



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الجمهورية اليمنية
وزارة حقوق الانسان
مكتب الوزير

*Speech of the Republic of Yemen,
61st Session of the Human Rights Commission
Geneva, March 15, 2005,
Amat Al-Alim Al-Soswa,
Minister of Human Rights.*

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure, at the outset, to extend my congratulations on electing you as a chairman of the committee. We have all the trust that your presidency will push the activities of this session forward to obtain the goals for which the Commission holds its sessions.

It's also my pleasure to highly appreciate and profoundly thank your predecessor His Excellency the Ambassador Mike Smith for the outstanding and effective role he played during his chairmanship of the 60th session.

We hope that this session will represent an important step towards reaching concrete achievements in field of human rights all over the world, so that human beings can effectively contribute to building society and bringing about the desired changes.

We are looking forward that this session will meet the international ambitions and aspirations. We also wish the discussions and outputs would be added to the great achievements in the road of promotion and protection of human rights in response to the requirements of this era and current global challenges.

Mr. Chairman ,

Undoubtedly, this global gathering of delegations from all over the world reflects the deep concerns and worries of all nations about human rights.

And the great efforts exerted by those who came before us over the last decades have actually created the current changes.

To mention but a few, the release of the International Human Rights Declaration, which was a victory for rights, justice and freedoms. We can see that clearly in ending colonies, practicing the experience of the national building, promoting human rights and democracy, eradication of illiteracy, and alleviation of poverty.

If we were to evaluate what has been achieved so far, we should admit burdens and challenges facing the many countries which try to move towards development. This requires boosting cooperation with the objective of creating suitable circumstances in order to attain the common goals of the political, economic, social, cultural and educational dimensions.

Mr. Chairman,

It warms the heart, indeed, to see many countries getting started in recent years to positively deal with human rights and show more tolerance and respect of freedom of opinion and expression despite economic, social and legal challenges.

The Republic of Yemen, for instance, has taken positive steps towards practicing democracy and freedom of speech, and it has really been improving year by year in terms of comprehensive development.

As a matter of fact, Yemen has been dealing with the human rights principles as a necessity for building a democratic and fair community.

Yemen tries to get rid of sufferings of the past and to look to more bright and shining future. It seeks to widen the range of democracy and preserving the dignity of citizens in words and actions.

The impartial observer would realize that the situation of the rights of the Yemeni people has improved greatly under the political leadership which confirms its commitments to all human rights conventions , taking into consideration that democracy and human rights are universal and that both of them represent an essential requirement to every simple nation.

The political leadership believes that human rights and democracy are considered to be the rescue ship for political regimes and the safe way to achieve security, stability and development.

Regarding the practical procedures and legal and constitutional guarantees that ensure human rights and freedoms, Yemen has been working to reform its laws in a way that makes them be in line with the democratic trend that it has adopted .

Perhaps it's worth noting , in this regard, that Yemen has already signed and ratified more than (56) international conventions, and treaties.

In the field of political and civil rights, the civil society witnessed over the last 15 years a vital improvement that enhanced the commitment of the government to respect public liberties and basic rights of people , such as rights to move freely, to secure their own properties, to protect their own choices in life, to form political parties and organizations, to establish their own publications that reflect their own ideas, and to create a suitable environment to activate their performance.

At the time being, there are about (4,500) organizations and parties contributing to confirming democracy, through various events including the parliamentary elections of 1993, 1997 and 2003 as well as the presidential elections in 1999, and in the elections of the Local Councils in 2001 with the aim of setting up the decentralization of governance and sharing local societies in building their present and future without any interference.

In fact, civil society organizations have reasonably done their job in the past elections, be it in monitoring or guiding people to their rights as voters or candidates. (fairness

During the last decade , women have been occupying positions they have never occupied before.

In terms of the public employment, there are (69,203) women employees in different administrative units. In educational sector, female employees are now 40,223, nearly 663 of them are principals of schools, 1,400 are deputy principals , (10) are deputy ministers, more than (5) are assistant deputy ministers and (130) are general directors in different government institutions.

Some women were appointed as deans of academic institutes, colleges and universities, and some women were appointed in the consultative council and one woman was elected as a member of Parliament.

Many women are serving as heads of committees and high councils, such as the High Council of Motherhood and Childhood, the Women National Committee.

Additionally, some women were appointed as advisors for the president of the Republic, some others were appointed as advisors for prime Minister.

Many women have also shown the way as businesswomen, forming 22.7 percent of the private business sector.

In the field of mass media, women participate in this sector, which was only limited to men 20 years ago. Chief editors of six newspapers and two magazines are women. There are also some gifted female journalists who write articles and some columns in newspapers and magazines.

As for the judiciary, there are (84) women working in this field . Some (65) women were appointed as judges in various courts ,besides (600) who are serving as policewomen.

The increase of women's participation in the economic, social and political development enabled them to get better education and health services. However, there is still a gap of gender equality, notwithstanding it is being bridged gradually.

In the field of health, the government worked to improve the health conditions and to upgrade the living standards of people, being an essential part of human rights. This commitment includes every Yemeni citizen, without any discrimination based on position, age or sex, in both rural and urban areas.

In 1997, Yemen has adopted a national strategy to reform the judiciary system, for justice is the essential theory of the country and the main way to maintain human rights and freedom.

Mr. Chairman,

My country has shown its adherence to the improvement of the conditions of human rights through the It was formally announced that there are not any political prisoners in Yemen.

My Ministry of Human Rights also regularly visits prisons and through the humanitarian and legal conditions of the prisoners, and the Council of Shura visited prisons and checked their conditions.

The civil society organizations participate closely in monitoring the conditions of the prisoners as volunteers to get to know how their rights are protected according to the law and constitution.

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In addition to what has been mentioned, the government also has played a vital role to confirm democracy and respect of human rights and this can be shown through the following :

- 1. The announcement of Sana'a as the Arab Cultural Capital for 2004. Through this year Yemen hosted the International Symposium of the Dialogue of Civilizations and Cultures. It also organized some local, regional and international cultural activities.*
- 2. Holding the Intergovernmental Conference of Democracy and Human Rights and the Role of International Criminal Court 2004.*

3. *Holding the first meeting of Councils of Shura Senates and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World to enhance the partnership between the member countries in the council and the parliamentary regional and international organizations in Europe, Asia and North and South America.*
4. *Conducting dialogue with the young people accused of having links to terrorism.*
5. *The participation of Yemen in the 8-G summit of industrial countries, and its invitation to a real partnership in democracy and development between poor and rich countries.*
6. *Yemen has been seeking a clear vision to resolve the problems in the African Horn.*
7. *Carrying out the general census as the essential achievement of development and upon which Yemen will design future plans for comprehensive development.*
8. *The Council of Ministers approved by the end of 2004 the ratification of the optional protocol CEDAW convention.*
9. *The President of the Republic ordered amendment of the law of Press and Publications so as to cancel the clause which allows imprisonment of journalists.*
10. *Issuing the 4th regular report about Yemen's compliance with the international conventions of the civil and political rights.*

11. *The Ministry of Human Rights issued its second national report that includes an evaluation of the experience of Yemen in the field of human rights .*
12. *Making a comprehensive judicial movement by making new appointments and punishing judges involved in violations and contraventions, and replacing other judges and supporting the courts with a new staff to strengthen and boost the justice.*
13. *Yemen's getting closer and closer to closing the file of coercive disappearance .*
14. *My country has ratified the Optional Protocol on children participating in armed conflicts, and the Optional Protocol on children trafficking and exploiting them in prostitution.*
15. *30,000 Yemeni children participated in 2004 in the 2nd Child Parliamentary elections.*
16. *The Council of Ministers approved the national strategy of gender.*
17. *The Ministry of Human Rights conducted a study along with the bodies concerned to incorporate the concepts of human rights in school's curriculum.*
18. *Forming a committee from the bodies concerned to draft a law on refugees.*

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In spite of the achievements of Yemen in the field of human rights, we admit we are still taking the first step on a very long and tough road of human rights, we also admit there are some violations here or there.

However, they are not made on purpose, but that happens only because institutionalization is still the beginning as well as low level of awareness of these issues and high rate of illiteracy among people.

At last but not the least, *I would like to assure you that the real guarantee to make the mission of human rights successful in the whole universe is to make these rights within an essential dimension in a new comprehensive international project for promoting and protecting these rights all over the world using some specific mechanisms that should avoid all the past defects and shortcomings.*

I hope this session will come out with recommendations that will contribute to achieving more progress in the road of the universal rights, overcoming all the obstacles especially those emerged after 9/11. wishing you all the best.

Thank you