



BANGLADESH

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Statement by

Mr. Md. Mustafizur Rahman, Deputy Permanent Representative of Bangladesh
on the Report of the Human Rights Council under agenda item 64

at the plenary of the 67th UNGA

New York, 14 November 2012

Mr. President,

My delegation appreciates Ambassador Laura Dupuy Lassaerre, President of the Human Rights Council for the presentation of the annual report. We appreciate her able stewardship in taking forward the work of the Council in last one year. We welcome the opportunity to interact with her and share our views on the activities of the Council.

Mr. President,

My delegation had and still has high expectation from the Human Rights Council, the principal body of the UN for the promotion and protection of human rights. The Council with its institutional machinery; such as, the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism, the Special Procedures, the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee and the Complaint Procedure is, indeed, in a position to bring significant improvements in the enjoyment of human rights. By establishing the Council, our predecessors intended to bring in a new era in the human rights discourse and to introduce a new culture in dealing with human rights. We are disturbed by the news of increasing polarization in the Council. This is not a good sign. If we do not move away from this path and do not seek mutual respect and understanding, the body may soon be

discredited as its predecessor, the Commission for Human Rights. It is important to nurture this as a forum that fosters dialogue and cooperation instead of divisiveness and confrontation. Our efforts should be to make the human rights mechanisms more transparent, accountable and balanced so that real change can be brought in the human rights protection. As the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, all victims of human rights abuses should be able to look at the Human Rights Council as a forum and a springboard for action.

The creation of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism was one of the most significant innovations in the area of human rights. Its greatest strength lies on its universality, with all countries facing scrutiny regardless of their region, size, or influence. This peer review mechanism is supposed to create an environment of mutual trust, confidence and understanding. If we can exploit its full potential, the mechanism may change the culture of human rights discourse. With the second cycle of UPR in motion, we expect it to be developed into a more meaningful and effective mechanism so that we can eventually get rid of naming and shaming through the controversial country specific mechanisms.

Our delegation concurs that the system of Special Procedures is important to ensure the effective promotion and protection of human rights. We were pleased to see some improvements brought into the system. The streamlined appointment procedure of mandate holders can be mentioned here in this connection. The selection process may be further improved through, inter alia, efficient outreach and periodic updating of the roster. With the code of conduct in place, we believe that the special procedure is in a right track to garner greater legitimacy it lacked before. However, there are still reports of non-compliance of the code that was very meticulously crafted and unanimously adopted. We would emphasize the critical importance of the mandate holders to abide by the code of conduct and remain within the respective jurisdiction for proper functioning and credibility of the procedure. On the creation of new mandates, the Council should be cautious against unnecessary proliferation or attaching undue

importance to a particular group of rights or thematic areas. In total, there should be a balance between the two major groups of rights. The Council should also avoid bringing in controversial issues or norms that are not universally accepted through any loop holes.

Mr. President:

Relationship of the High Commissioners Office with the Human Rights Council remains an issue. We attach great importance to the position of the High Commissioner in promoting and protecting human rights. High Commissioners have over the years played an important role in upholding human rights all over the world. We do support noninterference in her activities. However, as it is the case in other bodies of the UN, the Human Rights Council should have overseeing responsibility. This issue needs to be considered at an appropriate time.

The Council is organizing increasingly more special sessions to deal with human right emergencies. The initiative, nevertheless, remains focused up until now on country situations. There are critical thematic issues that deserve urgent attention. We had one such session on the impact of financial crisis on human rights couple of years ago. There should be many more such sessions on contemporary issues of importance. I can mention, for example, incitement of hatred in the internet. There is an urgent need to address such developments before it creates further division in society, and breeds further intolerance and hatred.

Mr. President,

As the workload of the Council is ever increasing, we cannot and should not ignore its financial needs. It is a pity that the Council is not provided with sufficient money to function properly. A mechanism like UPR suffers due to inadequate budget provision for translation services. If we want to see it work as a robust body, we have to ensure necessary means at its disposal. We would urge on the General Assembly to keep this into consideration when the budgetary issue is considered in the relevant committee.

I thank you Mr. President.