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**STATEMENT BY**  
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**DENMARK**  
**AT THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE**  
**UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

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Check against delivery

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished members of the  
Human Rights Council,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Initially I wish to endorse fully the statement by Dr. Steinmeier on behalf of the European Union.

With globalisation and new issues on today's international agenda, we need strong multilateral cooperation. With more and more problems being of transnational character, we need international organisations that are geared to meet the new challenges.

Denmark worked hard to establish the new Human Rights Council and it is a privilege to address the Council today. The Council must be the central human rights body of the United Nations. We need to make it effective, credible and operative.

Denmark stands ready to shoulder its responsibility and is therefore candidate for a seat on the Human Rights Council at the upcoming elections. A joint

candidate of the Nordic countries, that is. Our policy to this effect is explained in detail in our written pledges and commitments.

Mr. Chairman

Dialogue and consensus must be at the core of the Human Rights Council, as it is in Denmark's own human rights policy. An open, transparent and genuine dialogue with all actors lies at the heart of this principle.

If consensus cannot be reached however, we must not remain paralysed. If dialogue within the Council has failed and action needs to be taken, the Human Rights Council should stand ready to act in the interest of the victims of human rights violations and the credibility of the Council.

The will and the ability of the Council to address specific human rights problems is crucial. But it is also important that the Council is able to offer ways and means to alleviate the root causes of such problems. How could this be done? We believe by integrating offers of technical assistance in the Council's toolbox.

The Human Rights Council should assess needs, *inter alia* through the Special Procedures and the Universal Periodic Review, and recommend specific measures to be taken in cooperation with the country in question.

Our dialogue should not only be a dialogue among states. Human rights affect civil society. And NGOs and National Human Rights Institutions are strong voices of civil society and very often the victims of human rights abuses. These voices need to be heard in the Council. Their expertise and commitment are important to us, and they deserve our full attention. This is also true for the indigenous peoples. The commitment of Denmark to the worldwide aspirations of the indigenous peoples remains unabated.

Mr Chairman,

Denmark considers respect for human rights, democratisation and good governance as keys to development. And development assistance is an important instrument to support respect for human rights.

Denmark remains one of the world's largest bilateral donors of development assistance per capita. In this context Denmark also provides significant voluntary contributions to UN funds, programmes and agencies. This includes *inter alia* the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Voluntary Fund for Torture Victims and the funds assisting indigenous peoples, as well as the High Commissioner's activities at country level.

Mr. Chairman,

Independent and effective monitoring is of the essence in constructing and working with the instruments of the Human Rights Council. All states need to cooperate fully and in good faith with the monitoring procedures and the mechanisms for individual and inter state applications under the human rights conventions.

Sudan's reaction to the request to visit Darfur by the HRC mission does not represent cooperation in good faith. The mission concluded that the Government of Sudan has manifestly failed to protect the population of Darfur from large-scale international crimes and has itself orchestrated and participated

in these crimes. The Government of Sudan must comply with its obligations under international law and ensure the free and safe movement of human rights monitors as well as afford full cooperation with ICC. We expect the Council to draw the appropriate consequences.

Strengthening the international legal order was a cross cutting priority for Denmark during its membership of the Security Council 2005 – 2006. In June 2006, the Security Council under Danish presidency adopted unanimously a presidential statement, which underscored the imperative of fighting impunity for the most serious crimes under international law and of upholding procedural rights in the sanctions regimes against terrorism. And as chair of the Security Council Terrorism Committee in the same period, Denmark worked resolutely to strengthen respect for human rights in the fight against terrorism and succeeded in the end of this year in establishing a “delisting mechanism”.

Mr Chairman,

Regrettably torture is a problem on the rise, not a problem in decline - despite the entry into force 20 years ago of the UN Convention against Torture. But this

year the Subcommittee for the Prevention of Torture under the Optional Protocol to the Convention is commencing its work. This is indeed an innovative and proactive instrument focused on prevention rather than condemnation. The EU Policy Guidelines against torture are another example of a practical approach to fighting torture. The Human Rights Council as well as the bilateral development assistance could develop frameworks for bilateral cooperation against torture on the ground.

The death penalty is a problem closely related to torture. Denmark is strongly committed to the abolition of capital punishment. Taking someone's life to make the point that killing is repulsive does not make sense.

Mr Chairman,

The duty to ensure respect for human rights rests with the respective national authorities, and nations need assistance to shoulder this obvious human obligation. But it is also a global human responsibility, which rests upon all of us. And when nations fail, we cannot sit idle by and observe. It is our common and individual duty to act in the face of human rights violations. That is why the