



SWEDEN

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STATEMENT

BY

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Mr. Chairman,

“Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”

The opening paragraph of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights sets out our shared vision of common values; that every human being is **equal in dignity and rights**.

The fundamental principle of non-discrimination springs from this vision of equality in dignity and rights, and only through the realization of this vision will we be able to create sustainable peace and development for all. Human security and human development require us to focus on the rights of each individual.

It is high time that we take this vision seriously, that we include everybody in our work to promote and enhance human rights and that we now engage in an era of implementation.

I would like to address both these aspects, starting with inclusion of everybody and then addressing the implementation aspect.

Mr. Chairman,

Xenophobia, racial and ethnic discrimination has too long and too often hindered development and peace, for both individuals and societies. In a climate of insecurity, xenophobia and fear of the unknown easily take hold of us. These are however irrational – and irresponsible – answers to complex problems and must not be allowed to prevail. Only through respect for human rights for all, working for our common vision that we are equal in dignity and rights, may we find long-term solutions to social and political problems – and thus increase security.

If racism and xenophobia are not properly fought the danger of such elements being used for various political goals remains high. Conflicts fueled by ethnic or racial hatred become fierce, and atrocities – even **genocide** – may be the result.

Prevention is key to success, and we need to be better at identifying indicators of racism and ethnic intolerance, which may develop into grave human rights violations and conflict. I would like to see close cooperation between the **Special advisor of the Secretary-General on prevention of genocide**, the Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination and other UN special mechanisms in the field of human rights. If these tools are used effectively we will have an important system of **early warning**. It will then be up to all of us to have the commitment and strength to react if and when the warning bells are rung. Cooperation between the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Security Council and the development actors are crucial in this work.

Mr. Chairman,

At least half of the world's population is **women**. Women carry a substantive part of society's responsibilities and duties, but far too often are they deprived of the enjoyment of human rights and democratic powers.

Women all over the world are **victims of violence**, which affects their everyday life. The Swedish ministry for Foreign Affairs yearly publishes human rights reports about all countries in the world. It is striking that domestic violence against women is a problem reported in every one of these almost 200 reports.

Violence committed against women **in the name of honor** continues to threaten the health and even lives of women and girls around the world. In December last year, the Swedish Government organized an international conference on the theme *Combating Patriarchal Violence Against Women – Focusing on Violence in the name of honor*. It is my hope that the outcome of the conference will encourage and contribute to increased co-operation in this area.

The widespread recourse to **sexual violence as a means of warfare** is a frightening example of the most severe violations of the human rights and the dignity of women and young girls. We must make sure that there is no granting of amnesties or **impunity** for crimes against humanity and war crimes including those relating to sexual violence. Equally we must ensure that those, who by the international community are tasked to protect, do not become perpetrators of such crimes. In this regard it is crucial to promote the work to implement and

monitor the landmark Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

To buy or sell a human being is a grave breach against the dignity and rights of that person. Yet **trafficking of human beings** is an increasing and prosperous trade today. The majority of the victims of trafficking are women and girls, and for that reason we need to apply both a gender and a child rights perspective to all policies and programs designed to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings. We need to focus not only on the perpetrators and victims of these crimes, but also on the root causes of trafficking, in particular poverty, gender inequality and lack of respect for human rights.

The empowerment of women and promotion of gender equality is not only a must in order to fulfill our vision of being equal in dignity and rights, but it is crucial for the **eradication of poverty** and our ability to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

It is truly time for women and men in all States to act together to stop all forms of violence and discrimination against women. I welcome the much-needed work and the report from the **Special Rapporteur on violence against women** and I urge all other special rapporteurs to include a gender perspective in their work.

Mr. Chairman,

Well aware of that the issue of **non-discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation** has led to fierce debates in this commission during the past years, I believe that if we together work from our common vision, as stated in the

Universal Declaration on Human Rights, we will be able to agree. We, as human beings, are equal in dignity and rights and everyone has the right to fully enjoy his or her human rights without discrimination on any ground. No one should be arbitrarily executed and everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. We may differ in tradition and culture, but we must be equally committed to our human rights obligations, which are universal.

I am pleased that the Secretary-General has decided that UN-personnel living in homosexual marriages or partnerships will have the same employment benefits as married heterosexual employees, and I urge all UN organs and specialized agencies to follow suit.

Mr. Chairman,

Certain groups in our societies have great difficulty to claim their rights. In many cases it is the structures of our societies that deprive them of their voice, and thus their rights. To achieve our vision of being equal in dignity and rights, we must work consciously to ensure that the right to be heard and listened to is extended to persons belonging to minorities, indigenous people, people with disabilities and, in accordance with age and maturity, children. And we must act to protect the rights of those who cannot be heard. Policies of exclusion must be changed to policies of inclusion.

An important step towards the realization of a world where we are all equal in dignity and rights has been taken through the UN Member States' determination to develop a convention on the enjoyment of all human rights by **persons with disabilities**.

Children around the world affected by armed conflict might be the most vulnerable group of all, and often a group that lacks all resources to fend for their rights. Nowhere is our duty to protect stronger or more urgent. We must adopt a child rights perspective also in the period after conflict, and make sure that the situation of children and their rights are regarded in periods of transition.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me turn to the aspect of implementation.

We all know that words and visions are not enough to bring about change. I very much welcome the report by the **UN High-level Panel on threats, challenges and change**. It is positive that the Panel underlines the importance of integrating human rights across the board in the UN-system.

The panel rightly stresses that in signing the Charter of the United Nations, states not only benefit from the privileges of sovereignty but also accept its responsibilities. I fully share the Panels view that if States are unable or unwilling to protect its own people and to avoid harming its neighbors, the international community should act in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

When it comes down to the concrete proposals of the Panel, I do however believe that we may be bolder. Reforming this commission may be an important step to take, and I welcome the idea of universal membership, but it is not

enough in order to achieve the kind of human rights system we would like to see in place for the future.

The linkages between human rights, sustainable development and peace and security have become increasingly clear and widely accepted. We fully support the idea of further mainstreaming human rights into the work of the **Security Council**, including the more active and frequent involvement of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Security Council deliberations.

Nevertheless, concrete efforts at mainstreaming human rights throughout the UN system are often challenged. We therefore propose that Governments participating at the High-Level Meeting should give their support to the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner by calling on all parts of the United Nations system to concretely implement relevant human rights related decisions. This should include effectively linking the human rights programs with peace keeping and peace building activities in the field, as well as strengthening the UN system at national level to assist governments in implementing their human rights obligations.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion I want to repeat my call for the realization of every human being's right to be treated equally in dignity and right. Let us engage in open and fruitful dialogues of how to make this an era of implementation, adjusting our human rights systems to give everyone a voice.

Thank you.