

PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA TO THE UN, GENEVA

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

19TH SESSION (27 Feb-23 Mar 2012)

General Segment

(1 Mar 2012)

Statement by India

Madam President,

Let me begin by expressing our appreciation to you, for the able manner in which you have been conducting deliberations of the Council. We commend other members of the Bureau for the effective discharge of their responsibilities. We take positive note of the commitment of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as her Office, in protection and promotion of human rights.

2. As a founder member of the United Nations, India has played an active role in the human rights machinery of the UN, dating back to the adoption of the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* in 1948. We have a long tradition of commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights. Our democratic polity, together with an independent and impartial judiciary, free and independent press, a vibrant civil society and a powerful and independent National Human Rights Commission, provides the basis for nurturing a culture of respect for, and promotion and protection of, human rights. Indeed, it has been a privilege for us to come back to the Council as a member after the mandatory one year break, (*from June 2010 to June 2011*) having served as a member of the Council since its inception. Our approach in the Council has been guided by the firm belief that promotion and protection of human rights can be best pursued through dialogue and co-operation.

Madam President,

3. The strength of the Council lies in its adherence to the principles of objectivity, transparency, non-selectivity, non-politicization and non-confrontation. We need to ensure inclusiveness and emphasize on dialogue and cooperation while urgent human rights situations are addressed. The Council must be guided by

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prudence rather than strategic expediency, safeguarding the delicate balance in the Institutional building package. To this end, India is concerned that the recent trend and spate of country specific resolutions may well end up weakening the constructive dialogue and cooperative approach which has prevailed so far in Human Rights Council. Therefore, the promise shown by the Council since its inception as the premiere organ of the United Nations dealing with Human rights must be preserved.

4. We believe that the Universal Periodic Review enjoys a broad support since it avoids selectivity and provides for the human rights record of all UN member states to be subject to peer review. The enthusiastic participation by Member States in the UPR process in the first cycle underscores the success of this important mechanism.

5. While we rejoice in our successes, the Council must pay due attention to the urgent need to rationalize and prioritize our work to make the most efficient use of our limited resources. The near-permanent nature of the functioning of the Council, besides stretching the limited human resources of most developing country delegations including mine, imposes ever-increasing obligations with little time, energy and resources for implementation and monitoring. Serious thought should be given to streamline the number of resolutions tabled in each session; to avoid duplication and overlap by rationalizing the work of the Council and the mandates of Special Procedures without in any way undermining our commitment to human rights; and make the dialogue between the Council and member states genuinely interactive.

6. In conclusion, we take this opportunity to assure you that India remains committed to make the Human Rights Council a strong, effective and efficient body capable of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms for all in a transparent, cooperative and non-selective manner.

Thank you, Madam President.