

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.E. Dr. Nizar Obaid MADANI**  
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

**AT THE 61<sup>ST</sup> SESSION OF THE  
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

**GENEVA,  
15 MARCH 2005**

Mr. Chairman,  
Madam High Commissioner for Human Rights,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in beginning my statement before this distinguished gathering by expressing to you, Mr. Chairman, and to your friendly country Indonesia our sincere congratulations on your election as Chairman of this session of the Commission on Human Rights. Your election unquestionably reflects the extent of the respect and high esteem that both you and your country enjoy. We are confident that your wisdom, experience and wide knowledge will help to ensure the successful outcome of this session's work. I also have pleasure in expressing to your predecessor, Ambassador Mike Smith, our gratitude for his effective role and commendable endeavours during his chairmanship of the previous session.

At the same time, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome H.E. the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to whom I wish every success in her demanding task of promoting and protecting human rights.

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Delegates,

Respect for human rights constitutes a fundamental component of the policy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as emphasized in its Basic Law, since my country's Government believes that the primary responsibility for safeguarding human rights lies with Governments, supported by civil society organizations and international institutions, including the Commission on Human Rights. In this context, the National Human Rights Commission that was established in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is continuing to play its role of helping to protect and develop human rights concepts in a fully independent and transparent manner. Its activities have recently been expanded, especially in regard to the monitoring of conditions in prisons and reform institutions in order to ensure that the rights of prisoners and accused persons are respected and that no violations are committed against them.

Mr. Chairman,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has made considerable progress in the adoption of measures to promote and protect human rights, since it believes in the importance of developing individuals and society in a manner consistent with their own particularities and requirements rather than with theories and concepts imposed on it from abroad. To this end, the Kingdom has promulgated a Basic Law, instituted a national dialogue among all sections of Saudi society and broadened the membership of the Consultative Council, whose competence has been extended to include the review and development of laws and regulations. The Kingdom has also begun a process of municipal elections in which it is taken for granted that Saudi citizens are competent to participate in decisions affecting their lives. In this connection, I would also like to refer to the statements made by some of the Kingdom's officials affirming that there is nothing to prevent Saudi women from participating in future elections.

With regard to Saudi women and their role in the reform process, it should be noted that the Kingdom's educational reforms have produced a new generation of highly educated, trained and knowledgeable women who are now taking their proper place in Saudi society. In addition to the various employment opportunities that they enjoy in the public and private sectors, women can now be recruited and employed by governmental institutions, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The State has also shown fundamental concern for the judicial system through the promulgation of a number of laws and enactments to regulate and develop civil and criminal procedures and the practice of law. These regulatory reforms comprise more than 25 new enactments in the fields of foreign investment, insurance, financial markets, taxation and procedures to prevent money-laundering and financial fraud, in addition to the introduction of a number of anti-corruption measures.

With regard to prisons, international reports have indicated that the Prisons Administration in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is complying with international standards. This was also confirmed by Mr. Cumaraswamy, the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, during his visit to the Kingdom in the course of which he inspected its prisons.

Saudi society, Mr. Chairman, is by nature a conservative society that needs to be convinced that the benefits of development will not have an adverse impact on its religious beliefs. The municipal elections showed that a large section of society is most ready to respond favourably to gradual and carefully studied modernization

Mr. Chairman,

The international community is facing tremendous challenges in all fields. These challenges, which are closely linked to the relationship between the individual and society and the relationship between governments and the governed, are not confined to domestic structures and policies; in fact, they extend to the international community as a whole.

The greatest challenge facing us all at the present time may well be the need to combat the scourge of terrorism, which is no longer merely a local concern of particular States and their legal systems since it has become one of the goals of the new international order. My country has been, and still is, a target of indiscriminate terrorism which has taken a heavy toll of innocent lives. Accordingly, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has repeatedly, and in the strongest terms, denounced, condemned and deplored terrorism, all forms of which are incompatible with its Constitution based on the Holy Qur'an and the practice of His Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace). It has also affirmed its determination to continue to make every possible effort to combat this scourge, and anyone who attempts to finance or abet it, until it is totally eradicated. The Kingdom hopes that all States will play their role in this regard, particularly by depriving terrorists of any safe refuges in which they might exploit asylum laws to the detriment of human rights concepts by inciting terrorism and promoting ideologies based on hatred and extremism. Within the context of its efforts to combat this scourge, the Kingdom convened an International Conference on Terrorism, which was held in the city of Riyadh from 5 to 8 February 2005 under the patronage of H.R.H. Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz. That Conference, attended by delegates from more than 60 States and international and regional organizations, issued the "Riyadh Declaration", which affirmed the obligation to comply with United Nations resolutions concerning the need to

combat terrorism since that International Organization is the basic forum for the promotion of international cooperation against terrorism. The Declaration further affirmed that no international endeavour to counter the phenomenon of terrorism would be effective in the absence of collective action and a comprehensive strategic perspective to deal with that phenomenon. In this context, the Conference adopted a proposal by H.R.H. the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to establish an International Centre to Combat Terrorism.

The Conference also emphasized that terrorism does not have a particular religion, race, nationality or geographical area and, consequently:

(a) Any attempt to associate terrorism with any religion would, in effect, help terrorists and strengthen the position of extremists. As the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has already affirmed in numerous forums, Islam cannot be blamed for terrorism.

(b) The war against terrorism should not be used as a pretext for violations of the rights of individuals, groups, nations or States.

(c) The fight against terrorism and extremism requires from us all, more than ever before, diligent and concerted national, regional and international endeavours to promote a culture of tolerance, as well as the values of dialogue, an open mind and mutual understanding between cultures and civilizations, and respect for religious values, with all the enriching diversity that they contribute to mankind as a whole, in a manner conducive to the promotion and protection of human rights.

The International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism and Security that was held last week in Madrid affirmed that terrorism is a worldwide phenomenon and, as such, can be eliminated only through collective international action.

Mr. Chairman,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

No modernization or development programme can succeed in the absence of a suitable environment and appropriate circumstances including, in particular, the enjoyment of security, stability and peace. Of all the regions of the world, the Middle East is suffering most from a lack of stability, security and peace due to the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories.

Since the flagrant violations of Palestinian and Arab human rights are standing items on the agenda of this Commission, there is an imperative need for measures to compel Israel to implement this Commission's resolutions in order to establish security and stability in the region.

It is our hope that the recent efforts made to revive the peace process in the Middle East will lead not only to implementation of the Arab peace initiative, proposed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and adopted by the Arab Summit at Beirut in 2002, but also to reactivation of the Road Map and cessation of the construction of the separation wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory which Israel is continuing to erect in total disregard of the ruling of the International Court of Justice in which this wall was declared to be illegal .

Within the region, our sister country Iraq is in dire need of international cooperation and support in order to be able to establish security, achieve stability and consolidate its sovereignty and territorial integrity. In this regard, the Kingdom welcomed the success of the Iraqi elections as a first step towards the rebuilding of a united and stable Iraq living at peace with itself and its neighbours. The Kingdom, for its part, was among the largest contributors to the reconstruction of Iraq at the Madrid Conference of Donor States.

Mr. Chairman,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The agenda of your distinguished Commission comprises a tremendous number of complex topics and issues which need to be addressed in a diligent, well-intentioned and concerted manner. One of the most important issues is the question of poverty and the related right to life, food, medication, education and a proper environment conducive to the promotion of tolerance and the repudiation of terrorism in the light of the fact that hunger, poverty and marginalization help to foster extremist terrorist ideology. There are also other vitally important issues such as globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of human rights, and the question of the right to development. In fact, the efforts of the developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals are being hampered by a reluctance to honour the pledges in which the developed countries undertook, years ago, to allocate 0.7 % of their GNP to development assistance. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has helped to fund the economic and social development endeavours of the developing countries, even though it is itself a developing country with ever-increasing financial needs of its own. The Kingdom has also waived \$ 6 billion in debts due to it from a large number of poor countries and has called upon other donor States to help to alleviate the foreign debt burden of the poor countries in order to support the efforts that the governments of those countries are making to give effect to the economic, social and cultural rights of their peoples.

Mr. Chairman,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your Commission will continue to be an august forum for the safeguarding and upholding of contemporary norms of human rights and human dignity, which have taken on broad and comprehensive significance since, far from being confined to the elimination of torture and racism or realization of the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the International Covenants, they include political, economic and social dimensions such as, in particular, the minimum standard of living needed to preserve the dignity and guarantee the rights of the human person.

Throughout the years since its establishment, your distinguished Commission has played an effective role in elaborating international human rights instruments, setting up mechanisms to implement their provisions and establishing committees of experts to monitor and, where necessary, develop them. The establishment of the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights was a positive step to support the work of your distinguished Commission. I would like to emphasize that all States members of the international community should encourage, develop and support the growing role of this Commission by every possible means, without the need to establish posts or create human rights mechanisms that would be beyond the scope of the Commission's mandate.

To achieve the purpose for which this Commission was established, we must comply with the provisions of international humanitarian law and the International Covenants governing human rights. We must also endeavour to prevent any politicization of this Commission's work by addressing the issues before it on an equal footing, without selectivity and without applying double standards. In this connection, it might be appropriate for me to quote part of the statement made by H.E. the Secretary-General of the United Nations at the opening of the last session of the General Assembly, in which he said:

**“All States – strong and weak, big and small – need a framework of fair rules, which each can be confident that others will obey. Fortunately, such a framework exists. From trade to terrorism, from the law of the sea to weapons of mass destruction, States have created an impressive body of norms and laws. This is one of our Organization's proudest achievements. And yet this framework is riddled with gaps and weaknesses. Too often it is applied selectively, and enforced arbitrarily. It lacks the teeth that turn a body of laws into an effective legal system. Where enforcement capacity does exist, as in the Security Council, many feel it is not always used fairly or effectively. Where the rule of law is most earnestly invoked, as in the Commission on Human Rights, those invoking it do not always practise what they preach. Those who seek to bestow legitimacy must themselves embody it; and those who invoke international law must themselves submit to it.”**

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Delegations,

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as a member of your distinguished Commission, will do its utmost to cooperate with you and with the Office of the High Commissioner in all matters conducive to the promotion and protection of human rights. We are confident that this session will provide a valuable opportunity to address numerous issues affecting our present and our future and which require, more than ever before, joint and concerted efforts on our part to achieve the lofty goals to which your distinguished Commission is aspiring. It is my hope that the Commission's deliberations and endeavours will be fruitful and crowned with success.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.