



**PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**  
**MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**(Translation)**

**Statement by Ms. ZHANG Dan, Counsellor of the Chinese Mission to  
the United Nations, at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Committee of the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the  
General Assembly on the Report of the Human Rights Council (Item 68)**

**November 1, 2006**

Mr. Chairman,

At this moment last year, the General Assembly was engaged in intense negotiations on the specifics of establishing the Human Rights Council. A year later, the Council has already held two regular sessions and two special sessions, where a series of procedural and substantive issues have been discussed. So far, our feeling toward the work of the Human Rights Council is mixed.

On the one hand, the Human Rights Council has achieved some positive results. The working groups on assessment of special mechanisms and on universal periodic review mechanism have been set up as is required by the resolution of the GA and have already started informal negotiations. Two special sessions have been held as a rapid response to gross and systematic violations of human rights. Interactive dialogue has been carried out with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and various special procedures. Some other traditional human rights items have been discussed, which led to the adoption of relevant resolutions. It is gratifying that, during the first session, particularly at the high level segment, all representatives have highlighted the historic opportunity brought about by the establishment of the Human Rights Council for the international community to use new

ideas and new approaches in addressing human rights issues, and expressed their willingness to carry out the work of the Council through dialogue and cooperation. In effect, the first session was held in a harmonious and friendly atmosphere conducive to dialogue.

On the other hand, the second session of the Council has given rise to disappointment and concern on our part. According to the resolution of the GA, during the first year of its work, the Council should focus on developing its working methods, particularly the setting of the modality of universal periodic review and the assessment of the various mechanisms under the former Commission on Human Rights. However, 47 draft resolutions irrelevant to these topics were submitted to the second session, and could not be considered within the scheduled time-frame. Moreover, the dialogue with special procedures was shrouded in an increasingly confrontational atmosphere, particularly when country-specific human rights issues were raised again, which gave rise to more discordance, risking a return of politicization and selectivity in the human rights field.

Mr. Chairman,

GA resolution 60/251 clearly stated that the work of the Human Rights Council must be guided by cooperation and dialogue and ensure that all human rights are treated according to the principle of universality, impartiality and non-selectivity. This is both the main criteria for the credibility and efficiency of the Council and the important guideline for our work. The key to the success of the reform of the human rights mechanism is whether there will be a thorough transformation of not only the mechanism, but also the concept. Otherwise, it will only be “old wine in a new bottle”. Concerning the future work of the Council, we would like to make the following suggestions:

1. The spirit of the GA resolution should be strictly adhered to. All sides should show political will for dialogue and cooperation, respect each other's historical and cultural backgrounds, engage more in self-criticism instead of always criticizing others, put a firm end to malicious attacks and the practice of submitting country-specific resolutions, and always remain vigilant against returning to the old path of political confrontation which characterized the work of the Commission on Human Rights.

2. The Council is currently in the critical stage of rule setting and institution building. It is necessary to focus on the discussion of procedural matters. In consultations on specific issues, efforts should be made to create and maintain an atmosphere of mutual trust and cooperation, negotiate on an equal footing and accommodate the concerns of all sides, so as to create conditions for an eventual consensus.

3. In her reports to the two regular sessions of the Human Rights Council, the High Commissioner for Human Rights has referred to the right to development and eradication of poverty as the priority tasks in the current period. We hope to see these priorities really implemented through the programmes of the OHCHR. The future agenda and resource allocation of the Council should also give due reflection to these priorities.

4. The relationship between the Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of the GA should be arranged properly. The General Committee of the GA already made a provisional decision on the consideration of the "Report of the Human Rights Council". China still believes that as the main committee of the General Assembly responsible for the consideration of human rights issues, the Third Committee is the appropriate forum to consider the annual report of the Human Rights Council. In the meantime, the Third Committee, in arranging its work and agenda items, should avoid duplication with the Human Rights Council.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.