



# General Assembly

Sixty-sixth session

**49<sup>th</sup>** plenary meeting

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Official Records

*President:* Mr. Al-Nasser ..... (Qatar)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Thomson (Fiji) took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

## Agenda item 64

### Report of the Human Rights Council

#### Report of the Human Rights Council (A/66/53 and A/66/53/Add.1)

**The Acting President:** In connection with this item, I would like to recall that the General Assembly, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 16 September 2011, decided to consider agenda item 64 in plenary meeting and in the Third Committee on the understanding that, inter alia, the Assembly, in plenary meeting, would consider the annual report of the Human Rights Council on its activities for the year.

### Statement by the President

**The Acting President:** I shall now make a statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Nassir Al-Nasser.

“Alongside peace and security and development, human rights constitutes the third core agenda of the United Nations. In that context, consideration of the report of the Council by the Assembly is of special significance.

“As a relatively young entity of the United Nations system in its present form, the Human Rights Council has grown and developed

considerably in responding to the need to ensure all human rights for all around the world. It has acted quickly and responded to many situations, and it has also promoted dialogue and cooperation among States on various human rights issues. In particular, the consensual approach that prevailed throughout the review of the Council’s methods of work and functions demonstrated the commitment of the membership to achieving the shared objective of strengthening the human rights system.

“The outcome that resulted from these negotiations, as well as the coordinated approach between Geneva and New York during the review, is welcomed. I believe firmly that this practice of coordination and consultation between the Council and the Assembly should be built upon and enhanced.

“Allow me in that regard to commend the work carried out by Ambassador Sihasak Phuanketkeow of Thailand, whose leadership as Council President during the review, especially in steering the process to a successful conclusion in Geneva and in coordinating efforts with the General Assembly, is worthy of our special appreciation.

“Following the conclusion of the review, it is expected that the Human Rights Council is now better equipped to face the many human rights challenges of today’s world. In its five years of existence, the foremost achievement of the

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Council has been the successful completion of the first cycle of the universal periodic review of the States Members of the United Nations, which were reviewed on the basis of equal treatment on their human rights records and performance. The spirit of cooperation and, above all, the commitments displayed by the membership to improving their human rights records is to be commended. I look forward to the second cycle of reviews and to the implementation of the commitments made.

"I also note with appreciation that the Human Rights Council's deliberations, particularly in recent years, on collective and solidarity rights such as the right to development, the right to food, the right to safe drinking water and sanitation, environmental rights and even the right of peoples to peace, have very effectively engaged the international community's expectations in connection with these emerging rights.

"Also worthy of special mention are the many panel discussions held on a broad range of human rights issues, which have either drawn international attention to new and emerging issues or broadened international understanding of others. The active participation of United Nations entities and other international and regional organizations in these panel discussions — and more generally in the work of the Council — has also contributed to human rights mainstreaming in the work of the United Nations as a whole.

"I would also like to underscore the significant work carried out by the various special procedure mechanisms of the Council — the eyes and ears of the human rights system. They have a key role to play not only in human rights protection but also in broadening and advancing the understanding of key human rights abuses.

"As members know, the theme of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly is mediation, and I hope that the Human Rights Council will continue to be instrumental in fostering dialogue among the many cultures and civilizations, and be guided by the needed spirit of cooperation and the inherent value of mediation. In view of the importance of the

Council's work to the overall objectives of the General Assembly, I myself look forward to addressing the March session of the Council next year."

With the General Assembly's full support for the work of the Human Rights Council and for the able leadership of the current President, Her Excellency Ms. Laura Dupuy Lasserre, I now have the pleasure to invite her to introduce the report of the Human Rights Council.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/281 of 17 June 2011, I now give the floor to Her Excellency Laura Dupuy Lasserre, President of the Human Rights Council.

**Ms. Lasserre** (Uruguay), President of the Human Rights Council (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a great honour to present today to the Assembly the annual report of the Human Rights Council (A/66/53 and A/66/53/Add.1). Allow me also to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser on his election and to sincerely wish him a successful tenure.

The year 2011 marks the fifth year since the establishment of the Human Rights Council. In accordance with resolution 60/251, the Council undertook a review process whose outcome was adopted by its members last March and by the General Assembly last June.

The review process has proved to be a valuable opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the Council and of its working methods. Even though the outcome document does not include specific language on how the Council could enhance its effectiveness in responding to urgent human rights situations, the review process has created a momentum for rising above group politics and responding to such situations on the ground in a timely and constructive manner.

During the past year, the Council has held four special sessions in relation to the situations in Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and, on two occasions, the Syrian Arab Republic, and has established commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions in order to ascertain facts and to make recommendations in connection with human rights violations.

Furthermore, at its most recent session, the Council held an interactive dialogue with the High Commissioner on specific country situations, including on Yemen and Belarus, on which the Council will

follow up. We held interactive dialogues promoted by concerned States, including Somalia, and adopted a number of technical cooperation resolutions, also at the request of concerned States such as Tunisia and Cambodia, as well as the Sudan and South Sudan. That review process generated a series of follow-up tasks for the Council. In my capacity as President and in fulfilment of the mandate with which I was entrusted by the Council, I established a task force to devise ways of improving Secretariat services, accessibility to the work of the Council for persons with disabilities, and the viability of using information technology. That team will report back and present specific recommendations to the Council during its nineteenth regular session.

I have also begun consultations on the first annual high-level panel established to incorporate human rights in the general activities of the United Nations system, to be held on 28 February 2012, during the Council's March session. The Council will shortly invite the heads of United Nations agencies to participate in that event as panellists alongside the Secretary-General, who, we hope, will deliver the opening statement. Under the broad focus of development and cooperation in the field of human rights, that panel will provide a favourable opportunity to assess the progress, achievements and challenges in mainstreaming human rights within the United Nations system in accordance with the mandate given to the Council by the General Assembly, as well as in promoting human rights mainstreaming at the national level.

Another achievement of the review process was the opening of new spaces for the participation in the Council of accredited national human rights institutions, in compliance with the Paris Principles. Such institutions are key actors for improving the situation on the ground, especially because of their potential to play a role in the follow-up recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), as well as of the special procedures. From now on, their contributions to the UPR process will be reflected in a separate part of the summary of stakeholders' information provided by my Office, and they will be able to take the floor right after the State under review at the adoption of the UPR regarding that State in Council plenary meetings. National institutions will also be able to take the floor following the State concerned after the presentation of country mission

reports by special procedures. We began to implement this new procedure last September. The review has also reinforced the quality of the selection process for holders of special procedures mandates.

The annual report of the Council and its addendum, which I am presenting to the Assembly today, contain the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Council at its sixteenth and seventeenth regular sessions and at its fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth special sessions, which took place under the presidency of my predecessor, Ambassador Sihasak Phuanketkeow, Permanent Representative of Thailand, and those adopted at the seventeenth special session and the eighteenth regular session under my presidency, which began on 20 June.

During its past three regular sessions, among other debates, the Council has held a total of 14 panel discussions designed to share the visions of a broad range of actors, including United Nations experts on human rights and representatives from civil society, academia, Governments and international and regional organizations. The themes of those panels included, *inter alia*, the rights of victims of terrorism; aspects of human rights in the context of measures adopted in cases of hostage-taking by terrorists; the rights of children who work or live on the street; violence against women; the health rights of older persons; the role of international cooperation in improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities; the languages and cultures of indigenous peoples; best practices in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance; the complete fulfilment of the human rights of people of African descent; the strengthening of international initiatives aimed at promoting a worldwide dialogue that will encourage a culture of tolerance and peace at every level, based on respect for human rights and the diversity of religions and beliefs; the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests; and the realization of the right to development. As should be evident, those themes suggest the Council's concern with identifying specific forms of protection and challenges in promoting the rights of people who belong to a diverse range of social groups.

The Council now has a total of 44 special procedures under way, including both country and thematic mandates. The newly created mandates include the Special Rapporteur on the situation of

human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the independent expert on the situation of human rights in Côte d'Ivoire, the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, the independent expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees on non-recurrence.

The Council has also undertaken standard-setting activities through its working groups. The United Nations declaration on human rights education and training and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child providing for a communications procedure have been submitted to the General Assembly for adoption.

I am pleased to report that on 17 October, the Working Group on the UPR concluded the last session of its inaugural work cycle. Although that cycle will formally end at the forthcoming regular session of the Council in March 2012, with the adoption of the outcome documents of the last seventeen States examined, it is important to emphasize that the human rights situations of all 193 United Nations States Members have been considered by the Working Group and by the Council, with most of the States under review represented by very high-level ministers. That is a milestone in United Nations history.

The second cycle of the UPR, which begins on 21 May 2012, will be critical to the success of this mechanism. It will provide an opportunity for States and other stakeholders to take stock of developments since the previous review, to examine the progress in the implementation of recommendations, and to reassess the human rights situation in general. The transition from a four-year to a four and a half-year cycle means that the Working Group will review fourteen countries, instead of sixteen, at each session. The time available for each review will therefore increase from three hours to three and a half. Some of those adjustments require a few additional human and financial resources in terms of conference services. Most importantly, the General Assembly should keep in mind that, since the UPR's creation in 2008, that successful and valued mechanism has not received adequate funding from the regular budget, in particular with regard to the timely and appropriate translation of documents.

Before concluding, I would like to touch briefly upon the significant challenges facing the Human Rights Council in terms of the resources it needs to continue its activities. As I mentioned earlier, the past year has witnessed renewed attention by the Council to urgent human rights situations, leading to an increase in the number of resolutions and decisions adopted, which entails significant financial repercussions. While the total cost of resources required by Human Rights Council mandates issued in 2010 was close to \$5 million, this year the total rose to more than \$24 million. The main reason for that increase stems from the establishment of four independent commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions, as well as the creation of new special procedures mandates. Those amounts have a direct impact on conference service requirements; the Geneva conference capacity is underfunded and has already reached its limit, as a result of which a growing number of reports are not made available in all the official languages before being considered. As was decided in the resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on the review of its work and functioning, the General Assembly will during this session consider the issue of making additional funds available quickly in order to implement urgent new mandates adopted by the Council at each session.

I would therefore like to ask for cooperation and support when the Fifth Committee addresses this important issue by giving positive consideration to the options that may be presented in the Secretary-General's report, particularly as regards the funding of unforeseen or extraordinary expenditures arising from the Council's resolutions and decisions. To that end, the unexpected emergency expenditures mechanism could be adjusted to cover the funding of urgent mandates with significant financial implications, such as fact-finding missions and independent international commissions of inquiry.

Pursuant to Assembly resolution 65/281, on the review of the work and functioning of the Council, I will, as an interim measure, hold the presidency until the end of 2012 and will have the honour to return to the Assembly next year in order to report on the Council's activities during the period of my presidency. In conclusion, I reiterate my commitment, not only to follow up on the outcome of the review, but to oversee generally the efficient functioning of the Council

during my tenure. I am grateful for the Council's attention and support.

**Mr. Sefue** (United Republic of Tanzania): The African Group is grateful to the President of the Human Rights Council and her entire staff for their engagement and efforts on behalf of the promotion and protection of human rights in the world. The Group is very much aware of how challenging her task is, for every country in the world has its own issues and challenges requiring attention. It is for this reason that the African Group would like to express its support for her and her team and to reaffirm its commitment to the work of the Human Rights Council. The African Group would also like to emphasize that continued engagement on this subject with all stakeholders is key to arriving at an understanding of the issues on which Member States diverge and to advancing those that they agree on.

The African Group welcomes the opportunity to participate in this discussion. The Group has taken note of the efforts of the President of the Council to lead the Council towards a successful outcome of the review process. In particular, we appreciate the open format for the second session of the Working Group, allowing for the effective participation of members, observers and other stakeholders.

The African Group believes that the Human Rights Council, as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, plays a crucial role in protecting and mainstreaming human rights worldwide. Last year, within its mandate, the General Assembly carried out negotiations on the review of the Council with a view to strengthening the Council's functions and methods of work. The African Group welcomes the consensus approach and outcome that resulted from those negotiations, as well as the coordinated approach between Geneva and New York during the review process. That practice should be strengthened, and the African Group is confident that we will all benefit from the new practice of holding an interactive dialogue between the Third Committee and the President of the Human Rights Council.

The African Group reaffirms its support for the General Assembly decision to allocate the agenda item on the report of the Human Rights Council both to the Assembly plenary and to the Third Committee. We are pleased that the President of the Human Rights Council is now able to present the report in his or her capacity

as President to the plenary meetings of the General Assembly and the Third Committee. Those bodies are now able to consider and act on all recommendations of the Council to the Assembly, including those that deal with the development of international law in the field of human rights.

The Group looks forward to reinforcing the Council's efforts to combat all forms of discrimination around the world on the grounds of race, sex, language or religion, particularly discrimination against women, and deal with issues regarding national, ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities and migrants and others who face varying degrees of social marginalization and discrimination. Our endeavour in that regard should be to avoid the imposition of controversial notions that have no basis in international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and that do not take into account the differing social, cultural and value systems in different societies.

Finally, the African Group encourages the Human Rights Council to continue and intensify its collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in line with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

**The Acting President:** I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

**Mr. Mayr-Harting** (European Union): I would first like to express our satisfaction at the great interest this important subject is generating among the membership of the United Nations, and, more specifically, among major groups in the General Assembly.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Iceland, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia, as well as Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union thanks the President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Laura Dupuy Lasserre, for presenting the Human Rights Council's sixth annual report (A/66/53 and A/66/53/Add.1) to the General Assembly. We also appreciated this morning's opportunity to hold an interactive dialogue with the Council's President.

From the outset, the European Union has been a strong supporter of the Human Rights Council as the main body of the United Nations human rights machinery. The Union attaches great importance to the credibility and effectiveness of the Council, and will continue to make every effort to ensure that it is able to fulfil its mandate responsibly and effectively and that it contributes to tangible improvements of the human rights situation on the ground. Even now that the review process is over, the European Union believes that we must use every occasion to enable the Council to fulfil the commitments undertaken and to live up to the expectations that the world at large has of it. The Human Rights Council has the responsibility to address situations of violations of human rights, including gross and systematic violations that require urgent action on the part of the international community.

In that regard, the European Union is very pleased to note that the Council has played a leading role in taking up recent events in the Middle East and elsewhere. In particular, the action taken by the Council to address urgent human rights situations in Cote d'Ivoire, Libya, Syria, Belarus — a neighbour of the European Union — and Yemen is exemplary and shows that it is functioning as it is intended to. The European Union hopes that the Council will continue to follow such developments and take action where necessary.

Serving as a member of the Council entails important responsibilities. Resolution 60/251 provides that members elected to the Council shall uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights. As the EU has regularly underlined, most recently in the context of the review process of the Human Rights Council, that principle should guide both the election of members to the Council and their conduct during their tenure. In that respect, it is significant to recall that in February, the special session on the human rights situation in Libya not only expressed strong concern about the human rights situation in that country, but also recommended the suspension of Libya's membership in the Human Rights Council. The General Assembly did the same on 1 March in an unprecedented move. Against that emblematic case, we encourage all to pay more attention to the human rights records and commitments of States when electing members to the Human Rights Council, as well as throughout their membership.

The European Union also attaches the greatest importance to special procedures, the eyes and ears of the Council. Given the deteriorating situation in Iran, we welcome the establishment, during the period covered by the report, of a new mandate on that country and the extension of the mandates of the Special Rapporteurs on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Myanmar and Cambodia. The Council also renewed the mandates of the independent experts on the situation of human rights in the Sudan, Somalia and Haiti. The Council committed to providing technical assistance and capacity-building to the Government of South Sudan to promote human rights, upon its request.

Thematic special procedures play an equally outstanding role, through their research, country visits and their valuable contribution to the better understanding of the content of specific human rights and their contribution to the enhancement and realization of human rights standards. Among the many thematic special procedures, let me highlight the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, a mandate established 25 years ago, as a follow-up to the 1981 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.

In order to allow special procedures to perform their role, it is crucial that mandate holders be able to carry out their assessments in an independent manner and that they draw the Council's attention to human rights issues and situations. The ability of mandate holders to undertake country visits and establish direct contact with the relevant governmental structures, as well as other national and regional stakeholders, especially civil society, is of crucial importance. All States members of the European Union have extended a standing invitation to the special procedures. The EU calls upon all United Nations members to do likewise and to actively cooperate with them.

Over the year, the Council has contributed to the further development and understanding of international norms and standards in the field of human rights. It has successfully achieved the adoption of the draft third optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and of the draft United Nations declaration on human rights education and training. We support action on those issues later this month in the Third Committee, and their adoption by the General Assembly before the end of the year.

The Council is also mandated to monitor the implementation of international human rights law and standards. Only through objective monitoring and reporting can the Council identify the needs of victims and possible areas for capacity-building and technical assistance to States. The strengthening of international cooperation and the development of capacity-building and activities in the area of technical measures remained a strong area for involvement in the Council, with important initiatives adopted in support of the efforts of the authorities of Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia, Guinea and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In situations that may give rise to grave violations of international human rights law or humanitarian law, the Council should also act in a timely and effective manner. The creation of commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions during the past year was therefore an important step in that regard. The European Union calls upon all States to fully cooperate with the missions in order to ensure that there is no impunity for such violations. I would also like to recall that, in the course of the review process of the Council, the European Union made a number of additional suggestions aimed at enhancing the Council's reaction to situations of concern. We still believe that there is scope to improve the Council's capacity to have an impact on the ground, particularly in responding to human rights violations in real time and in helping to prevent further abuses.

The Universal Periodic Review complements the special procedures and the other human rights tools and mechanisms that monitor and address human rights situations. We welcome the completion of the first cycle of the review and encourage the comprehensive and swift implementation of its recommendations, including by drawing on international assistance to that effect. The European Union also encourages all States to fully cooperate with all relevant stakeholders in the preparation for the review process by promoting consultations with national parliaments, national human rights institutions and civil society representatives. As the Universal Periodic Review process moves into its second cycle, the focus should henceforth be on implementation and follow-up, thus enhancing the credibility and impact of that mechanism of the Council.

The Human Rights Council also has an important role to play as a forum for dialogue and the exchange

of best practices and experiences on a wide range of thematic human rights issues, and thus the advancement of the human rights agenda. I would just like to highlight the following important developments.

First, the Council requested the High Commissioner for Human Rights to commission a study to document discriminatory laws and practices and acts of violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity, in all regions of the world, and decided to convene a panel discussion on the basis of the report. We look forward to that important event and expect to participate actively in the proceedings.

Secondly, the Council endorsed the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework and launched a follow-up mechanism to the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the Issue of Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and other Business Enterprises. We envisage close cooperation with the Working Group on Transnational Corporations, so as to contribute to the effective implementation of the Guiding Principles.

During the reporting period, the Council also continued to mainstream human rights into the overall United Nations system. Moreover, the European Union highly values the role of civil society organizations and national human rights institutions for their important contribution to the work of the Council. We look forward to continuing and further developing their cooperation with the Council.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the European Union's strong commitment to contributing to the work of the Human Rights Council, to further strengthening its role in helping to develop international human rights law, to systematically upholding and ensuring the implementation of existing international norms and standards, and to promoting the observance by all States of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

I wish to thank the Acting President for ensuring the good functioning of this meeting. We believe that the substance of the issue is so important that we decided to leave discussions on some open procedural questions for another day.

**Mr. Sugavanam (India):** My delegation would like to thank the President of the Human Rights

Council for her presentation of the reports of the Human Rights Council (A/65/53 and A/65/53/Add.1), under agenda item 64.

The Human Rights Council, established in 2006, has strengthened efforts to promote and protect human rights globally. We are encouraged by the broad consensus that the Council has been able to achieve in addressing human rights issues in a more constructive manner. The Council has been a considerable improvement over its predecessor, the Commission on Human Rights. We believe that this has been possible in large measure owing to the Council's non-selective and transparent approach to promoting and protecting all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

We welcome the successful completion of the review process, in which India actively participated. The review process has provided a road map for further streamlining the Council's work methods and functioning, as reflected in the outcome document (resolution 65/281, annex) adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. We must consciously ensure that the Council continues to function in a non-selective, non-politicized and transparent manner.

We consider the Universal Periodic Review to be a positive, universal, transparent mechanism in which all stakeholders directly or indirectly participate, and that fact strengthens our commitment to making a genuine improvement in the human rights situation on the ground.

We also acknowledge the important role played by treaty bodies in monitoring the implementation of treaty obligations by the State parties. The recommendations made and best practices identified by those bodies have strengthened domestic legal regimes and assisted Governments in capacity-building in the area of human rights.

We welcome the practice of presenting the report of the Human Rights Council directly to the General Assembly.

We must also ensure that the decisions of the General Assembly on the report of the Council, especially those with financial implications, can be considered quickly by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee, so as to minimize delays.

We reiterate our firm commitment to continue to engage constructively with all Member States in making the Human Rights Council a strong, effective and efficient body, capable of promoting and protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all.

**Ms. Rodríguez Camejo** (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Five years have passed since the Human Rights Council began its work, and we greatly appreciate its efforts.

The Council was established as a result of the urgent need to tackle the double standards, confrontation and political manipulation of its predecessor, the Commission on Human Rights. We must ensure that the Council does not repeat the harmful practices that ultimately discredited the former Commission. Cuba has very clearly stated that it rejects the imposition of such practices.

We are concerned by the Council's tendency to perpetuate the practice of selectivity and the application of double standards in its consideration of human rights situations, when its work should be guided instead by cooperation and respectful dialogue.

Cuba played a very active role in the establishment of the Human Rights Council and as a negotiator at each stage of the review process, which was conducted in Geneva and New York between March 2010 and June 2011, with a view to fine-tuning and consolidating the Council's work in its first five years of operations.

The outcome of the review process was favourable for developing countries. It was possible to retain the core elements of the Council's institution-building package and the provisions of resolution 60/251 establishing the Council.

The Universal Periodic Review is the only universal mechanism in place for the comprehensive analysis of the human rights situation in all countries, and it is what mainly distinguishes the Council from the former Commission. That mechanism has proven its importance as a foundation for international cooperation in the field of human rights on the basis of constructive dialogue and respect for the principles of universality, objectivity, impartiality and non-selectivity.

The Council has demonstrated its capacity to respond to emergencies that require the attention of the international community. It has frequently studied



Israel's grave violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people.

The convening of special sessions to address thematic issues represents a milestone in the work of the Council. The first of those, organized by Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, provided room for debate and suggestions on how to respond to the serious impact of the world food crisis on the exercise of the human right to food. Those initiatives demonstrate the Council's capacity to respond in emergency situations, which are neither confined within national borders nor derived from internal conflict or international disputes.

With regard to funding, double standards have unfortunately also seeped into the work of the Council. Western countries have no objections when the Council addresses issues in line with their strategic interests, including through country resolutions, commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions, in spite of the significant costs that are sometimes involved. However, they block the draft resolutions introduced by developing countries, citing budget constraints and arguing that such activities should be undertaken within existing resources. The international community expects us to respond collectively and effectively to all crises that are having an impact on humankind and, in particular, on the countries of the South.

When the world is facing serious challenges — which have been unpredictable in their scale — such as those arising from the profound economic, financial, energy, environmental, food and social crises affecting the planet, the right to international solidarity becomes an urgent demand, and the Council must uphold that right.

As long as an unjust and exclusive international economic and political order remains in place, the Council must continue to speak out for an international order that is democratic and equitable. While coercive unilateral measures are imposed and unrelenting blockades, like the one that Cuba has suffered from for over 50 years now, remain in place, the Council must reject such practices and demand that an end be put to them. We also reaffirm the need to ensure that the Council's special procedures uphold the principles of objectivity and impartiality and in general terms respect the code of conduct that was adopted during the institution-building phase of the Council.

Cuba has worked for the promotion and protection of all human rights in the Council, has submitted numerous resolutions in the area of economic, social and cultural rights with the aim of ensuring that those rights are placed on the same level as civil and political rights.

Cuba reiterates its desire to cooperate with the Council and with the human rights machinery of the United Nations system and its institutions providing universal application in a non-discriminatory manner. We confirm our desire to enter into dialogue with all States based on mutual respect, acceptance of sovereign equality and recognition of the right of all peoples to select their political system and institutions.

**Mr. Wenaweser** (Liechtenstein): I would like to thank the President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Dupuy Lasserre, for her comprehensive report to the General Assembly on the work of the Council (A/66/53 and A/66/53/Add.1). She has presented the report on a successful year for the Council, which has, moreover, undergone a thorough and comprehensive review both of its work and functioning and of its status in relation to the General Assembly. While ambitious ideas to improve the work of the Council did not culminate in agreement, several measures could be adopted to fine-tune its proceedings and institutional relationships.

Given the strong performance of the Council during the period covered in the report, we are convinced that the modest results of the review process reflect a general perception of the Council as a well-functioning institution and the respect and authority it has gained over the years through its work. However, that perception should not have prevented us from taking more decisive action, in particular in the areas of funding and the processing of the Council's recommendations.

The difficulties that the Council has had in funding its decisions within the framework of special sessions are now putting regular Council activities in jeopardy. We therefore hope that the Fifth Committee will grant the High Commissioner access to the unforeseen and extraordinary expenses mechanism to fund the implementation of Council mandates aimed at addressing human rights emergencies.

On the basis of the broad consultations during the review of the Council, which I had the honour to facilitate together with my distinguished colleague and

friend Ambassador Loulichki of Morocco, we expected the time to be ripe to send a consensual message of support to the Council from this body. Still, the review has resulted in the broadest possible support for the Council, short of consensus. The exceptional element to point out in that exercise is the constructive cooperation between Geneva and New York throughout the entire process. In an often sensitive political environment, the frequent exchanges and the commitment to close coordination between the Presidents of the Council and the General Assembly have set the stage for the smooth execution of our task. We see in that effort a model of close cooperation between Geneva and New York and encourage its continuation to the mutual benefit of both bodies.

The enhanced authority of the Council is a consequence of an increasingly comprehensive implementation of its mandate during the last year, in particular in the areas of urgent human rights crises, thematic human rights issues, standard setting and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Led by continued efforts on the part of the High Commissioner to raise awareness on human rights emergencies in a non-selective and fact-based manner, the Council reacted swiftly and adequately to address the situations in Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and Syria. Unfortunately, equally urgent action by the Council was not taken in the cases of Bahrain, Yemen and Sri Lanka, where such action would have been justified. We welcome the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran as an important step towards accountability and call for full cooperation with the mandate in that regard.

We particularly welcome the landmark decision of the Council to mandate a study into discrimination and human rights violations experienced by persons on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity. We sincerely hope that that report will be the basis for a more pragmatic and constructive dialogue on the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for those persons who find themselves in a particularly vulnerable position owing to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

In the field of standard-setting, we particularly welcome the consensual adoption of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Protocol fills an important gap in the treaty-based human rights protection and accountability framework. In addition, we welcome the endorsement by the

Council of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. They too will serve as an important guidance tool in an area where protection had previously been limited.

Finally, we commend the Council for the successful completion of the first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review. The UPR has quickly given rise to the most significant and comprehensive assessment of the global human rights landscape. It has brought a large number of recommendations to all States under review, on which it will be crucial to ensure follow-up. Meaningful follow-up can be assured only if we as States are also ready to engage on recommendations that we have previously rejected. On that basis, a qualified assessment of the progress made during the second cycle will be possible and also will testify to the usefulness of the UPR as an instrument for the promotion and protection of human rights.

We wish President Dupuy Lasserre a good start on this exercise next June. She will be the only Council President who will have the opportunity to present an annual report to the General Assembly twice. We already look forward to welcoming her back here next year.

**Mr. Hassan Ahmed** (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I would like to thank Ms. Laura Dupuy Lasserre, President of the Human Rights Council, for her detailed presentation to the General Assembly. We would like to congratulate her on her wise leadership of the Council and wish her every success in her task.

Five years ago, the Human Rights Council was established, which was an important milestone in the work of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies. The Council has to deal with human rights, with all countries on an equal footing, through what is known as the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, in which all countries without exception must participate. However, thanks to resolution 60/251, there is a mechanism of special procedures, which can be extremely helpful in eliminating politicization, partiality and selectivity. The Human Rights Council has further adopted resolutions 5/2 in 2007 and 11/11 in June 2009 on such special procedures.

I would like to confirm the Sudan's cooperation with the Human Rights Council. I am pleased to report that the Sudan has submitted, in Geneva, its first report under the Universal Periodic Review mechanism. Many people were involved in preparing the report,

including the Government, various organizations and civil society. In addition to describing the human rights situation, the report described the democratic transformation, the recent parliamentary and presidential elections in the Sudan and the signing of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, which has resulted in reduced violence and an improvement of the human rights situation in Darfur. The report also described ways in which the Sudan has complied with all of its peace obligations, as well as its acceptance of the outcome of the referendum on South Sudan.

In addition to those positive developments, the Sudan has also become party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol and has recently confirmed its readiness to comply with and implement the recommendations made to us in the Review.

My country welcomes the adoption by the Human Rights Council, at its most recent session in September, of resolution 18/16 under agenda item 10, which, in its paragraph 11, extended, with a special mandate, the term of the independent expert on the situation of human rights in the Sudan. The decision taken by the Human Rights Council has confirmed that there has been an improvement and positive developments in the human rights situation in the Sudan. We welcome the Council's decision on the mandate of the independent expert and will endeavour to establish an independent office on human rights in the Sudan. The legislature has already approved that request and the office will be established shortly.

Lastly, my country wishes for the necessary financial resources to be made available to the Council, in order for the Secretariat to carry out its work, in particular on priority issues involving human rights in the economic, social and cultural sectors. Those should be given consideration equal to that given to civil and political rights.

**Ms. AlGharabally** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): Today, the General Assembly is considering an important agenda item. I therefore I wish to thank the Human Rights Council for the report contained in document A/66/53, that summarizes the work of the international community to promote human rights and its continued efforts to strengthen and protect the fundamental principles of human rights.

My delegation is pleased to express its gratitude to the Member States of the General Assembly for their

confidence in electing Kuwait as a member of the Human Rights Council for the period 2011-2013 and affirming, through that membership, Kuwait's commitment to making its most sincere efforts towards the promotion and protection of the principles of human rights, while affirming the important role of the Human Rights Council in combating racism, intolerance and discrimination and appreciating the concrete efforts of Member States in this regard.

The advancement and progress of peoples and nations is measured by their commitment to, and respect for, human rights. The Charter of the United Nations urges the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and calls upon all of us to join our efforts to ensure the success of that endeavour. Nothing should prevent any individual — no matter how diverse human beings may be in terms of race, religion or belief — from enjoying the full spectrum of fundamental rights.

My delegation has studied with great interest the report under this item. I would like to affirm Kuwait's commitment to human rights standards. The Kuwaiti Constitution of 1962 confirms the rules, agreements and norms of human rights. My country has consecrated those rights, including the right to life and the right to freedom of opinion and expression. Article 7 of the Constitution affirms that freedom, justice and equality constitute the pillars of society and that cooperation and mutual understanding ensure close bonds among citizens. Article 29 of the Constitution provides for all persons to enjoy equal human dignity and equality before the law in terms of duties and rights, without discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, language or religion. Kuwait has also given multiple rights to women, who enjoy full legal personhood and full political rights. Women have also assumed many leadership positions in the State through direct election.

Also, women account for 8 per cent of the total number of members of the Kuwaiti Parliamentary Council. My country has also sought to provide welfare for children, based on its constitutional commitments and on the instruments and treaties to which it is party. Kuwait believes in the role of civil society organizations and freedom of opinion and of the press. It has promulgated a number of relevant laws including 3/2006 and 61/2007, which have organized the work of the media in all its forms. That has ensured an atmosphere of greater openness, transparency and

greater democracy. Article 31 of the Kuwaiti Constitution protects all human beings from torture, oppression and abuse. Such an atmosphere of freedom aims to create a healthy environment and promote the exchange of views, ideas and dialogue. It would also guarantee increased popular participation in decision-making in Kuwait, which would provide greater stability and prosperity, and thus promote the advancement of my country.

In affirming the established principles of Kuwaiti foreign policy — the promotion of international peace and security, the renunciation of violence and respect of human rights — we provide a high level of humanitarian assistance through governmental and non-governmental organizations to various people in order to promote human rights and human dignity.

On the other hand, Kuwait has increased its established voluntary contributions to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to support its efforts and mandated functions. In that regard, in discussing human rights and the need to strengthen respect for human rights, we must vigorously denounce the oppressive Israeli policies and practices that continue to violate the fundamental human rights of the defenceless Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

We also call upon the international community to assume its responsibility in order to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to comply with resolutions of international legitimacy and renounce its expansionist and aggressive policies; and to compel it to respect international humanitarian law and the principles of human rights.

Kuwait is fully convinced of the need to respect human rights and will spare no effort to defend them. It affirms its conviction through its participation in all international forums and United Nations organizations and governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with questions of human rights, since cooperation in that regard is the optimum means to advance peoples and nations.

**Ms. Hernando** (Philippines): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for this opportunity to speak on the report of the Human Rights Council (A/66/53 and Add.1). This agenda item is of particular importance to the Philippines as a founding and re-elected member of the Council. We thank the President of the Council, Ambassador Laura Dupuy

Lasserre, for presenting the Council's sixth annual report to the Assembly.

In 1948, the United Nations elaborated a common standard of achievement for all peoples of all nations, based on the core principles of universality, equality, fairness and non-discrimination. Crafted in a world ravaged by the horrors of war, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights articulates our highest aspirations for freedom from fear and want and our commitment to protecting the sanctity and dignity of every human life, regardless of race or creed.

More than 60 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, our quest to attain our highest aspirations continues. Peace and prosperity remain elusive. There are widening poverty gaps, food shortages, climate change, economic crises, armed conflicts, rising unemployment, popular unrest and the other pressing challenges confronting our world today. Many children, women and men still live in dire need of the fulfilment of their entitlement to a life of dignity, freedom and equal opportunity.

But despite the elusiveness of our highest goals and aspirations, we remain hopeful. The establishment of the Human Rights Council, aimed at strengthening the United Nations human rights machinery to ensure the effective enjoyment by all of every human right — civil, political, economic, social and cultural, including the right to development — is but one of the manifestations of our continuing faith in and enduring commitment to the values and principles of the Universal Declaration.

The formal process of review of the status of the Council, as well as of its work and functioning in Geneva, which culminated in the adoption of Assembly resolution 65/281 in June, provided us with an opportunity to take stock of the gains made by this relatively young institution. The Council has made reasonable progress in fulfilling its mandate, as set out in Assembly resolution 60/251. Its workload has increased markedly since its inception, and the growing number of cross-regional initiatives in the Council demonstrates delegations' positive engagement and cooperation in working towards more practical and forward-looking approaches to addressing pressing economic, social, cultural or humanitarian concerns.

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR), with its intergovernmental and peer-review nature, remains the Council's most innovative and effective mechanism for

ensuring that States fulfil their responsibility to respect and implement human rights and fundamental freedoms. There is a need, however, to further strengthen the UPR if we are to bring to fruition our vision of an ever-responsive mechanism for the improvement of the human rights situation in all countries and for addressing human rights violations wherever they occur.

The Philippines believes that the Council should be a partner with all States and stakeholders in the promotion and protection of all human rights, with a strong focus on capacity-building and international cooperation. It must continue to work in a constructive manner, fostering dialogue and cooperation and engaging in meaningful interaction with States and all stakeholders at national and international levels.

The special procedures play an important role in promoting and protecting human rights. The independence of mandate holders is vital to their work, but it must always be balanced by important considerations such as professionalism, integrity, efficiency and effectiveness.

As a founding and re-elected member of the Council, the Philippines endeavours to contribute constructively to the efficient and effective work of the Council and to continue to focus on the importance of achieving national, regional and international human rights goals, standards and strategies. It is the main sponsor of initiatives in the Council on human rights and extreme poverty and on combating trafficking in persons, especially women and children. It traditionally sponsors initiatives on the protection of the human rights of vulnerable groups such as migrants, women, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities and is a member of the cross-regional Platform for Human Rights Education and Training, composed of Costa Rica, Italy, Morocco, Philippines, Senegal, Slovenia and Switzerland.

The Philippines is pleased to note that at its sixteenth session the Council adopted the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training. The Declaration is the first reference document entirely created by the Human Rights Council since its establishment in 2006. It provides a clear and precise definition of human rights education and training, their scope and principles, and the various means for ensuring their effective implementation. At its eighteenth session, the Council also adopted another

important resolution, initiated by the Philippines and Bangladesh, concerning the adverse impacts of climate change on the full enjoyment of human rights.

Finally, 2011 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development, which unequivocally established development as a right and put people at the centre of the development process. Taking into account the importance of the right to development to all human rights, the Philippines continues to advocate for, and support discussions on, the right to development with a view to ensuring its realization, particularly in the Human Rights Council.

My delegation, sensitive to current and emerging human rights challenges and aware that the effective realization of human rights is vital to alleviating poverty and creating a better quality of life for all, reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights.

**Mr. Diallo** (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I would like to commend the remarkable work accomplished by the Human Rights Council during the past year and to express my delegation's appreciation to the Council's President, Her Excellency Ambassador Laura Dupuy Lasserre, Uruguay's Permanent Representative in Geneva, for the quality of her report. The conduct of three extraordinary sessions and the significant number of resolutions and decisions adopted this year reflect her dynamism and are eloquent proof of the progress the Council has made.

In that regard, I should add that we welcome the fact that almost all Member States have now submitted to the Universal Periodic Review, which, as the Secretary-General has said, opens a new chapter in the promotion of human rights and underscores its universality. The appreciable participation by States in this mechanism, only a few months before the end of its first cycle, shows clearly that it is possible to approach the issue of human rights impartially and free of any form of politicization by establishing an objective, constructive and transparent dialogue. However, the mechanism's capacity to make an effective contribution to promoting and protecting human rights can be gauged only after its recommendations are implemented. It is our common responsibility to work for the success of this enterprise.

The results the Human Rights Council has achieved since its founding are testament, if any were still needed, that this body is capable of producing

responses adequate to the situations requiring its attention. However, far from letting us adopt a self-satisfied attitude, the progress that has brought about both hopes and expectations should rather encourage us to intensify our efforts to consolidate the Council and improve its functioning.

That is the direction we should follow in the work we undertook with the adoption, last June, of resolution 65/281 and its annex, which is entitled "Outcome of the review of the work and functioning of the Human Rights Council". Even though that resolution was not completely satisfying for many delegations, the result we attained — thanks to the willingness to compromise and the flexibility prevailing in our discussions — should be commended.

In deciding to maintain the Human Rights Council's status as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly and to align its annual cycle with the calendar year, we in fact contributed to improving the functioning of the Council. In that same spirit, we requested a study of means to provide adequate funding for unforeseen and extraordinary expenses arising from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Council. Clearly, granting the Human Rights Council adequate financing would increase its efficacy.

In that same vein, I commend Human Rights Council decision 17/118, of 17 June 2011, which creates the Office of the President of the Human Rights Council. That should allow an institutional memory in the Council and improve its visibility. We hope that in the establishment of that important new entity, the principle of equitable geographic representation will be taken into account in the staff selection process.

In the course of our consideration of the draft budget for the 2012-2013 biennium in the Fifth Committee a few days ago, we commended the Secretary-General for recommending additional funds for institutional strengthening of the human rights agenda of the Organization.

In the current period of crisis, when doubt and uncertainty dampen even the most optimistic souls, the immeasurable contribution of the Human Rights Council to safeguarding such fundamental values as tolerance, intercultural dialogue and responsible free expression is a source of hope and comfort. In that light, the Council should redouble its efforts in promoting human rights education, which could

contribute greatly to realizing the goal of ridding the world of prejudice and fear of the other.

Even as it continues in that vein, the Human Rights Council should also focus more on the many facets of the right to development. We are convinced that respect for all human rights, without distinction, including the right to development, is one of the principle measures of peace and stability at both the national and international levels.

In conclusion, I want to encourage all Member States to commit to making the second cycle of the universal periodic review a genuine success.

**Mr. De Séllos (Brazil):** Brazil welcomes the report of the Human Rights Council to the General Assembly (A/66/53 and A/66/53/Add.1). We also thank the President of the Council, Ambassador Laura Dupuy Lasserre, for her presentation of the activities of the Council in the past year. The report offers a vivid description of the intense work of the Human Rights Council. The positive outcomes achieved in both regular and special sessions show that the Council is an essential mechanism to ensure the promotion and protection of all human rights and of fundamental freedoms for all.

The fact that most of the outcomes of the Council's work were adopted by consensus is still more evidence that, in the human rights agenda, what we share still outweighs what divides us. Brazil maintains that increased dialogue and mutual understanding are fundamental to achieving an even greater convergence, which can only lead to a more effective Human Rights Council.

Having recently completed our second mandate as a member State of the Council, Brazil has constantly worked with a view to achieving outcomes that are both meaningful and acceptable to all. In the reporting period, my Government presented draft resolutions on the subjects of the protection of human rights in the context of HIV and AIDS, on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health in the context of development and access to medicines, and on the incompatibility of democracy and racism, the latter in conjunction with the members of the Southern Common Market and its associated States. All of them were adopted without a vote, and usually with numerous sponsors.

We note with appreciation the conclusion of the first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The fact that all States Members of the United Nations have undergone the review exercise has highlighted the fact that all of us, independent of our level of development, face challenges in ensuring the full enjoyment of all human rights for our peoples. The high level of cooperation received by the mechanism may have exceeded the most optimistic forecasts.

My country has engaged constructively with the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, thus contributing to its undeniable success. With a view to avoiding selectivity and politicization, Brazil has made recommendations to all countries reviewed in the reporting period. We will also engage constructively in our own upcoming review, due next May, in the second cycle of the UPR.

For all those reasons, Brazil's assessment is that the Human Rights Council is overall a success story. At the same time, the Council has the potential to become an even more effective instrument for the promotion and protection of all human rights. The recently concluded review has already made important contributions to the work and functioning of the Council, and we believe it is possible to continue that improvement during its day-to-day work.

Among the necessary improvements, Brazil attaches great importance to increasing the Council's ability to provide cooperation and technical assistance. We recall, in that regard, the joint intervention by Brazil and 97 other countries on the topic of technical assistance and capacity-building. We must do more in order to fully realize the mandate of the Council for fostering cooperation, thus contributing to the promotion and protection of human rights in the world.

**Mr. Mitsialis** (Greece): My delegation fully subscribes to the statement made earlier by the observer of the European Union. Allow me to make some additional comments in my national capacity.

In our globalized world, human rights have become a vital factor in the promotion of peace, justice, security and development. They offer a unique means of protection of individuals against harm. They constitute a *sine qua non* ingredient of international and domestic political discourse and constitute the cornerstone for building a fair, peaceful, all-inclusive civil society. It is therefore imperative that human

rights be respected by all States Members of the United Nations.

I wish to extend our appreciation to the President of the Human Rights Council, Ms. Laura Dupuy Lasserre, for presenting the Human Rights Council's sixth annual report (A/66/53 and Add.1). The report underlines the Member States' adherence to the principles of cooperation and mutual respect. Among the resolutions adopted by the Council, we consider those on violence against women, trafficking of women and children, and the incompatibility between democracy and racism to be the most notable.

Developments and changes in the countries of North Africa and the Middle East dominated this year's sessions of the Human Rights Council. Those developments produced the constantly pressing need to guarantee the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of all the peoples in our neighbouring region. In addition, the adverse impact of the greatly prolonged global financial crisis and the food crisis in the Horn of Africa have put considerable pressure on us when it comes to the protection of the economic, social, civil and political rights of a great number of people.

Among the positive developments of this year's sessions of the Human Rights Council, we noted the review of the Council, the consensual adoption of many country-specific resolutions and the successful completion of the first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process with the adoption of all national reports. We now have before us the first universal human rights map. Special procedures mandates were extended and new ones were created as the Council attended to matters not previously covered.

At the same time, we should aim for better streamlining of various Council initiatives, bearing in mind the limited resources available. As collaboration among existing mandate holders has become commonplace, assigning additional reporting requirements could be avoided in order to achieve greater effectiveness.

In July, we welcomed the Republic of South Sudan as the 193rd State Member of the United Nations and expressed our appreciation for its immediate engagement with the Human Rights Council in order to strengthen national mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We expect that serious efforts will be undertaken from all sides to prevent further

violence. We are ready to assist the new Government in the promotion of human rights.

Greece welcomed the transition in Libya. It strongly supports the ongoing process towards democracy and stands ready to offer any assistance in that direction.

Greece eagerly supports the work of the Human Rights Council. Despite the current difficult economic juncture, my Government spurs no efforts in promoting human rights in all fields of action. In the fight against racism, xenophobia and related intolerance, a new law will soon be submitted for adoption by Parliament that will further criminalize racist acts. Furthermore, we have strengthened our legislative framework in favour of gender equality and counselling for victims of gender-based violence, trafficking of women and children, and for the protection of children's rights based on the principle of the best interests of the child.

We are proud of the steps taken to comply with international standards for the elimination of trafficking through the enactment of strict legislation for prosecuting perpetrators and protecting victims in accordance with victim-centred legislation, as well as to improve prevention through focused activities and national coordination. In addition, we are adopting measures to broaden the safeguarding of the rights of persons with disabilities. Their equal participation in economic, social and political life remains at the top of our agenda.

The European Union perceives human rights as universal, indivisible and interdependent. All of its member States share the same core values in terms of respect for, and promotion and protection of, human rights, democracy and the rule of law, not only within European Union borders but also beyond them. As a member of the European Union family and a party to all major international human rights instruments, Greece has a long-standing commitment to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and has long been a staunch supporter of all efforts to promote human rights values and principles at all levels and in all countries in the world. We acknowledge the pivotal role that the United Nations has played in strengthening the international community's ability to promote respect for all human rights. Therefore, since its inception, we have fervently supported an efficient Human Rights Council.

Greece's commitment to upholding human rights is the cornerstone of our candidature for election to the Human Rights Council for the upcoming period 2013-2015. In this respect, we presented our national report to the Universal Periodic Review mechanism in May and accepted the vast majority of recommendations made by Member States. We thus intend to ensure an effective follow-up to all UPR recommendations. The overall positive assessment of Greece's human rights record under the Universal Periodic Review confirms our readiness to actively participate in the work of the Council, contribute to the full implementation of its mandate and enhance its credibility and efficiency through improved cross-regional cooperation and greater efforts to achieve wider agreement on its decisions.

For its part, the Greek Government has extended and honoured standing invitations to all the Human Rights Council special procedures. We firmly believe that only through objective monitoring and reporting can the Council identify the areas in need of capacity-building and technical assistance, thus further helping countries to better address human rights violations, wherever they occur.

In the context of our candidature for a seat in the Human Rights Council, Greece is in the process of ratifying several international human rights instruments and intends to further promote the engagement of Greek and international non-governmental organizations in the Council's work. In addition, we intend to take a number of supplementary steps and to initiate actions in the fields of migration management and asylum procedures, given the challenges that arise from the unprecedented flow of irregular migrants entering Greece as a result of its geographical location.

The full enjoyment of human rights remains the cornerstone of any democratic edifice and constitutes the epitome of the human condition. In the quest for this ideal, the Human Rights Council meticulously fulfils the role assigned to it. Greece, conscious of the significance of its mission, will continue to be actively engaged in that process.

**Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia)** (*spoke in French*): I take this opportunity to welcome with great satisfaction the new dynamic of cooperation that since the 14 January revolution has taken root between the United Nations human rights machinery and Tunisia. Tunisia is more committed than ever to abiding by its international



commitments in the field of human rights and to ensuring that human rights become universal values in all dimensions and that they become a tangible reality in the daily life of Tunisia.

This new dynamic of cooperation is illustrated by Tunisia's ratification, last June, of four international human rights instruments that are of great significance, namely, the Rome Statute, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. These commitments reflect my country's strong resolve to put in place a comprehensive human rights mechanism that will break once and for all with the past and establish solid assurances against flagrant violations of human rights.

Furthermore, Tunisia has withdrawn its reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, so as to establish the rightful place of women in Tunisian society and further reinforce gender equality.

In the same spirit, following its open invitation to all special procedures of the Human Rights Council, Tunisia welcomed the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism and the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, who visited Tunisian prisons and detention centres and made observations and recommendations.

Many international entities and organizations working on human rights issues have opened offices in Tunis. I would cite the particular example of the new country office of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which was opened in July by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, and which confirms our collective will to promote cooperation as a means of truly recognizing human rights.

My country also worked to reactivate the national committee to follow up on the recommendations made by the various human rights treaty bodies and special rapporteurs and organizations active in the field of human rights. It also set up a committee to harmonize its national legislation with international human rights instruments.

That new momentum towards productive cooperation with the Human Rights Council was also recognized with the Council's adoption, on 24 March, of resolution 16/19 on cooperation between Tunisia and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which demonstrated the firm commitment of the international community to supporting my country's efforts to promote human rights, in particular by mobilizing the resources needed to tackle its economic and social challenges.

On 23 October, Tunisia took a giant step forward in its transition to democracy by holding free, democratic and transparent elections for the first time in its history. Tunisians, hungry for democracy and freedom, affirmed their commitment to civic duty with a massive turnout at the polls to exercise their right to choose their representatives in the National Constituent Assembly, many of them for the first time in their lives. More than 90 per cent of registered voters turned out to vote. In that connection, we reiterate our deep gratitude to the United Nations and all international observers for their commendable efforts to ensure a smooth and successful electoral process.

We take this opportunity to reaffirm our major commitment to securing the gains already made so that the Tunisian people can enjoy a better future, thereby responding to their deepest aspirations for a democratic, fair, free, united and developed system of Government.

Aware of the importance of the support provided by the United Nations human rights machinery for efforts to promote human rights, Tunisia is preparing its second national report, which is to be submitted next June as part of the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review. The report will give us an opportunity to highlight not only our national efforts, in particular those made to implement all of the recommendations stemming from the first cycle of the Review, but also the related challenges that remain. The second cycle will certainly help to promote the role of that innovative mechanism and thereby ensure that it will play a more active role in helping countries such as mine that wish to build their capacities to promote and protect human rights.

In conclusion, we reiterate our determination to take further steps to ensure our full and stable cooperation with the Human Rights Council. In that way, Tunisia will succeed in its transition to democracy

and be better able to promote the culture of human rights in its broadest form around the world.

**Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express Egypt's appreciation for the detailed statement delivered by the President of the Human Rights Council to the General Assembly on the work of the Council, following her valuable statement to the Third Committee on the report of the Council (A/66/53 and A/66/53/Add.1), which was submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/281 on the review of the Human Rights Council.

Since its establishment by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/251, the Human Rights Council has continuously improved its performance by harmonizing its working methods and standards and adopting a constructive and cooperative approach to dealing with human rights issues, with a view to providing advice and the necessary support. As a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, the Council plays an important role in promoting human rights through international cooperation, as established by the World Summit Outcome Document of 2005 (resolution 60/1), and contributes to activities aimed at promoting universal respect for human rights. Those mechanisms should be activated in all Member States without exception, double standards, politicization or selectivity, and in an objective and fair, equal and impartial manner.

The international community is making continuous efforts to promote and protect human rights, as well as to address the various challenges and make concerted efforts to overcome them. In particular, we must restore cooperation in the international interest in and attention to economic, social and cultural rights, on the one hand, and civil and political rights, on the other hand. That can be done by bridging the gap between the North and the South with a view to improving living standards, which in turn would help to advance the cause of human rights.

We should also strengthen our efforts to combat all forms of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, language or religion, including through the implementation of our joint commitments, in accordance with the Durban Declaration, its programme of action and the outcome document of its review conference, as well as the political declaration (resolution 66/3) adopted by consensus during the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of

the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, held last September.

In addition, we have an obligation to support and respect the institutional balance between the roles of the principal organs of the United Nations in addressing human rights issues, while paying special attention to the economic, social and cultural aspects involved. In doing so, we should stand up to those who attempt to impose their values and views and the standards of their justice, social, legal and human rights systems on others, and to force certain controversial notions that ignore the diverse social, cultural and legislative systems of the world.

In that regard, it is important to respect the mandate of the Human Rights Council and to refrain from submitting country-specific recommendations to the Third Committee, particularly since those decisions target only developing countries and hinder our efforts to reach consensus-based cooperative solutions, which can help to build respect for human rights around the world.

We should therefore reiterate the importance of not politicizing the Council and the significance of its central role in ensuring respect for all human rights and international humanitarian law, in particular in the occupied Palestinian territories, by verifying Israel's full compliance with all its international obligations, including its commitment to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur and the fact-finding missions mandated by the Human Rights Council to investigate gross human rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Furthermore, we must enhance dialogue and promote constructive cooperation to ensure the effectiveness of the special procedures system. It is a shared responsibility of the mandate holders, the States and all other relevant parties, which should be based on the principles of transparency, fairness and mutual cooperation, while ensuring full respect by the special procedures of their mandates and responsibilities as established by the Human Rights Council.

Finally, Egypt reiterates the importance of identifying the financial resources needed to support the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights so as to enable it to follow up on all Council resolutions and provide the necessary assistance to Member States in the area of capacity-building. Those resources should be drawn from the

regular budget and conditional external funding should be avoided. Assured, accountable and transparent funding from the regular budget will secure the Office's role in the work of the Council.

Egypt is currently witnessing a major and positive transition in its history, based on an unwavering commitment to the principles of democracy, transparency and accountability and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms. In that regard, Egypt reiterates the important role of the Human Rights Council, based on our conviction that human dignity, dialogue, cooperation and mutual understanding guaranteed by human rights and fundamental freedoms are the essential cornerstone to ensure respect for those rights.

Egypt will seek to consolidate and promote the role of the Council, on the principles of accountability and transparency, believing that human dignity is the main aim of all our efforts to guarantee respect for human rights.

**Mr. Chuquihua** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank the President of the Human Rights Council, Ms. Laura Dupuy Lasserre, for her presentation of the Council reports (A/66/53 and A/66/53/Add.1) to the General Assembly. Peru notes that the work of that important United Nations body provides essential elements for the promotion and protection of human rights.

The Human Rights Council is the body responsible for promoting universal respect for and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for everyone without distinction and in a just and equitable manner. That is a fundamental task, absolutely requiring the support of all States, given that human beings are the central focus of our Organization.

In that regard, we are pleased to see that the Council's resolutions and decisions consistently seek to promote greater understanding of and enjoyment of human rights. Examples are the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure and the Council's commitment to further developing human rights through its study on climate change and human rights. The Council also seeks to take proactive action on urgent situations that threaten human rights in various parts of the world.

Peru is a new member of the Human Rights Council, and as such it takes on the great responsibility of promoting and protecting the human rights of all the planet's citizens without distinction. As a member — and in line with its historic commitment to human rights both nationally and internationally — Peru will continue to work to make the Council effectively fulfil its mandate to vigilantly engage in all instances of human rights violations, no matter where, in keeping with the principles of universality, indivisibility, impartiality, objectivity and non-discrimination.

Peru has worked with Human Rights Council special procedures mandate holders and working groups. It has hosted visits from the Working Group on arbitrary detention, the Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, the Special Rapporteur on the right to health, the Working Group on the use of mercenaries, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism and, most recently, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery.

Peru will continue along those same lines in supporting initiatives to strengthen the special procedures system and the Universal Periodic Review. My country believes that in order to fulfil the Council's mandate it must closely cooperate with regional organizations, national human rights institutions and civil society. To do that, Peru will promote and support initiatives to increase those actors' participation. Technical assistance and capacity-building are also key elements of the Council's mandate. In that regard, as we have reiterated many times, Peru will support efforts to effectively respond to States' requests for technical assistance.

At its eighteenth session, the Human Rights Council adopted by consensus resolution 18/7 on truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, which Peru presented along with other delegations. The resolution established a Special Rapporteur with the mandate of addressing and promoting the rights to truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence. Peru was one of the leading sponsors of that initiative because it is our deep conviction that, faced with violence and flagrant violations of human rights, building a society that is more just, unified, peaceful

and prosperous requires a quest for truth. Truth can explain the causes of violence, so as to prevent it, identify and bring to justice those responsible for it and offer reparations to victims and their families, restoring their dignity.

Peru participated actively both in Geneva and New York in the Human Rights Council review process. The Council, under the presidency of Ms. Dupuy, will enter a critical phase in which it will implement the findings of the review of its work and functioning. That will be an opportunity to strengthen the Council's mechanisms, so as to respond effectively to victims' needs and to prevent human rights violations from occurring. We hope that the Council can count on funding sufficient for it to fulfil its functions, including needs arising in unforeseen or extraordinary circumstances resulting in urgent resolutions or decisions on the part of the Council.

In line with its deep commitment to the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights, Peru will continue to support any initiative that aims to strengthen the work and functioning of the Human Rights Council and its important task of defending the human rights of all people, without distinction. Respecting and promoting human rights can no longer be just an ideal. We must use the mechanisms we have and our experience to make the ideal a reality.

**Mr. Kodama** (Japan): I thank the President of the Human Rights Council. Ms. Laura Dupuy Lasserre, Permanent Representative of Uruguay in Geneva, for the presentation of her reports (A/66/53 and A/66/53/Add.1) today, both to the Third Committee and the General Assembly, and for her dedicated work in the Council.

The international community has been faced with new challenges to strengthen the human rights machinery and responsibly address ongoing human rights violations around the world. To that effect, the Human Rights Council has an increasingly important role to play in the international community. Since its establishment, the Council has steadily accumulated achievements.

First, the Universal Periodic Review was created as a new mechanism to improve the human rights situations in all Member States through their voluntary follow-up actions. Secondly, the special procedures complement the Universal Periodic Review in

addressing serious human rights violations around the world. Japan places a high value on the role of the special procedures and has extended an official standing invitation to all thematic mandate holders. Thirdly, the Council has convened special sessions in response to serious human rights violations and has taken appropriate actions, including the urgent dispatch of an international commission of inquiry and the strong messages sent to the international community through resolutions.

Japan has been a member of the Council from its establishment in 2006 until this year and is now standing as a candidate in the 2012 election. In Geneva and New York, Japan has engaged in efforts to strengthen the work and functioning of the Council and participated actively in the negotiations of the Human Rights Council review this year.

As all Member States know, those negotiations were extremely difficult. The co-facilitators and all States made efforts to reach an agreement. As a result, an outcome was reached that contained a few improvements to the Council, although not all we had hoped for. We agreed on an improved and more practical way to align the Council's work with its membership and reporting cycle. With regard to the financial issue, the outcome requested the Secretary-General to present a report with options for the Fifth Committee to consider, including ways to implement urgent mandates as decided by the Council.

On the other hand, we also sought concrete and practical measures, including the improvement of the election process in order to ensure the active participation of the membership, with the aim of strengthening the implementation of resolution 60/251. Unfortunately, we were unable to agree on such an outcome.

We would like to stress that the Council was established to mainstream human rights, that is, to integrate a human rights perspective into all United Nations activities. We should further strengthen the functioning of the United Nations as a whole, recognizing that the role of the Third Committee of the General Assembly as a universal body that includes all Member States is also important. We expect both the Third Committee and the Council to fulfil their roles, making full use of their respective advantages.

In the future, the Council should fulfil the expectations of the international community by

accruing further concrete achievements and by strengthening its functions through a continuous review of its own work. We hope that the General Assembly will also review the Council's work in the near future through an agreement of the Member States in order to advance the mainstreaming of human rights throughout the United Nations system.

**Mr. Ulibarri** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica welcomes the report on the work of the Human Rights Council (A/66/53 and Add.1). We are especially pleased that the Ambassador of Uruguay, Laura Dupuy Lasserre, presented it to this body in her capacity as President of the Council. That is a step in the right direction to give the importance it deserves to that central body of the Organization on the question of human rights.

According to the agreements reflected in resolution 65/281, on the review of the Council, review or consideration of the report as such should be conducted in this plenary meeting, while the Third Committee is responsible for reviewing its recommendations.

As we indicated when we explained our position at the adoption of that resolution (see A/65/PV.100), the final outcome of the review process did not reflect all our hopes, but it was the result of lengthy negotiations and came as close as possible to consensus, with a positive outlook. In that regard, it is crucial for all countries to honour the commitments that we made in good-faith negotiations, and that we act accordingly.

We would also have preferred that the report be presented first in the Assembly plenary so that it could be considered in its entirety and then to the Third Committee as the basis for the examination of specific recommendations, as was indicated in the letter and the logic of the resolution approved. Equally, we consider it indispensable not to schedule meetings of the Third Committee when the report of the Council is being considered in the Assembly.

We invite Member States, future presidencies and the Secretariat to consider these important points with a view to improving future decisions on this matter.

My country is strongly committed to the promotion and protection of human rights and to the work of the Council. The eighteenth session, which took place from 12 to 30 September and on 21 October

2011, was the first regular session in which Costa Rica participated as a new member State. As proof of our commitment, our delegation was led at the highest level, by the President of the Republic, who pledged to take on our new work responsibly, seeking to build bridges between opposing positions and to contribute so that decisions and resolutions adopted by the Council are fully implemented, especially on the ground.

Through our participation, and in every one of the actions taken as a member of the Council, we have continuously sought to act in accord with the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity, non-politicization, constructive international dialogue and cooperation, following the commitments we made to the membership in our promises and pledges at the time of our candidacy.

Among the important achievements of the most recent Council session, we would like to call attention to the creation of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees on non-recurrence (resolution 18/7) and the adoption of resolution 18/22 on human rights and climate change. With respect to the protection and promotion of human rights and the protection of the environment, we believe that a comprehensive approach should be adopted in order to analyse all the effects of environmental deterioration on the full exercise of human rights and to respond to them effectively. We should consider establishing a special procedure on human rights and the environment.

During that session, we continued the constructive cooperation with a number of countries, as we had done when we were observers. Along with 62 other States, we renewed our open invitation to the special procedures, promoting the universality of an initiative already backed by 88 countries. We respectfully invite those countries that have not already done so to extend and honour that open invitation, especially if they hope to hold a seat on the Council.

Along with Belgium, Italy and Slovenia, we introduced decision 18/117, adopted by consensus, requesting the Secretary-General to continue to prepare an annual report on the application of the death penalty in the world. In that proposal, we stressed the importance of consultation with Governments and other relevant stakeholders, and we sought an approach

based on the protection of the rights of those who face the death penalty.

Similarly, through parallel events, together with the Permanent Mission of Spain and other entities, we promoted the human right to peace. We are continuing to promote human rights education and training, along with Slovenia, the Philippines, Italy, Morocco, Senegal and Switzerland.

With respect to the report in A/66/53, we would like to highlight the recommendations brought before the Assembly at this session to adopt the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (resolution 16/1) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure (resolution 17/18). These are fundamental advances in the issue of human rights and are the fruit of years of open and inclusive negotiations. Just as we did on the occasion of the outcome of the Geneva meeting of the review process of the Human Rights Council, we wish to reiterate our call to uphold the results of that body's work, and we request States to adopt these resolutions by consensus.

Finally, we believe that we have a responsibility to continue improving this Organization's system for the promotion and protection of human rights. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights requires independence and funding. Sufficient funding must be made readily available so as to meet the unexpected needs of the Council. That requires that States respond positively in our upcoming deliberations. It is also essential that we respect the independence of special rapporteurs, ensure the resources for their proper functioning, and maintain the integrity of their mandates.

There are many other improvements that do not need new decisions or policy changes, but just the political will of States. We therefore urge all members to think creatively and to promote changes in the Council's day-to-day practice, while taking closely into account the contributions of civil society organizations, and citizens in general, in that undertaking.

**Mr. Guerber** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the President of the Human Rights Council for her presentation of the annual report of the Council (A/66/53 and Add.1). I also thank her predecessor.

Switzerland welcomes the fact that human rights have become more visible in the United Nations system. The presentation of the Council's annual report in that context is an example. However, my country regrets that the review of the functioning of the Council did not ultimately lead to our exchange today taking the form of an interactive dialogue.

Switzerland views the Council's work positively. Over the past year, the Council was able to respond to the many expectations associated with its establishment. Thanks to the special sessions, the dispatch of fact-finding missions and the creation of new mandates, the Council has been able to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to emergencies and the latest developments.

In recent months, the dynamic within the Council has developed in a promising way in response to democratic movements and the general surge in popular support. The nature of those changes underlines the importance that States should accord to the search for comprehensive solutions in a spirit of cooperation, inclusion and genuine transregional dialogue. To that end, efforts to overcome current divisions among regional groups must continue.

As a member of the Human Rights Council, Switzerland is actively committed to strengthening the Council's actions on several themes. I will give just three examples.

Switzerland is pleased with the discussions during the panel on promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests, at the Council's eighteenth session, in September. Its goal was to draw the Council's attention to a phenomenon that is becoming increasingly widespread.

Switzerland is also one of the main authors behind the establishment of a new mandate for a special rapporteur on promotion of truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence. That mandate will certainly reinforce the fight against impunity.

Thirdly, Switzerland is happy to have actively participated in the transregional Platform for Human Rights Education and Training. The members of that transregional Platform will propose to the Third Committee, during the current session, the adoption of a United Nations declaration on that issue, along the

lines of that adopted by the Human Rights Council in March (A/HRC/RES/16/1, annex).

Switzerland sees two main challenges to address in order for the Council to continue to work for the realization of all human rights for all and to respond effectively to serious human rights violations wherever they may be committed.

First, my delegation is thinking of the Universal Periodic Review and some special procedures. Those mechanisms have the potential to contribute, in a concrete manner, to improving the human rights situation on the ground. The implementation of their recommendations is seen as the most important aspect of the Council's work. With the end of the first cycle of the universal periodic review, the follow-up given to the agreed recommendations will be the key issue of the Council's first decade.

Secondly, Switzerland welcomes with satisfaction the Secretary-General's plan to increase the budget earmarked for activities linked to human rights and the Human Rights Council, which today amounts only to some 3 per cent of the United Nations regular budget. Switzerland also calls for lasting solutions to be found to the financing and implementation of measures decided by the Council, in particular with regard to urgent measures. A mechanism similar to the Secretary-General's unforeseen and extraordinary expenses should be established in the field of human rights.

Finally, Switzerland expresses its appreciation for the work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in support of the Council and of its mechanisms and for its technical assistance. That work must continue within the context of the autonomy granted to the High Commissioner under resolution 48/141, which created his mandate.

**Mr. Tinajero (Mexico)** (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to welcome the President of the Human Rights Council and thank her for presenting to the General Assembly the report of the Council (A/66/53 and Add.1). The delegation of Mexico also wishes to acknowledge her work and to once again assure her of our full support in that regard.

In 2005, the international community recognized that it was necessary to raise the level of treatment of human rights in our Organization by setting up a new body to strengthen the work of the United Nations in

their promotion and protection in the world. Since then, the Human Rights Council has made progress in discharging its important mandate and is developing new tools in order to have a genuine and more rapid impact on the lives of millions of people.

Last year, the review of the Human Rights Council began with general agreements on the scope of that exercise, emphasizing that only five years had elapsed since the Council's establishment and that it was very early for a comprehensive assessment of its functioning. Some themes — such as the Council's capacity to review national cases, the special procedures work, the topics into which the agenda is divided, the structure of the Council and the election of its members — took up much of the time available for the review and, in some cases, affected the work culture, which is key to the Council being able to properly further its work.

Above all, time and political will were lacking to thoroughly study the changes introduced in 2006 and to complete outstanding tasks, including the Council's relation with other bodies of the system and the powers of the President and the High Commissioner. Also pending is the proposal that the Council become a principal organ of the Organization, which Mexico continues to support.

Notwithstanding, we can affirm that the outcome of the review is positive. In particular, it confirmed the prior understanding that the institution-building package continues to reflect the basic balances and therefore remains the basis for moving ahead in strengthening the institutional framework for the promotion and protection of all human rights for all people in all regions and situations.

It should be pointed out that at the same time that we were conducting the review exercise, the Council was making full use of all available tools to make decisions on a broad spectrum of issues, such as the protection of the rights of women and of children, freedom of association and the right to truth and justice, to mention only a few. Moreover, the Council considered pressing situations in Côte d'Ivoire, Syria and Libya. In the latter case, it recommended that the General Assembly suspend its membership rights. The special sessions and their outcomes are an example of the effective decisions taken five years ago, at the creation of the Council and its institutional structure.

Mexico is aware that the Council's work can be improved and that there is ample space to improve the way it deals with national situations, the functioning of and cooperation with the special procedures and the use of the few resources available.

We also know that successes bring new challenges. The clearest example is the universal periodic review, which requires increased support and technical cooperation so that during the second cycle States can implement the commitments made in the first cycle. The increase in signatories and ratifications of human rights treaties, which is due in some part to that exercise, also demands greater resources. More has to be done, and with greater efficiency. To us it seems urgent that we address with greater determination the coherence of the United Nations system for the promotion and enjoyment of all human rights.

The Human Rights Council must continue to play its central role as the specialized political body for developing new standards for the protection of human rights, international monitoring mechanisms and spaces where civil society and national human rights institutions can participate. The Council must also examine the way it interacts with other United Nations bodies, organs and entities to ensure that the human rights perspective is integrated into each and all of the activities of the United Nations.

In that context, complementarity between the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly is essential, as is the active participation and commitment of the High Commissioner. Coherence requires avoiding unnecessary duplication or voids and making use of the areas in which responsibilities can be distributed appropriately.

While we all recognize the importance of avoiding duplication of efforts and resources, delegations can find it difficult to take concrete steps with regard to their own initiatives. Mexico has carried out an internal evaluation exercise that prioritized the substantive and differentiated treatment of issues in accordance with the competencies of each relevant body. We are also staggering the presentations of some of our initiatives without that affecting the development of the issues.

Lastly, allow me to stress the importance of the General Assembly's firm support of the work of the Human Rights Council, backing its recommendations, helping to strengthen that important pillar of

multilateral action and making use of its broad attributes. The work of the Third Committee in supporting the Council is indispensable.

**Mr. McLay** (New Zealand): New Zealand thanks the President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Dupuy Lasserre of Uruguay, for presenting the Council's sixth annual report (A/66/53 and Add.1). We also thank her predecessor, Ambassador Phuangketkeow of Thailand, for his excellent work. New Zealand remains a committed supporter of the Human Rights Council as the principal human rights body of the United Nations.

This year there has been no shortage of serious human rights challenges, including in the context of the Arab Spring. Since the special session on Libya in February, the Council has exhibited an increased willingness to act decisively when faced with serious human rights violations. Its actions on Libya, Côte d'Ivoire and Syria, the debates on other situations, and the appointment of a new Special Rapporteur on Iran all exemplify this positive progress.

The Council will be judged by its willingness to engage on human rights violations. This year has seen it fulfilling its mandate in a constructive and cross-regional manner.

The ability to work cross-regionally has also been evident in many of the Council's thematic initiatives. In the Council's March session, New Zealand and Mexico again presented a resolution on the rights of persons with disabilities, a resolution which built on work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and looked at how States might best fulfil their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with regard to international cooperation and assistance. And in the September session, we worked again with Colombia and Burkina Faso to present a resolution inviting OHCHR to convene an expert working group to enable a human rights approach to reducing unacceptably high global rates of maternal mortality.

In our cross-regional work on disability and on maternal mortality, and in many other areas of the Council's work, we have, as always, been impressed by the contribution by civil society and national human rights institutions. Civil society plays an active role in the Council's work, and in New Zealand's view, that assists in the achievement of better outcomes. So we



pay tribute to our colleagues in civil society for helping the Council fulfil its mandate.

That mandate also includes promoting effective coordination and mainstreaming human rights within the United Nations system. Just as civil society has helped our work in the Council, New Zealand believes the involvement of other branches of the United Nations system has made a positive difference.

Having just completed the last round of the first cycle of the universal periodic review (UPR), it is also timely to reflect on that aspect of the Council's work. New Zealand regards the UPR as a valuable addition to the United Nations human rights machinery.

At the 42nd meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum, held in Auckland, New Zealand in September, Pacific leaders acknowledged as a major regional achievement the successful participation of all Forum members in that round. Crucial support was provided to them by the Forum Secretariat, the Regional Rights Resource Team of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, and OHCHR. The resulting networks are now an important regional source of human rights expertise.

We also regard the Council's special procedures as a vital tool for promoting and protecting human rights. Globally, these are, as many have said, the Council's eyes and ears. Last year, New Zealand welcomed a visit by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, Professor James Anaya, and appreciated his identification of the progress we had made, as well as the problems still to be addressed. The Government is acting on many of his recommendations and will continue to draw on his report.

This time last year, we were in the midst of reviewing the work and functioning of the Council, and New Zealand had hoped that would present opportunities to improve the Council's effectiveness. While any resulting improvements were modest, we believe the success of the Council lies not just in the rules that govern it, but also in the manner in which those rules are implemented.

The Council's mandate is to promote and protect human rights. Fulfilling that mandate requires both the political will and the courage to act decisively and consistently.

As the President pointed out in his opening statement, human rights are one of the three pillars on

which the United Nations was founded. As we move into the Council's seventh year, and into the second cycle of the UPR, New Zealand hopes that this year there will be positive progress in pursuing the Council's mandate and that that will be sustained. New Zealand certainly remains ready and willing to support that goal.

**Mr. Al Habib** (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the Human Rights Council for sharing with us an overview of the developments and activities of the Council over the past year and of challenges ahead, and for her efforts in the promotion and protection of human rights at the Council. Built upon the invaluable lessons learned from the shortcomings of the former Commission on Human Rights, the Human Rights Council has inspired new hopes and motivation for finding sound and decent solutions to the maladies of the Commission, in particular its selective manner in addressing human rights situations.

The Islamic Republic of Iran considers the Human Rights Council to be a focal point for all Governments to address global human rights challenges, free of politicization, selectivity, double standards and confrontational approaches, as highlighted by resolution 60/251.

There were high expectations that the Human Rights Council would be a forum for dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation in achieving the universal realization of human rights, taking into account the diversity of cultures and civilizations. However, to our grave dissatisfaction, new concerted attempts are emerging to force the Council back onto the path of the former Commission, with a view to transforming it into a mere political tool to serve the political ambitions of a few countries.

My delegation would like to reiterate that the rationale behind creating the universal periodic review (UPR) was to ensure universality and non-selectivity in the work of the Human Rights Council. There is unanimity among the States that such a mechanism constitutes a breakthrough in the United Nations intergovernmental human rights activities, and the real performance of this mechanism, in a logical setting, is to allow the human rights machinery to act beyond the monopoly of a few in monitoring the human rights situations of the Member States.

However, it is deplorable that despite the existence of the UPR mechanism in the Human Rights Council, certain countries continue to table country-specific resolutions in the Human Rights Council and in the Third Committee of the General Assembly. It goes without saying that such resolutions are politically motivated exercises designed to meet the political purposes and interests of their sponsors.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran is fully cooperating with the United Nations human rights machinery. Last month, the third periodic report of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was considered by the Human Rights Committee. A high-ranking Iranian delegation that attended the meeting had an interactive and fruitful dialogue with Committee members.

With regard to the UPR mechanism, the national report of the Islamic Republic of Iran was considered during the seventh session of the UPR Working Group, in February 2010. My Government had made comprehensive arrangements with all national stakeholders, including governmental and non-governmental institutions, to draw up and submit the national report for the consideration of the UPR Working Group. The Islamic Republic of Iran fully and closely cooperated with the UPR mechanism by submitting a comprehensive and detailed national report and dispatching a high-ranking delegation that actively and constructively participated in the review of Iran's national report in order to play its part in the enhancement and promotion of this newly established mechanism.

The world is facing numerous human rights challenges, such as poverty, discrimination against migrants and religious minorities in Western countries, racial discrimination, foreign occupation and aggression. It is expected that the Human Rights Council, relying on the principles of objectivity, cooperation, transparency and consensus, will undertake a more active role in tackling those challenges.

Finally, the Islamic Republic of Iran has continuously emphasized the significance of interactive and cooperative approaches in the promotion of human rights as established in the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. We are determined to continue our constructive cooperation with the Council

for the promotion and protection of human rights all over the world.

**Mr. Shin Dong Ik** (Republic of Korea): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Laura Dupuy Lasserre, for presenting the sixth annual report of the Human Rights Council (A/66/53 and Add.1) to the General Assembly.

The Republic of Korea is pleased to note that in the past one-year period the Human Rights Council responded promptly to recent human rights emergencies, especially in the Middle East and North Africa, through four special sessions. The international community has delivered the unified message that serious human rights violations should be ended immediately and that accountability must be established. My Government once again urges all relevant Governments and entities to heed this urgent call by the international community.

My delegation notes with satisfaction that the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process completed its first cycle with the conclusion of the twelfth session of the Working Group earlier this month. For the most part, the UPR has proved to be a very constructive process for the countries that have participated. In general, States under review have made sincere efforts in preparing their reports and also have displayed great flexibility, openness and a genuine willingness to cooperate with the recommendations presented by other participants in the UPR Working Group. Along similar lines, States participating in conducting the reviews have also contributed to the working group process by making clear, constructive and pertinent recommendations.

The success of the UPR process ultimately depends on the sincerity with which States respond to the recommendations put forward. The human rights records of all States Members of the United Nations having been reviewed, it is now important that each State take the recommendations made during the first cycle of the UPR seriously. In this connection, all States should make sincere efforts to fully implement the accepted recommendations through concrete actions and tangible measures with a view towards achieving the ultimate goal of improving the human rights situation on the ground.

The Republic of Korea is pleased to see that, as a follow-up to the outcome of the review of the work and

functioning of the Human Rights Council, some improvements have been made to the modality and procedures of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review. We look forward to the second cycle, which is set to begin next year. We take this opportunity to reiterate that we attach great importance to the Universal Periodic Review process and expresses its strong commitment to the process in the future.

We would also like to acknowledge that the review of the work and functioning of the Human Rights Council, which was completed earlier this year, has provided us with a valuable opportunity to identify other areas in which there is a real need for improvement and to find ways to better fulfil the mandate of the Council.

The Republic of Korea would like to emphasize that many good proposals, especially on persistent non-cooperation and on the capacity of the Council to respond promptly to human rights emergencies, should not be dismissed simply because they have not been reflected in the outcome document of the review (Human Rights Council resolution 17/9, annex). I believe that they will continue to be a good reference point in an ever-evolving process of the Council's transformation into an even more effective and credible body in the future.

In parallel with the Universal Periodic Review, the special procedures system is an important tool in the promotion and protection of human rights. The special procedures mandate holders play an indispensable role in ensuring the timely and effective response to urgent human rights situations in specific countries or in reporting on major thematic issues. However, persistent refusals by some States to cooperate with the special procedures not only continue to present a major challenge to mandate holders in carrying out their mandates but also undermine the capacity of the Council to respond to chronic human rights concerns and emergencies. We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our strong support for the special procedures and invite all States to continue to cooperate with and assist the special procedures mandate holders in their tasks.

As a firm advocate for adherence to and application of human rights principles, the Republic of Korea has contributed strongly to the work of the Human Rights Council through its two consecutive

terms as a Council member, from 2006 to 2008 and 2008 to 2011, and in its current position as an observer member. I would like to once again reiterate that the Republic of Korea looks forward to continuing its demonstrated efforts to enhance a deeper and broader respect for human rights around the world.

**Mr. Lukiyantsev** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Ms. Laura Dupuy Lasserre, President of the Human Rights Council, for introducing the reports on the work of the Council (A/66/53 and A/66/53/Add.1).

The establishment of the Human Rights Council was an important milestone in the ongoing reform of the United Nations. Changing the main intergovernmental human rights organ in the United Nations system from a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council into a subsidiary body of the General Assembly was a real step forward in acknowledging the importance of human rights as a United Nations priority.

Just a few months ago we completed an important stage in the review of the United Nations human rights structure. The review consisted of a systematic analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the Council, its special procedures and other mechanisms. A key factor in the success of the review was the recognition by all States of the need to strengthen international cooperation in the human rights field, as well as the principles of dialogue and mutual understanding in resolving problems in the humanitarian sphere. We believe that the results achieved to date will make the United Nations human rights machinery more effective so that all peoples and individuals will call upon it.

In our view, one of the most important functions of the Council, which it is called on to exercise under resolution 60/251, is to carry out the Universal Periodic Review of the human rights situation in all United Nations Member States. Russia supported the establishment of that procedure in the hope that, if carried out in a spirit of equal rights and mutual respect, it would help to lower the level of confrontations that arise in intergovernmental human rights efforts. We believe that ultimately the Universal Periodic Review will completely replace the discredited practice of adopting one-sided and politicized resolutions on the human rights situation in one or another country.

We also emphasize that it is essential for States to comply strictly with relevant intergovernmental agreements that define the methodology of the Review, including those identifying different categories of participants. It is significant that those provisions were unanimously confirmed in the recent review of Human Rights Council.

One of the Council's most important instruments is the special procedures system, inherited from the Commission on Human Rights. Unfortunately, despite the undeniable merits of the special procedures, they also had severe defects, for which they were rightly criticized. We must make sure that human rights machinery operates in a less politicized manner and that special procedures are carried out in strict accordance with the Code of Conduct for Special Procedures Mandate-holders of the Human Rights Council, which was adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-second session in resolution 62/219. From an institutional point of view, the Council is now characterized by new types of relationships between States and civil society, without which the Council would be unable to meet its potential. Russia hopes that relations between the Council and non-governmental human rights organizations will be founded on a basis of mutual respect and constructive dialogue.

Russia supports initiatives to ensure more active participation by the Human Rights Council in reviewing the basic directions being pursued by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in its work, including planning and the implementation and management of the programmes of the Office at the global, regional and national levels. Relations between the Council and the Office of the High Commissioner must be transparent with genuine feedback. In relations between the Council and the Office of the High Commissioner the same principles should apply as applied between the Office of the High Commissioner and the old Commission on Human Rights, especially as regards accountability. The provisions of resolution 48/141 regarding the mandate of the High Commissioner should apply to the Human Rights Council mandate as well.

In a more general way, the ultimate goal of the cooperative efforts of the Council and the Office of the High Commissioner should be to eliminate duplication of efforts in the work of United Nations human rights bodies, which, for their part, must be complementary rather than competitive. The Vienna Declaration and

Programme of Action reiterated that human rights are equal, indivisible, interdependent and complementary. We therefore wish to remind the Human Rights Council to allot equal attention in its work to all categories and norms in the protection of human rights. We believe that that must be a fundamental principle in setting the Council's priorities and agenda, in both the short and long term.

We also believe that the Council should give due attention to certain other conceptual issues. Given the importance of the intercivilizational and intercultural components of the United Nations work, we believe it appropriate that the main intergovernmental human rights body should deal with the relationships and mutual influence between the norms and standards in human rights and traditional values. We believe that universal standards with regard to human rights stem from the various civilizations and cultural and historical traditions in different societies. That unites us in our commitment to human rights; it does not divide us. We believe that the resolutions on that topic adopted at the initiative of Russia provide a good basis for such an approach.

As to whether the Human Rights Council of the United Nations will be able to meet the hopes placed on it depends, to a large extent, on us as Member States. The guarantee for success is our readiness to listen to each other, to consider and respect the views of others, and to implement our own decisions effectively. We call on partners among Member States and representatives of civil society to take stock of these aspects of the issue so as to make the Human Rights Council truly effective and productive.

**Mr. Mohamed** (Maldives): Allow me at the outset to thank Her Excellency Ambassador Laura Dupuy Lasserre, President of the Human Rights Council, for joining us here today and for presenting the report of the Human Rights Council to the General Assembly (A/66/53 and A/65/53/Add.1). We also welcome the opportunity to reflect on an eventful year for the Human Rights Council, and we appreciate the leadership taken by the Council on a number of issues of concern to the international community.

As a member of the Human Rights Council, the Maldives has taken onboard what is expected of a member State, that is, to be responsible and actively advocate for the protection of basic rights and fundamental freedoms for all. We pledge our continued

support to the cause of promoting and protecting human rights, and will continue our work domestically and internationally in that regard.

This year has been a historic one. The events in the Middle East prove that all peoples, regardless of race, ethnicity or religion, yearn for their freedoms and the full recognition of their basic rights. We commend the transitions that have taken place in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, and encourage those States to fulfil their obligations to their citizens and to swiftly move towards implementing the necessary structural reforms.

However, we must be mindful that every human being is entitled to his or her rights, and we call on all parties to cease the ongoing violence, to discourage extrajudicial retributions against former adversaries, and to work to ensure protection from abuse as their countries move through their transition phase. We strongly encourage countries undergoing civil unrest to engage in dialogue that will lead to peaceful and substantive reforms.

It is the work of the Human Rights Council, and the United Nations as a whole, to facilitate such outcomes. We call upon all States in the process of transition to work closely with United Nations bodies in order to establish the necessary institutions, including an independent judiciary and proper human rights mechanisms, and to ensure the establishment of an inclusive and democratic system of Government.

*Mr. Shin Dong Ik (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

As noted, Maldives has been active in the area of human rights since we underwent our own transition to a democratic system of Government three years ago. We have used our own experience to define our human rights principles. Based on those guiding principles, we have been able to participate in a number of issues at the international level, including the protection of the rights of women and the review of the work of the Human Rights Council.

The Maldives also took a lead role in other areas of importance and concern. In response to the unfolding events in the Middle East, we took action in the Human Rights Council in calling for special sessions on Libya and Syria. We co-sponsored the resolutions establishing commissions of inquiry to look into allegations of gross human rights violations in both of those countries.

In addition, the Maldives, working with a number of other key countries, also played an important part in the negotiations on the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure. We took part in the discussions with a view to bridging the differences of opinion among delegations and to underlining the fundamental nature of a communications procedure to protect the rights of children. We hope that the resolution, which the Council adopted in Geneva in June, will be adopted by the General Assembly as well, after which it will be open for signature in 2012. We call on all countries to support the adoption of that draft resolution by consensus in the General Assembly.

No Member State of the United Nations has a perfect human rights record. However, we strongly believe that engagement with the Human Rights Council and its machinery, including the Universal Periodic Review, would yield better results for Member States, as the Council has the potential to assist countries on a number of the challenges that they face. With that in mind, the Maldives was in the core group of countries that called for the establishment of new special procedures on the freedom of assembly and on laws that discriminate against women, a special procedure on truth, justice and reconciliation, and, lastly, the establishment of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On the issue of Palestine, the Maldives continues to extend its unwavering support for the creation of an independent State of Palestine, living side by side and at peace with the State of Israel. We remain extremely concerned about the human rights situation in Gaza and the fate of the Palestinian people suffering under the Israeli blockade. We call upon all parties concerned to take on board the recommendations contained in the report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (see A/64/490, annex), and to take immediate measures to protect the rights of all Palestinian people.

Domestically, we have continued our own processes of establishing and strengthening critical human rights institutions. While we are proud of the progress that we have made, we recognize the steps that need to be taken to promote and protect the full rights of all our citizens. As a priority, we must ensure that we have a functioning independent judiciary that

understands its role as a protector of the rule of law and human rights.

We must also continue to appoint and to elect an increasing number of women to all branches of the judiciary and to areas of the public and private sectors. In addition, we must provide our youth with the education, opportunity and proper social institutions, so as to ensure that they receive the necessary tools to contribute to the betterment of society and understanding of the universality of human rights.

In the coming year, the Maldives would like to see a continued focus on the human rights situations in the emerging democracies in the Middle East, the achievement of greater equality for women and stronger protection of the rights of the child.

In that regard, we stand ready to lend our assistance and to extend our continued commitment to improving human rights globally. We look forward to continuing that work with great optimism, as we see democracy and a greater recognition of human rights spread throughout the world.

**Mr. Haniff** (Malaysia): The General Assembly, in its resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006, decided that the Human Rights Council should review its work and functioning within five years of its establishment and report to the General Assembly. Pursuant to the mandate authorized by resolution A/HRC/12/1, Malaysia was delighted to note the commencement of an open-ended intergovernmental working group to review the work and functioning of the Council and the commendable efforts of the President of the Human Rights Council in holding open-ended informal consultations on 26 May, 30 August and 6 September 2010, respectively, to further delineate the process and the modalities of the review.

The review process, which was convened in two separate sessions in October 2010 and February 2011, was aimed at strengthening the Council in its ability to protect and promote human rights. The review process therefore attempted to improve various aspects of the Council's work, including the Universal Periodic Review, special procedures, the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, the complaints procedures, the agenda of and framework for a programme of work, and the Council's methods of work and rules of procedure.

My delegation wishes to make some comments on the Universal Periodic Review and the special procedures. Allow me, first, to commend some of the encouraging assessments of and recommendations for the focus and modalities of the Review. Given the complexity of human rights issues, the recommendation to extend the review cycle to four and a half years, and with the existing resources and workload, is indeed welcome. In that regard, Malaysia notes with appreciation the recommendation that the Universal Periodic Review Voluntary Trust Fund to facilitate the participation of States, established by Human Rights Council resolution 6/17, should be strengthened and operationalized to encourage significant participation of developing countries, particularly the least developed countries and small island developing States, in their reviews.

In the area of special procedures, in line with Council resolution 5/2, States should cooperate with and assist special procedures in the performance of their tasks, and it is incumbent upon mandate holders to exercise their functions in accordance with their mandates and in compliance with the code of conduct. As enshrined in the Paris Principles, the integrity and independence of the special procedures and the principles of cooperation, transparency and accountability are integral to ensuring a robust system of special procedures that will enhance the Council's capacity to address human rights situations on the ground.

We take note of the work of the special procedures in fostering a constructive dialogue with States. By the same token, we would encourage the special procedures with country-specific mandates to closely examine the concerned country's internal situation in order to provide reports that would help to improve the internal human rights situations, while taking into consideration the views of the majority.

In Malaysia's view, the purpose of the Human Rights Council review is to enhance the Council's effectiveness and efficiency in discharging its mandate. That requires achieving consensus on practical and realistic outcomes. Malaysia notes with appreciation that the review process is a continuous effort, and the review is the first step in a continuing journey. In Malaysia's view, the Council should continue its efforts to become more responsive to that quest, which reflects the determination to seize the opportunity of the review to streamline the Council's work and maintain and

increase its relevance to the human rights situation on the ground.

Lastly, Malaysia fully supports the holistic goals of the review process of the Human Rights Council, which aims to contribute to the betterment of human rights. It is our utmost hope that the outcome of the review process will be geared to maintaining the principles of objectivity, inclusiveness, non-politicization, non-confrontation and, above all, avoiding double standards and ensuring the equal and fair participation of all States, which should remain the fundamental requisite of this State-driven process.

**Mr. Lanlehin** (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation warmly welcomes the President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Laura Dupuy Lasserre, to New York for this important event — the presentation of the report of the Human Rights Council (A/66/53 and Add.1). We commend and thank Ambassador Lasserre for her astute leadership of the Human Rights Council, just as we commend and thank her predecessor, Ambassador Sihasak Phuangketkeow, for his contributions to advancing the work of the Council. We acknowledge the fact that part of this report relates to the time period when Ambassador Phuangketkeow was in office.

We associate ourselves with the statement made earlier by the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the African Group.

Nigeria, as a democratic country, attaches great importance to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, not only within our country but across the world. It is for this reason that we are actively engaged with the Human Rights Council and interested in seeing the Council achieve the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly, which is to promote and protect fundamental human rights.

Nigeria is pleased to note the Council's substantial efforts towards achieving its mandate. The fact that it meets in three annual regular sessions, as well as special sessions, allows it to devote attention to global human rights issues in a timely and effective manner. Its various special procedures are also significant in that regard. The wide range of issues contained in the Council's report and even its sheer volume reflect the complexity and multiplicity of issues that the Council has dealt with.

We urge that the work of the Council continue to be guided by resolution 60/251 and solidly grounded on the fundamental principles underpinning the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on human rights. While we see the Council as a unique tool for the protection and promotion of all human rights, be they civil, political, economic, social or cultural, we also hold the view that a focus on economic, social and cultural rights might serve as the Council's own contribution to assisting States to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

The Nigerian delegation would like to commend the Human Rights Council for two important achievements, namely, the completion of the first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the conclusion of the review process on the work and functioning of the Human Rights Council. The UPR has so far proven to be quite successful. It is quite remarkable that since the first session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review in February 2008, this mechanism has attracted 100 per cent participation by States. We look forward to the commencement of the second cycle of the UPR, and we expect it to reinforce the importance of the UPR mechanism as a means of promoting and protecting human rights across the world.

Nigeria is pleased to note the substantial increase in the number of standing invitations issued to special procedures and the growing number of States ratifying the core human rights instruments. Nigeria welcomes the adoption in Geneva of the outcome of the review of the work and functioning of the Human Rights Council and the subsequent endorsement of the document by the General Assembly in June.

Nigeria would like to acknowledge the fact that people across the world expect the United Nations to protect their human rights and fundamental freedoms. We see evidence of that in the active participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the activities of the Human Rights Council. We welcome the Council's engagement with NGOs as a way of enabling the voice of the people to be heard.

Finally, we would like to underscore the importance of States' cooperation in advancing the work of the Human Rights Council. We seize this opportunity to affirm our unwavering commitment to cooperate with all States in that regard.

**Mr. Errázuriz** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the presentation to the Assembly by the President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Laura Dupuy Lasserre of Uruguay. It is the first time that the President of the Council has personally done that. That is a direct result of the review process of the Council that was approved by the Assembly in June.

Chile congratulates the President of the Council, Ambassador Dupuy Lasserre, on her leading of the Council's work. Her presidency, and through her, that of her country, reflects the international community's recognition of Uruguay's important contribution in the area of human rights.

Chile has actively participated in the review of the Human Rights Council in both Geneva and in New York. At both venues, we proposed that the Council should have resources sufficient to be able to fulfil its functions promptly and effectively. In that way, depending on the urgency of a particular crisis, it will be well positioned either to make a difference on the ground or to carry out its normal functions as required by the international community.

Today we heard from the President that the Council needs more funds in order to function better, especially for the conference services needed to handle

the flow of national reports submitted as part of the Universal Periodic Review. The presidency of the Human Rights Council can count on Chile's support.

In her report, the Council President detailed the activities carried out by the Council over the past year, not only during its regular sessions to receive reports under the Universal Periodic Review process, but also during its special sessions and commissions of inquiry. Those activities were noteworthy for their dispatch and for dealing with specific situations, and they made a difference.

The most important aspects of the human rights architecture, in particular of the special procedures, are the independence and impartiality of its senior officials, as well as the Council's non-selective and non-discriminatory approach. All of those aspects must underpin the Council's work in deciding when it needs to set up a special procedure in a given situation. We are sure that under Ms. Lasserre's guidance the Council will proceed in the same manner.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 64.

*The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.*