

PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA TO THE UN, GENEVA

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

16TH SESSION (28 Feb-25 Mar 2011)

General Segment

(02 March 2011)

Statement by India

Mr. President, High Commissioner for Human Rights, Excellencies,

We are meeting against the backdrop of extraordinary and momentous events unfolding around us, in which people are asserting their democratic aspirations held back for decades. While some of the reasons for them could be attributed to local socio-political structures, many others have to do with geopolitics. Notwithstanding the complex interplay of these factors, it is clear that these developments could pose challenges for multilateralism, both in testing the limits of some of the current doctrines and in trying to break fresh ground. We believe that this holds true as much for the Human Rights Council, as for a body like the UN Security Council or the General Assembly. We also believe that while we should strive to press forward in the course of addressing such challenges, we need to do so with due care.

Mr. President,

2. The Council's swift reaction to the deteriorating situation of human rights in Libya, the consensus that the Council's decision enjoys, and the content of the

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Council's decision have demonstrated the Council's ability to address serious and urgent situations in a commensurate manner. We commend and support this initiative. Indeed, we would like to echo the High Commissioner's emphasis on continued vigilance, on the consolidation of the gains made through rebuilding institutions of governance, and on our collective responsibility to extend support in both words and deeds. At the same time, we would like to underline the continued need for stress on co-operation and dialogue - something that has been a distinguishing feature of the Council over its predecessor, and something that remains vital to the Council's effectiveness and hence credibility.

Mr. President,

3. As the Council nears the end of its fifth cycle, the formal task of the conclusion of the review of its work and functioning is also drawing near. In this regard, we welcome the outcome document adopted by the Council's Working Group. This document would serve to further enhance the Council's functioning while recognizing the primacy of national efforts in the realization of human rights. We believe that the deliberations during this review, even though they could not garner consensus on some thought-provoking ideas, have provided us a stimulating residue that would remain with us and should goad us into exploring more as we go along. We would like to express our deep appreciation to you, Mr. President, for the able manner in which you have led and guided the review process.

Mr. President,

4. In conclusion, we take this opportunity to assure you of India's continued, active and constructive participation in the Council. As a founder-member of the United Nations, and as the world's largest and fastest-growing free-market

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democracy, we remain firmly wedded to the fundamental idea of expanding liberal space for human growth and empowerment. It is in this spirit that we have served on the Council in the past, and have now presented our candidature for the Human Rights Council for the term 2011-'14. 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, while adhering to the principles of objectivity, transparency, non-selectivity, non-politicization and non-confrontation. We consider the Universal Periodic Review to be a good mechanism that enhances our commitment to making a genuine difference to the situation of human rights on the ground. We also value and remain supportive of the importance of the Special Procedures that constitute a key mechanism of the Council. In this context, we are happy to announce that India has, in its voluntary pledges and commitments for its candidature for the Council term 2011-'14, committed itself to consider extending a standing invitation to Special Procedures.

Thank you, Mr. President.
