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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Organizational Meeting

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 20 June 2007, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. COSTEA (Romania)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

REPORT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL ON THE WORK OF ITS FIFTH SESSION
(A/HRC/5/L.10)

1. Mr. BURAYZAT (Jordan), Vice-President and Rapporteur, introducing the draft report on the work of the fifth session of the Council (A/HRC/5/L.10), welcomed the fact that a balanced package had been achieved on the issue of institution-building. While the content of the package was important, that achievement could be enhanced by continued promotion of the reform process within the Council in a spirit of compromise, cooperation and renewal. The Council had demonstrated that it was possible to reconcile political imperatives with the protection and promotion of human rights. The most important aspect of the outcome of the 9th meeting of the session was not its timing, but the fact that it had been achieved by consensus. It would assist the cause of human rights if the same consensual approach were to prevail in the future work of the Council.
2. Mr. CORMIER (Canada) said that his delegation remained of the opinion that no consensus had been reached in the final minutes of the 9th meeting held on 18 June: that fact should be recorded in the report of the fifth session. Canada had not agreed to the package that had been presented to the Council at midnight on that date, and had not seen the final version of the texts embodying the package until the following day.
3. A Council decision on a specific issue could only be taken by consensus or by majority vote, not by a vote on a procedural motion of the kind that had taken place the previous day.
4. Mr. BURAYZAT (Jordan), Vice-President and Rapporteur, said that his use of the word “consensus” had not been intended to imply unanimity or to prejudice any country’s position on the package.
5. Mr. JAYATILLEKA (Sri Lanka) said that the vote held at the previous day’s meeting showed that a consensus had been reached on the existence of a consensus.

GIFT FROM THE KINGDOM OF SPAIN

6. The PRESIDENT announced that Spain had provided financial assistance for the refurbishment of Room XX of the Palais des Nations, which was to be made available to the Human Rights Council for its work. He thanked King Juan Carlos I and the Government and people of Spain for their generous gift.
7. Mr. ARÍSTEGUI LABORDE (Observer for Spain) said that Spain was honoured to contribute to the consolidation of the Human Rights Council through the refurbishment of Room XX, the new “Human Rights Room” of the Palais des Nations, which was to be

embellished with a work by the Spanish artist, Miquel Barceló, and was undoubtedly destined to acquire iconic significance and symbolism within the United Nations as a whole.

8. Ms. ARBOUR (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) welcomed the completion of the institution-building phase of the Human Rights Council and commended the spirit of cooperation and mutual respect which remained the hallmark of its work. She expressed delight that the Council would soon have a room of its own, a dedicated space to further its transformation into a modern, forward-looking and reinvigorated institution.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.