



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Permanent Delegation
to the International Organisations in Geneva

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Note for the attention of

Mr Eneko LANDABURU, Director General, DG RELEX

Subject: Human Rights Council – 10th regular session – (2-13 March 2009)

The UN Human Rights Council (HRC) opened its 10th Regular Session – the main session for 2009 - on March 2nd 2009 with a three-day high-level segment, during which 64 high-level dignitaries from around the world offered their views on the functioning of the HRC and its mechanisms, presented national measures and priorities, and commented on themes and situations they deemed worthy of the HRC's attention. Two upcoming events, namely: the 2011 evaluation of the Human Rights Council's mandate and the Durban Review Conference in April dominated the Statements.

In a number of statements regarding the functioning of the HRC, it was evident that the "West against the rest" mentality (noted by the Dutch minister in his speech) remains prevalent, in spite of clear progress since the extreme polarisation of the Human Rights Commission. While the African, OIC and NAM groups generally welcomed the democratic working methods of the HRC but expressed concerns over its perceived selectiveness and politicisation of human rights, the 'West' deplored regional and ideological approaches undermining the universal character of human rights and the credibility of the HRC.

The following specific country situations were highlighted as deserving increased attention from the HRC: Sri Lanka (Germany, Portugal, France, Sweden); Zimbabwe (Germany, Portugal, UK, France, Sweden); DRC (France, Luxembourg); Sudan (Portugal); Iran (Portugal, UK); Myanmar (Sweden); DPRK (Sweden); Belarus (Sweden); Cuba (Sweden); Horn of Africa (Sweden); Iraq (DPRK); Afghanistan (DPRK); UK (Iran); Palestine (Brazil, Morocco, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Bahrain, Palestine, Sweden, Vietnam, DPRK).

Thereafter, **Interactive Dialogues** were held with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the special mechanisms on arbitrary detentions, mercenaries, the right to water, the right to housing, counter-terrorism, torture, disappearances, freedom of religion, minorities, human rights defenders, IDPs, trafficking and genocide. An annual interactive debate was held on the rights of persons with disabilities, a Panel discussion on the right to food, and an Annual full-day meeting on the rights of the child.

The **European Commission** made a statement, delivered by Director Arnault (RELEX B), during the high-level segment and in the debates on the rights of persons with disabilities, right to food and on the right of the child. The second week ended with a closed meeting of the individual complaint procedures.

Further details are available in annex 1.



Eckart GUTH

PART NOT TO BE DISCLOSED

1. High-Level Segment

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2. Presentation and Inter-active Dialogue on Annual Report of the UNHCHR

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3. Panel Discussions and Interactive Dialogues

PART NOT TO BE DISCLOSED

The Council held a full-day **panel discussion** on **promoting the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child** at the international and at the national level, on the 20th anniversary of the conclusion of the Convention. Among the panelists were; **the** United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Dainius Puras, Member of **the** Committee on Rights of the Child; Philip O'Brien, Director of Private Fundraising and Partnership of the United Nations Children's Fund in Geneva; Asma Jahangir, Chair **of** the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures; and Maud De Boer-Buquichio, Deputy Secretary-General of the Council of Europe.

The **European Commission** delivered during the discussion a statement that focused on European community legislation and other actions at the normative level to pursue the promotion and protection of the rights of the child in full conformity with the Convention, including support to NGOs worldwide working on the protection and promotion of the rights of the child.

PART NOT TO BE DISCLOSED

European Commission

UN Human Rights Council - One-Day Thematic Panel on the Rights of the Child

10 March 2009

Thank you, Mr President,

PART NOT TO BE DISCLOSED

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child guides the EU policy on children's rights. While implementing this policy, the European Community makes legislation and undertakes actions at the normative level to pursue the promotion and protection of the rights of the child in full conformity with the Convention. Examples of such actions include legislation on combating the sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, combating child trafficking, combating child pornography on the Internet, finding missing or sexually exploited children, among others.

PART NOT TO BE DISCLOSED

Thank you for your attention.