

REPUBLIC OF POLAND

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE OFFICE
OF THE UNITED NATIONS AT GENEVA



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Statement

by

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at

**the High Level Segment
of
the 7th Session of the Human Rights Council**

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Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

Poland highly values the establishment of the mechanism of special sessions of the Council. On several occasions they have proved to be the right way to draw the attention of the international community to grave situations of human rights violations. Furthermore we would like to stress that the special sessions should serve as a means of solving problems and not as a way of repetitive naming and shaming of particular countries.

We would like to underline the importance of the cooperation of all states with human rights mechanisms and the application of decisions and resolutions adopted both in Geneva and New York. Let us not be selective in the application and the effective implementation of our decisions.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is a great opportunity to remind us all here at the Human Rights Council of certain essential values. As Vaclav Havel said: "It is the first code of ethical conduct that was not a product of one culture, or one sphere of civilization only, but a universal creation, shaped and subscribed to by representatives of all humankind. Since its very inception, the Declaration has thus represented a planetary, or global commitment, a global intention, a global guideline." We should not forget that human rights are universal and should never be the subject to relativism; that they are equal and inalienable; that they need to be promoted and universally respected as well as protected by the rule of law. These and many other values are not outdated. They have as much importance now as they had 60 years ago and they should guide this Council in its work.

The Universal Declaration was a source of hope and inspiration for many generations of Polish human rights defenders and opposition leaders in the times of the communist regime. The struggle for the respect of values enshrined in the Declaration resulted in the creation of a free and democratic Poland. This is one of the reasons why the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is so dear to us Poles.

Let us use the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration to look at the fundamental tasks of the Human Rights Council which is to protect victims and discard individual political goals. We should all go back to the source of modern human rights and have a look from this perspective at the work that needs to be done in the Human Rights Council.

Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor to address this august body which is the main forum for promoting and protecting human rights all over the world.

Yesterday, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia addressed to the Council on behalf of the European Union. Poland fully endorses the views that were expressed in His Statement.

At the start I would like to focus on the most salient accomplishment in the area of human rights which was the establishment of a system of Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Poland views the UPR as a tool which will provide possibilities of assessment of the situation of human rights in all countries. At one of the first session of the Human Rights Council we have declared the readiness to be amongst the first countries to be examined by the new mechanism. As a result of later arrangements our wish became reality. Poland is looking forward to the first UPR session in April of this year. We strongly believe that an objective evaluation conducted on the basis of principles of universality, impartiality and non-selectivity can have an immense added value to the process of improving our national system of human rights promotion and protection. We are convinced that an approach to the UPR characterized by mutual trust and constructive international dialogue and cooperation can be beneficial to all of us.

The expectations that Poland has towards the Human Rights Council always were and still remain very high. We are confident that individual interests of the States or groups can be put aside and the attention of all of us will be focused on the implementation, protection and promotion of human rights.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

As I have said previously, we view the UPR as the most important achievement of the Human Rights Council. This said, we should not forget that the system of human rights protection encompasses other crucial elements. Resolution 60/251 explicitly provided for the preservation by the Council of the main achievements of the Commission on Human Rights. One of the most significant achievements of the Commission was the establishment of a system of special procedures both thematic and country specific. Poland believes that this system should be reinforced. In our view the country specific mandates constitute an element of paramount importance in the struggle to protect victims of human rights violations. The UPR should not be viewed as an alternative to country mandates. These two mechanisms should be considered as complementary. In this context, we are concerned with the fact that certain country mandates were eliminated in the course of the institution building process. We believe that those mandates should have been reviewed in accordance with the provisions of resolution 60/251 which clearly stated that "the Council shall assume, review and, where necessary, improve and rationalize all mandates". This provision of the resolution had unfortunately not been fulfilled in some cases. We regret this fact. We hope that the review of all remaining country mandates will take place according to the rules set out in adequate documents and in the spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation.