

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Mission Permanente du Royaume
d'Arabie Saoudite auprès
des Nations Unies
Genève



الوفد الدائم للمملكة العربية السعودية
لدى المقر الأوربي للأمم المتحدة
جنيف

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**STATEMENT OF THE
KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA**

DELIVERED BY

**H.H. Dr. Turki Bin Mohammed Bin Saud AL-KABEER
VICE-MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**AT THE 4TH SESSION OF THE
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**GENEVA,
13 MARCH 2007**

Mr. Chairman,
Madam High Commissioner,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has pleasure in expressing to you personally, Mr. Chairman, and to the members of your distinguished Bureau and the staff of your secretariat our gratitude and appreciation for the endeavours that you have made, since your assumption of the chairmanship of this Council, to reconcile viewpoints and eliminate the divergences and obstacles impeding the institution building of this Council in a manner consistent with its lofty mission and its high standing and in such a way as to exclude any methodologies or practices that might remove it from its designated framework or return it to the era of politicization and double standards.

I would like to take this opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to commend the endeavours being made by the working groups concerned with this Council's institution building, in accordance with resolution 60/251, and by all their facilitators. I wish to reaffirm my country's position, namely that, if we want this Council to be established on a firm basis capable of promoting and protecting human rights, we must closely examine the negative aspects of the past in order to remedy them and avoid their recurrence. If we succeed in this, we will be able to explore frameworks for cooperation and joint action to promote and protect human rights in a rational, transparent, just and equitable manner. We are confident that the members of this distinguished Council possess the will and determination needed to achieve its goals by formulating its working methods and procedures in a practical manner and studying appropriate ways and means to give effect to its resolutions.

Mr. Chairman,

The establishment of a strong Council with practical human rights mechanisms necessitates consideration of the facts of history and the requirements of logic. It is impossible to act without regard for the factors underlying the momentous events that are taking place in many regions of the world, including the Middle East, and which have given rise to erroneous concepts and ideas that are inconsistent with the values and principles in which the peoples of the region believe. We must jointly confront these misconceptions in order to prevent them from adversely affecting the work of this Council.

With regard to this distinguished Council's programme of work, my delegation emphasizes the primary need for a structured agenda comprising all the important and substantive issues in such a way as to promote and protect all political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights, including a number of issues that were regularly addressed by our previous Commission.

Mr. Chairman,

Human development, economic prosperity and political stability constitute the fundamental requirements for a better future for mankind as a whole and any endeavours made to this end will inevitably support, strengthen, enhance and help to safeguard human rights. In view of the disturbances and convulsions that are occurring in the Middle Eastern region as a result of the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict, the deteriorating situation in Iraq and the crisis in Lebanon,

there is a need for concerted international efforts to achieve security and stability in this part of the world. This can only be done by addressing the obstacles to the achievement of a peace based on justice and international legitimacy since the continued Israeli occupation of Arab territories will not put an end to the spiral of violence, extremism, terrorism and violation of the rights of others. Bearing in mind the fact that occupation constitutes a form of violation of human rights and international humanitarian law and impedes the enjoyment by individuals of all the God-given constituents of a decent life, that violence breeds only violence and that repression and tyranny are characteristics that kindle resentment and hatred, this Council must consider the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory from a purely humanitarian standpoint and must determine ways and means to put an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people. To this end, there is an imperative need to strengthen the mechanisms that have been established to deal systematically with Israeli practices and to find ways to enable these mechanisms to fulfil the mandates assigned to them by this Council.

Mr. Chairman,

Israel's transgressions have not been confined to depriving the Palestinians of their right to perform their religious ceremonies and exercise the universally recognized freedom of worship; they have even encroached on the sanctity of Jerusalem, one of the world's most sacred sites for all the divinely-revealed religions, specifically by disdainfully inflaming Muslim sensibilities by carrying out acts of demolition and excavations within the precincts and below the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque in gross violation of the sacrosanct nature of the Mosque and in a manner that threatens to sap its substructure and obliterate its distinctive and symbolic Islamic religious features. Moreover, ongoing attempts are being made to Judaize the City of Jerusalem, rob it of its identity and conceal its Islamic and Arab nature. My delegation deplores and condemns such acts and practices and calls upon the international community to intervene in a resolute manner to oppose and halt these acts and practices which, being designed to alter the religious and cultural identity of Holy Jerusalem, are provoking and deriding Muslim sensibilities. In this regard, we are eagerly awaiting the conclusions of the technical mission dispatched by the Director-General of UNESCO to look into Israel's activities on the access road to the Haram al-Sharif, bearing in mind that the mission's work was completed on 2 March of this year. We believe that your distinguished Council, for its part, should actively fulfil its role of safeguarding freedom of worship, the inviolability of holy places and respect for all cultures, as advocated in the relevant International Covenants.

The Kingdom's Government is diligently pursuing its conflict resolution endeavours, the most recent of which consisted in bringing the Palestinian factions together at the Makkah Conference, which led to the announcement of the Makkah Agreement aimed at reconciling Palestinian viewpoints and settling disputes among the factions on the basis of their belief that these steps will help to ensure the region's security and stability and contain its conflicts.

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Recent years have shown that the crises from which our international community is suffering are attributable to a lack of balanced human dialogue and the existence of irresponsible tendencies that are doing their utmost to exploit the present situation with a view to the incitement of conflict, racial discrimination and discrimination based on religion or belief in order to further certain aims that are totally inconsistent with the principles of human rights. We must therefore adopt a judicious and careful approach to overcome this crisis, with the minimum of detriment and losses, through tolerance, dialogue and rejection of discrimination in all its forms. In this context, it is important to emphasize that Islam, as a faith, a culture and a mode of life, advocates

the preservation and protection of human dignity, the maintenance of social cohesion, tolerance and dialogue with others and respect for their particularities.

Mr. Chairman,

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has made diligent endeavours to promote and protect human rights, believing that the responsibility for safeguarding human rights lies primarily with Governments, supported by relevant civil society organizations and international institutions. To this end, the Kingdom has established a governmental Commission headed by an official holding ministerial rank and comprising divisions responsible for human rights-related issues in the governmental departments concerned. Authorization has been granted for the establishment of a non-governmental Human Rights Association, which is making great efforts to protect human rights. A series of legislative acts, including a Code of Criminal Procedure, a Code of Civil Procedure and a Code of Practice for Lawyers, have been promulgated which have a direct bearing on the promotion of individual and collective rights. A new Code of Judicial Practice, which will greatly help to cover all legal procedures in such a way as to safeguard all aspects of human rights, is also in the final stages of promulgation. Within the context of the modernization measures on which the Kingdom has embarked in connection with individual and collective rights, I also wish to draw attention, Mr. Chairman, to the fact that the Kingdom has recently adopted a National Strategy to Protect Integrity and Combat Corruption with a view to safeguarding Saudi society from the dangers of corruption. This will be done through the establishment of a National Commission to Combat Corruption, which will monitor the implementation of the National Strategy, assess and evaluate its results, and formulate programmes and mechanisms to ensure its application by the governmental agencies responsible for protecting integrity and combating corruption through the exercise of their authority, application of the pertinent regulations, the curtailing and facilitation of routine procedures and application of the principle of the accountability of each official, regardless of his rank or the scope of his responsibility.

Mr. Chairman,

The question of this Council's institution building must be accorded sufficient time and effort at this crucial stage by making it one of your working priorities, especially as we are approaching the deadline set in resolution 60/251, so that we can address the important questions requiring action by your distinguished Council, such as the issues of poverty, globalization, the right to development and matters of direct concern to individuals. We are confident that this Council will provide opportunities to discuss the formulation of its programme of work and its future activities and to deliberate on matters affecting our present and our future. My delegation hopes that a consensus will be reached in your distinguished Council on all the important issues.

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

My delegation will spare no effort to facilitate the fulfilment of this Council's lofty mission. We believe that the Council will not be strong enough to fulfil its tasks without a solid infrastructural foundation based, inter alia, on democratic practice, transparent presentation, credibility of substance and a guarantee of equitable appraisal and judgement. We are confident, Mr. Chairman, that your skilled direction, with the support of your distinguished Bureau and the Office of the High Commissioner, will effectively help us to achieve our goals and our expectations of this Council.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.