

**Statement by the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Estonia**  
**Mr Urmas Paet at the First Session of the United Nations**  
**Human Rights Council, 20 June 2006**

Mr President,  
Distinguished colleagues,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador De Alba, upon your election as the first President of the Human Rights Council and commend you on your essential role in the consultations preceding it. I wish to assure you that you have our full support. While my delegation fully aligns itself with the statement on behalf of the European Union delivered by my Austrian Colleague, I would also like to offer the following remarks.

Undoubtedly, the creation of the Human Rights Council and the election of its first members was by itself a significant milestone on the road of the reform of the United Nations human rights machinery. The next step starts today, as the new Council needs to re-confirm this new beginning aimed at maintaining the highest possible standards in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In its work to promote human rights we encourage the Council to fully commit itself to the task of mainstreaming and effective coordination of human rights within the United Nations system, making recommendations, where necessary, to all relevant UN bodies.

Mr President,

It is essential to establish and preserve the integrity of the Human Rights Council, especially considering the high expectations vested in this new body. Estonia firmly believes that the Council's integrity greatly depends upon its ability and flexibility to deal with all human rights issues, including urgent matters. The holding of the HRC sessions throughout the year will certainly contribute to that goal, as will its close cooperation with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the civil society. Moreover, the Council's integrity is