, non-selectivity; lack of transparency, manipulation of civil society and | Will scrutinise the human rights situation in countries. | | | Need to respect international humanitarian law; terrorism; armed conflicts; racial discrimination, xenophobia, stereotypes and prejudice; discrimination against migrant workers in Europe. | Creation of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights under the African Union; Angola's 'battle' to establish a prosperous democracy; success in implementing human rights policies in the past years; strengthening of national legislation (new | |

| State | Human Rights Council | UPR | Special procedures | Countries of concern | Thematic issues | Pledges/elections | Other |
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| | international organisations; need to work with national human rights institutions (NHRIs); needs to ensure that High Commissioner does not have political motivations. | | | | | <i>Press Law</i>). | |
| Argentina | Supports Council, and has submitted candidacy for election to another term on the Council. | Will be one of the first States to be evaluated by UPR mechanism and hopes for its success. | | | Regional and national systems of justice; enforced disappearances; human rights defenders; genocide; migrants; indigenous peoples (voted in favour of General Assembly Resolution that adopted the <i>Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</i>). | Adopted <i>Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, Convention on Enforced Disappearances, Convention on Migrant Workers</i> ; intends to organise events to increase ratifications of the <i>Convention on Enforced Disappearances and the Prevention of Genocide</i> . | Supports strengthening national and regional systems of justice and protections of human rights; created human rights prize to reward human rights activists in Argentina. |
| Bolivia | | | | | Environmental degradation and climate change is of great concern. | Eradication of illiteracy this year. | Election of indigenous President; new Constitution is ‘one of the most advanced...in terms of human rights’; domestic disturbances |

| State | Human Rights Council | UPR | Special procedures | Countries of concern | Thematic issues | Pledges/elections | Other |
|-----------------|---|---|--|----------------------|--|--|--|
| Brazil | Fundamental stage in institution-building process; faithful implementation of <i>Resolution 5/1</i> ; need to overcome selectivity. | Framework is innovative and can overcome selectivity and impartiality; preparation for review should follow a broad consultative process. | Supports rationalisation of special procedures. | Haiti | | Will host the 11 th national human rights conference and the 3 rd world conference on sexual exploitation of children; revising its national human rights programme. | caused by land owners. Met first of eight millennium goals (anti - hunger programme); voluntary human rights goals are essential to increase visibility of human rights. |
| Colombia | Seek transparent Council with no political interests or selectivity; not examined objectively in the past. | Put itself forward for first cycle. | | | | Extension of memorandum of understanding on OHCHR presence in Colombia till 2010 (10 th anniversary of UDHR); will accept all guarantees to security in cooperation with international organisations; will continue with fight against drugs and terrorism with respect for human rights and international law. | Effects of terrorism; drug trafficking; internally displaced persons in Colombia; corruption; illegal armed groups; FARC and the situation of captives; kidnapping; recent liberation of Colombians taken by FARC; invites all countries to join Colombia in the fight against FARC. Reparations to victims in Colombia; <i>Law of Justice and Peace</i> ; integrating human rights in national bodies. |
| Croatia | Time for implementation of human rights; further development of collaboration | UPR is a key mechanism; requests States to integrate a gender perspective in the review process. | Commends achievements of special procedures system; a gender perspective | | Welcomes the adoption of a resolution on a death penalty moratorium by the General | Will run for Council membership from 2010-2013. | Treaty bodies, supports adoption of an optional protocol to the <i>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</i> |

| State | Human Rights Council | UPR | Special procedures | Countries of concern | Thematic issues | Pledges/elections | Other |
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| | mechanism between the Council and the treaty bodies is important. | | should be integrated in these mandates and particular attention should be given to the human rights of women in reports of special procedures. | | Assembly; the Council should mainstream religious and racial equality; supports integration of a gender perspective in the work of the Council and in peace-building initiatives; rights of the child; combating trafficking of persons; torture; intercultural dialogue; counter-terrorism. | | (ICESCR). |
| Cuba | Not assured that the Council will be different from the Commission - will depend on how UPR functions; Council needs to condemn powerful countries if they commit violations; United States (US) not to manipulate the Council. | Objectivity, impartiality, and non-selectivity; under review in 2009. | | OPT; US (unjust treatment of Cuba, nuclear weapons, preventive wars). | Effect of embargo on Cuba; Cuban prisoners in the US; clandestine flights; poverty; illiteracy; child mortality; women's mortality during childbirth; unjust distribution of wealth. | Recent signature of <i>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</i> (ICCPR) and ICESCR; reaffirms commitment to equality and freedom. | Cuban revolution; recent elections in Cuba; health of Fidel Castro. |

| State | Human Rights Council | UPR | Special procedures | Countries of concern | Thematic issues | Pledges/elections | Other |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| Egypt | Need to avoid selectivity, politicisation in protection of human rights; Council's repeated failure to constrain Israel has increased human rights abuses in the OPT. | Important to participate in UPR. | | OPT (particularly the situation in Gaza). | Religious defamation; racial discrimination. | Egypt has created special national councils, as well as human rights departments in Government ministries, to improve human rights protections domestically. | Full cooperation based on mutual respect; selectivity and politicisation undermine efforts to protect human rights, so double standards of human rights protection must be avoided; Egypt has taken steps to improve human rights culture, but this is an ongoing, cumulative process. |
| Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia | The Council should reflect the importance of human rights in the UN system; much has been achieved in the institution-building process; it must not allow differences of opinion to prevent it from seizing opportunities to address human rights. | UPR must be approached in a constructive manner; it must tackle human rights problems and challenges with the aim of resolving them; the UPR must also act as a preventative mechanism. | | | | | Dialogue between cultures and religions is important and Macedonia has hosted an international conference on this issue; treaty bodies are important for human rights advocacy; expressed gratitude for those States that had recognised Macedonia's constitutional name: Republic of Macedonia. |
| France | The world is watching the Council and expectations and demands are high; the Council was born of the | The UPR must allow the identification of gaps and shortcomings and where progress is needed; France has undertaken a broad | Special procedures are the eyes and ears of the Council and they are vital to the Council's work; France is | Burma/Myanmar, Darfur, OPT situations will test our resolve; Burma/Myanmar must implement the | Violence against women will be a priority during the French presidency of the EU; fight against poverty; enforced | Will stand for election to the Council in May 2008. | 60 th anniversary of UDHR; preparation for Durban must focus on commitments that have already been made; it must not be used to question fundamental |

| State | Human Rights Council | UPR | Special procedures | Countries of concern | Thematic issues | Pledges/elections | Other |
|----------------|---|---|--|---|--|-------------------|--|
| | aspiration to place human rights at the same level as peace and security and development. | consultation process with civil society in preparation for its review. | committed to extending the mandates on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Myanmar, human rights defenders, enforced disappearances, violence against women, torture, and freedom of expression. | recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on Myanmar; the Sudan should implement the recommendations of the Group of Experts on Darfur; it is unacceptable for civilians on either side in the OPT conflict to be killed and subject to violence. | disappearances; racism affects all of our societies; freedom of thought and expression and freedom of belief and religion are important rights that must be respected; equality between men and women is an essential value. | | freedoms. |
| Hungary | Increase non-governmental organisations (NGOs) participation in the work of the Council. | Potential to make a difference; must be transparent and efficient; cooperation with treaty bodies and special procedures makes the system of human rights protection complete; will not request Troika member from regional group nor substitution of reporter; widen possibilities for NGO interaction, including participation in the interactive | Council must continue to support mandate holders; the review, rationalisation and improvement of mandate holders should look at the whole system of special procedures. | | Minority issues (domestic forum for dialogue); women's rights (urged Council to integrate gender perspective in its work). | | Endorsed statement by the European Union (EU); commended work done by OHCHR. |

| State | Human Rights Council | UPR | Special procedures | Countries of concern | Thematic issues | Pledges/elections | Other |
|-------------------|---|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| India | Reiterated commitment to make the Council a strong and effective body capable of promoting human rights for all; important that momentum is not lost post-institution building process. | dialogues. UPR is crucial for the success of the Council and human rights efforts in general. | | OPT situation is of grave concern. | Stressed that measures need to be taken in poverty; development; fight against terrorism; women's empowerment; especially committed to fight against racism. | Is firmly committed to implement pledges made when seeking membership of the Council; have enhanced cooperation with the treaty bodies and the special procedures. | Continues to support OHCHR, including through financial assistance. |
| Japan | The Council must be an effective institution and must continue to develop steadily. | It is hoped that UPR will be an effective tool. | The system of country-specific special procedures is very important and States must fully cooperate with it; believes that the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) must be renewed. | Japan seeks to normalise relations with the DPRK, including in relation to the issue of abductions; urged DPRK to improve its human rights situation. | Wish to further expand mainstreaming of women and vulnerable groups; welcomed Brazil's decision to host 3 rd World Conference on the Commercial Exploitation of Children. | Will stand for election to the Council in May 2008; 'will play a responsible role in the international community as a peace-fostering State'. | Intends to take initiative in eradicating discrimination against those affected by leprosy and their families; will host Tokyo International Conference on African Development in May; support for civil society. |
| Luxembourg | Council needs to deliver its obligations to protect human | Need for dialogue and transparency; need to involve civil society. | Importance of Special Rapporteur on violence against | Middle East; condemned use of force in Gaza; 'troubling | Violence against women; genocide; torture and inhuman | Need to strengthen national legislation to incorporate human rights; lifted | Support the autonomy and independence of High Commissioner and her Office. |

| State | Human Rights Council | UPR | Special procedures | Countries of concern | Thematic issues | Pledges/elections | Other |
|-------------------|---|-----|--|---|--|---|---|
| | rights; needs to be credible and effective element in the UN system. | | women; genocide; cooperation between special procedures and Council needs to be objective. | situation' in Darfur (refugees and humanitarian assistance); Myanmar; DRC (child mortality); Cuba (signing ICCPR will improve freedom of expression). | treatment; political assassinations; equality of human beings based on Article 1 of UDHR; poverty; right to education; HIV; malnutrition, right to food. | reservations on Articles 7 and 16 of CEDAW and signed the Optional Protocol to CEDAW. | |
| Montenegro | Success depends not only on members but on all in international community. | | | | | | First participation; cherishes values of EU; contributed financially to the campaign of the 60 th anniversary of the UDHR; working with UN agencies in Montenegro; signed the <i>Convention on Enforced Disappearances</i> and the <i>Convention on People with Disabilities</i> . |
| Morocco | Important mechanism ensuring universality and non-selectivity; elaboration of national report should involve all parties concerned. | | | OPT; Western Sahara (situation of refugees in the Tindouf camps). | Women's rights; the rights of the child. | Training seminars on national and international human rights mechanisms; launched initiative with Switzerland on UN declaration for education and training; ³ strengthen | |

³ Human Rights Council *Resolution 6/10*, 28 September 2007 requests the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee to prepare a draft declaration for education and training.

| State | Human Rights Council | UPR | Special procedures | Countries of concern | Thematic issues | Pledges/elections | Other |
|--------------------|--|--|---|--|---|---|---|
| Nepal | | Innovative mechanism founded on the principles of universality, non-politicisation, and non-selectivity; should include a gender perspective. | | | Women's rights (urged Council to include gender perspective in its work). | cooperation with International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). National effort for elections while promoting broadest participation; action plan for national human rights body in keeping with <i>Paris Principles</i> on the independence of NHRLs. | Commended OHCHR for the creation of a gender unit; appreciates UN assistance in Nepal; ratified ILO <i>Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries</i> . |
| Netherlands | Substantial progress has been made in the past year. | Important because of its universal scope. The Working Group session in April will set the standard for the future; agreement on modalities was 'quite an achievement'; criticisms should be made with respect. | Called on States to extend invitations for visits of the Special Rapporteur on torture. | Burma/Myanmar situation continues to be of concern and hopes that mandate will be renewed. | Prioritisation of children, women and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights; criminalisation of consensual sexual acts between adults in many countries; supports the <i>Yogyakarta Principles</i> and encourages others to embrace them; absolute prohibition of torture; freedom of expression entails | Recognition of the right to water as a human right. | Supports independence of the High Commissioner. |

Human Rights Council, 7th session – Table on key issues raised during the HLS – 3 March 2008

| State | Human Rights Council | UPR | Special procedures | Countries of concern | Thematic issues | Pledges/elections | Other |
|--------------------|--|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| Norway | | | Special procedures can serve as early warning; need to preserve their integrity and independence. | Appalled by situation in OPT, violence has to stop and political negotiations must resume. | responsibilities; economic, social and cultural rights must be fulfilled. Death penalty moratorium welcome but remains concerned at use of the death penalty; need to support and protect human rights defenders; absolute nature of the prohibition of torture; need to balance fundamental freedoms with multicultural society freedom of media, freedom of expression cannot be exercised in isolation and must be balanced with other rights. | Has submitted candidacy to the Council for 2009-2012. | Expressed strong support for OHCHR and the High Commissioner. Welcomes General Assembly call for moratorium on death penalty; strong support for OHCHR. |
| Philippines | Important forum to promote human rights. | Recommendations will be vital to help protect rights. Should be an instrument for | Extend mandates on trafficking and migrants. | | Globalisation; trafficking of women and children; migrants. | Drafting and adoption of the <i>Association of Southeast Asian Nations Charter</i> ; | Non-State forces attack civilian populations in Philippines, but must continue efforts, with promotion of human |

| State | Human Rights Council | UPR | Special procedures | Countries of concern | Thematic issues | Pledges/elections | Other |
|--------------------------|--|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| Portugal | Need to deepen discussion on human rights and reinforce dialogue on human rights across regions; the Council must live up to the expectations placed on it and address gross and systematic violations around the world; it must be able to point to violations of human rights standards and offer assistance and support to victims. | The UPR will be a challenge for the weeks and months to come; expectations are high and the process should be balanced and transparent; no country should be exempt from scrutiny. | | Special sessions on OPT, Burma/Myanmar, and Darfur. Special concern regarding situations in Darfur and Burma, | Death penalty moratorium was a major success; need to continue to fight for implementation of human rights without discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, and race. | acceded to optional protocols for various human rights treaties; will donate to OHCHR special fund; abolished capital punishment. | rights as a core of activity; Philippines has banned the death penalty and protects life of unborn; is working with civil society to expand human rights protections. Paid tribute to the High Commissioner and to the work of human rights defenders; hopes for early adoption of the optional protocol to ICESCR. |
| Republic of Korea | High expectations of the Council, but it needs a means to engage governments not responding to international community. | Hoped for and widely supported; valuable tool in overcoming chronic criticism of selectivity and double standards; unprecedented | Major tool of Council along with UPR; <i>Code of Conduct for special procedures mandate holders</i> should not be | Darfur (women and children especially); Myanmar (hopes for a transparent constitutional referendum); DPRK. | Issued a standing invitation to all special procedures. | Programmes initiated to identify areas for improvement before UPR session in May; reaffirms commitment to open dialogue. | Adopted a national action plan for the promotion of human rights in 2008. |

| State | Human Rights Council | UPR | Special procedures | Countries of concern | Thematic issues | Pledges/elections | Other |
|----------------|---|--|--|----------------------|--|--|---|
| Romania | Global need to protect and promote human rights; non-discrimination of all rights key to effective work; need to assume role as early warning instrument; needs close cooperation with High Commissioner; States have primary responsibility to ensure that work of the Council is effective. | Needs to be transparent and effective; objective approach to human rights is required; question of resources needs to be addressed; States need to implement outcomes at the national level. | misused to limit their independence; supports the strengthening of special procedures; all States should issue standing invitations. Consolidate the function of the Council. | | Women and children; violence against children needs to be on Council agenda; situation of migrant children; too many people suffering from injustice, for whom the UN is a source of hope. | | Importance of intercultural approaches to human rights. |
| Serbia | | | | | | Is standing for election to the Council for 2008-2011; dedicated to further strengthening the Council. | Kosovo declaration of independence is 'unilateral, illegal, illegitimate'; 'terrible precedent' established by States recognising Kosovo; Human Rights Committee has criticised |

| State | Human Rights Council | UPR | Special procedures | Countries of concern | Thematic issues | Pledges/elections | Other |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Slovakia | The Council must be able to quickly respond to crisis situations. Recommendations must be pragmatic. Elaborating an early warning mechanism merits attention | Natural for the Council of Europe (CoE) to contribute to the UPR and has provided info on each of CoE member States. In national capacity, Slovakia stated that the UPR is the most distinctive feature of the Council; the first and second session will set example for future examinations; it is necessary that the UPR is conducted in an objective manner in compliance with <i>Resolution 5/1</i> ; need to involve independent experts in UPR. | Values the system of special procedures as the eyes and ears of the Council; appointment of new mandate holders. | | | Is standing for elections in May for 2008-2011; was never member of the Commission on Human Rights. | The Council of Europe is celebrating its 60 th anniversary in 2009; in March 2007 the Committee of Ministers decided to enhance cooperation between CoE and the UN in the field of human rights; this could include human rights education; children's rights, human rights defenders, and racism and intolerance. |
| Slovenia (on behalf of the EU) | Happy to participate and has high hopes for the Council; use of UPR and special sessions show Council's potential. | Should be able to prioritise review based on urgency, even if outside of Council framework (will determine credibility). | EU will participate in all further efforts and initiatives; extend mandates for DPRK, Burma, Somalia, DRC, and | Somalia; Kenya; Kosovo; Sri Lanka. | Indivisibility of human rights; death penalty. | | Lag behind on implementation at the national level; 15 years since Vienna Programme of Action; EU continues to engage in intercultural dialogue. |

Human Rights Council, 7th session – Table on key issues raised during the HLS – 3 March 2008

| State | Human Rights Council | UPR | Special procedures | Countries of concern | Thematic issues | Pledges/elections | Other |
|-----------|----------------------|-----|---|----------------------|---|---|--|
| Sri Lanka | | | Myanmar. Will undergo UPR in May 2008. | | Supported Council resolution on Human Rights Voluntary Goals. | Will stand for election in May 2008; has made significant efforts in good faith to uphold pledges; the representative in Geneva is currently a vice-president of the Council. | Sri Lanka is facing a number of challenges; armed conflict by political factions in Sri Lanka a challenge for securing human rights; political dialogue is needed to make situation sustainable; committed to fighting terrorism; strengthening of its Human Rights Commission has been given utmost priority; Parliament has approved a new act on victims and witnesses; has welcomed visits by the High Commissioner, the Special Rapporteur on torture and the Special Rapporteur on internally displaced persons in 2007 as part of constructive engagement with the international community; is open to fair and constructive international scrutiny as demonstrated by engagement with special procedures; rejects imposition of external structures that could |

| State | Human Rights Council | UPR | Special procedures | Countries of concern | Thematic issues | Pledges/elections | Other |
|------------------|----------------------|-----|---|--|---|-------------------|--|
| | | | | | | | undermine domestic institutions; the Council should aim at enhancing capacity of those States that seek assistance; Commission of Inquiry has achieved a 'fair degree of progress'; currently engaged in discussion with United Nations Development Programme on future cooperation between Sri Lanka and the UN; is working actively to implement recommendations on children in armed conflict, including in relation to rehabilitation and prevention; displacement is a major issue, but a large number of displaced persons have been resettled; new human rights bill is in process, which includes economic, social, cultural rights as well as civil and political rights. |
| The Sudan | | | Has cooperated fully with the Council and the Special Rapporteur on | Strongly condemned Israeli actions in the OPT and called on the Council to address | The Council has a significant role to play in addressing defamations of | | Negotiations on the Sudan have been unsuccessful despite Government's efforts; recently signed status of |

| State | Human Rights Council | UPR | Special procedures | Countries of concern | Thematic issues | Pledges/elections | Other |
|-------|----------------------|-----|---|---|-----------------|-------------------|---|
| | | | the Sudan and the Experts Group on Darfur; will continue to cooperate with these mechanisms; the Special Rapporteur on the Sudan is currently visiting the country. | the situation and put an end to the killing of civilians. | religion. | | forces agreement with African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID); preparations underway for census in April; infrastructural development projects in Darfur; revision of national laws; call for follow-up on 'kidnapping' by French NGO Zoe's Ark. |

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The Council Monitor forms part of the Human Rights Monitor Series produced by ISHR. It provides you with information about all the key developments at the Human Rights Council, including Daily Updates during the session of the Council, an Overview of the session, briefings and updates on the major issues of concern in the transition from the Commission on Human Rights to the Council and other key reports. It is currently an online publication that can be found at www.ishr.ch

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