

21st session of the Human Rights Council

Adoption of Outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of India

(20 September 2012)

Opening Statement by Ambassador/ Permanent Representative of India

Madam/Mr. President,

It is a privilege for me to lead the Indian delegation on the occasion of the adoption of the outcome of our second Universal Periodic Review. Our deliberations today will mark the culmination of a productive process from which we have benefitted tremendously. We have had an opportunity to understand how our efforts for the realization of human rights for our own people are viewed by member-states. It is a matter of great satisfaction that there was positive recognition of our efforts and that many of the initiatives launched by India were viewed as examples of best practices.

The interactive dialogue for the UPR of India was held on 24 May 2012. Our delegation was led by the Attorney General of India and other experts from various ministries of the Central Government who have domain expertise in various aspects of human rights. The interactive dialogue was rich and productive. It witnessed the participation of a large number of members and observers. It may be recalled that we made nearly 25 detailed interventions to respond to queries and comments from the floor.

A number of recommendations were made by delegations during the interactive dialogue. These were recorded in the report of the Working Group. We have carefully examined these recommendations in consultation with the concerned ministries and departments. We have submitted our response to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights which has circulated it and made it available in the form of an official document.

India regards the Universal Periodic Review as a continuous process, not a one-time exercise. We have commenced the second phase of the UPR cycle. During this phase, we will pursue the implementation of the

recommendations that we have accepted here. However, our commitments are not limited to these recommendations.

India accepts all positive suggestions and constructive criticism in the right spirit. We see this process as one of the constructive engagement. The promotion of human rights is a continuing endeavor to improve the quality of life of our people.

The fundamental rights enshrined in our Constitution and the various laws enacted by our Parliament form the bedrock of human rights in India. Over the decades, these human rights have been strengthened through judicial pronouncements and government policies that seek to further empower the people.

A range of administrative and legislative measures have been taken to seek improvement in all aspects of human life. Our vibrant democratic polity requires us to continuously pursue higher norms and standards be it in the area of human rights or social and economic development.

It is equally important to have in place an effective institutional framework to protect the human rights guaranteed by law to our people. In India, our democratic polity with an independent and impartial judiciary, free and independent press, a vibrant civil society and an independent National Human Rights Commission, provide the requisite framework for the promotion and protection of human rights.

While the UPR is primarily an inter-governmental process, it has been designed to facilitate effective participation of non-governmental organizations and national institutions. We also look forward to listening to their views today.

Thank you.