



**Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina  
to the United Nations  
at Geneva**

*Check against delivery*

**STATEMENT BY**

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**FOURTH SESSION OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**GENEVA, 12 – 30 MARCH 2007**

**High Level Segment, March 13<sup>th</sup> 2007**

Mr. President,  
Excellences,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great honour to address you today on the United Nations Human Rights Council fourth session.

First of all I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for all your efforts made during the first Council's year and wish you success in finalizing and completing the complex and hard work of institutional building.

I would like also to emphasize that my delegation fully aligns itself with the statement given yesterday on the High Level Segment by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. President,

With the adoption of the resolution 60/251, international community paid due respect to the fact that human rights form one of fundamental pillars of the UN system, together with security and development. The reached compromise represents a genuine effort to enhance the credibility and effectiveness of the multilateral human rights system.

We understand that the work of Human Rights Council, as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, should be viewed as an improvement over the Commission on Human Rights. Therefore, the Resolution contains elements that are helping us to create credible and effective UN human rights system as such. Today, on the fourth session of the Human Rights Council, we are again recognizing the responsibility of all of us for the functioning of the body and for providing the credibility of its work.

During the first year of the Council, the decisions that have been taken during these sessions, provided appropriate elements for the continuation of the work, as well as for the protection of the credibility of the Council, addressing the situations on the ground and enhancing the protection of people in need. With this regard I would like to stress the fact that collective achievement of the necessary compromise is one of the most important elements in the work of the Council, which on the same time will secure the principles of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity.

We are aware the Council has set the goal for an ambitious program of work for its first year that is still not completed. I hope that all decisions, which have to be made by the Human Rights Council members, in order to finalize the institutional building and to make the Council functional, will be made in a consensual and constructive manner. There is no doubt that members are making great efforts in this process, with the aim of developing a strong and effective Human Rights Council, which will be able to fulfill its mandate in a responsible and effective way, in very close future.

I very much appreciate all the efforts made by working group facilitators in order to provide us with the basis, ideas and visions for further deliberation and debates in a way as to find compromise solution. I wish them all success in their future work. I hope that all decisions, which have to be made by the Human Rights Council members in order to finalize the institutional building and to make the Council functional, will be made in a consensual and constructive manner.

It is important to mention the fact that other, non-member states, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions should be essential participants, actively involved in institutional Human Rights Council building process.

Mr. President,

With regard to that issue, I expect that the Council will be able to finalize soon, the consideration on establishing and implementing a new system of UPR, as credible and effective mechanism, which will allow us to improve the situation of those, most in need of protection, and, at the same time, to assist all states in their efforts to fully implement their human rights obligations in cooperative manner, and based on interactive dialogue.

Bosnia and Herzegovina strongly supports the special procedures mechanism. We welcome active participation of the Special Procedures mandate holders in Human Rights Council sessions, during the first year, expecting that the ongoing review would focus on strengthening the system, while improving the ability of mandate-holders to carry out their mandate effectively.

I would like to reiterate that Bosnia and Herzegovina fully co-operates with the special procedures, on each and every issue within mandates, in a spirit of an open and constructive dialogue, and responds favorably and rapidly, to requests for visits by Special Rapporteurs. Last year Bosnia and Herzegovina extended the invitations to the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Human Rights Defenders and Special Rapporteur on Education, to visit Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we are looking forward to their visits during 2007.

Mr. President,

In the context of the development of international human rights instruments, Bosnia and Herzegovina was among the first countries to sign the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances and particularly supported last year's adoption of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a country which, unfortunately, had grave war experience, highly appreciates the work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and will continue to lend its support to them in fulfilling its mandate, as well as to continue its efforts to strengthen the role of civil society in the promotion and protection of human rights at all levels.

I would like to underline that in accordance with norm setting and legislation on human rights and their institutionalization BiH has ratified all major human rights

conventions. The authorities of the country work on the improvement of the implementation of these instruments. In the analytical – reporting sphere related to human rights we have fulfilled numerous important international obligations, especially those that are connected with the UN human rights monitoring system obligations.

We have achieved significant progress in establishing more effective governance and basic legislative framework, especially in the process of harmonizing laws with *acquis communautaire*, in strengthening the State institutions capacities, with the aim to establish sustainable system, particularly in the field of the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We are making further necessary steps to improve the functioning of the judicial system and to remove rapidly the obstacles to the efficient operation of the judiciary. The War Crimes Chamber at the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina was vested with competence to deal with war crimes cases transferred to it from the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia as well as the State Investigation and Protection Agency within the Ministry of Security to enhance the co-operation of the police with war crimes prosecutors.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has made progress, particularly regarding the modification of the necessary legislative framework for protection of women. It prevents any discrimination based on gender, which has been additionally strengthened by the Law on Gender Equality in the country. With regard to that Law, the Agency was established with its broad defined competences.

As regards children's rights, the authorities of the country are generally committed to rights and welfare of children. The Action Plan for Children for the period 2002 – 2010 has been made by the competent authorities and under the auspices of UNICEF. The Council for Children has been established in order to undertake implementation of the Action Plan with the aim of realization and implementation of the principles and provisions of the Convention.

Mr. President,

Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to implement the National Plan of Action for Fight against Human Trafficking and Illegal Migrations. Combating human trafficking remains one of the high priorities for our authorities. Bosnia and Herzegovina is firmly committed to the regulation of legal status of minorities in the country. The competent authorities have made further efforts to strengthen country's legislation and in that line, adopted the Law on the Protection of the Rights of National Minority Members.

We made great efforts in resolving the problems of refugees and internally displaced persons in the country, particularly the activities that are undertaken in close cooperation with the UNHCR's Office in BiH on reducing the level of displacement. We are undertaking great efforts on regional level to implement conclusions and tasks of Sarajevo Declaration. Return of refugees and displaced persons is closely connected with the implementation of the Law on real property law. In that regard, the property repossession process in BiH is practically completed.

BiH continues to be an active participant in various regional cooperation initiatives. Regional cooperation and good neighborly relations are an essential part of Bosnia and Herzegovina's path towards the EU.

Mr. President,

Allow me, finally, to express my sincere hope that, through the work of the Council, we will all be able to promote the effective coordination and the mainstreaming of human rights within the United Nations System, bearing in mind our responsibilities in conformity with the purposes and principles, contained in the UN Charter, as well as principles based on multilateralism and mutual understanding.

I thank you for your attention.