



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**STATEMENT BY H.E. ERKKI TUOMIOJA
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND**

**AT THE 1ST SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
HIGH-LEVEL SESSION**

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**Statement by Mr Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland,
to the Human Rights Council, 1st Session
Geneva, 19 June, 2006**

Mr Chairman, Mme High Commissioner, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr Chairman,

Let me first of all congratulate you on your election to the Chairmanship of this important first session of the Human Rights Council. I wish you every success in your challenging work.

In addition to what was said by Ms Ursula Plassnik, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria, I wish to make the following remarks.

Mr Chairman,

I am honoured to address the Human Rights Council today when this significant body convenes for the first time. The establishment of the Human Rights Council satisfies the wish clearly expressed by our Heads of State and Government in the UN World Summit last September. At the Summit, human rights were acknowledged, along with peace and security as well as development, as the main pillars of the United Nations system and the foundations of collective security.

The Council is needed to address current human rights challenges, such as more effective protection of human rights in the combat of terrorism and contribution towards more balanced globalization, to name but a few of the challenges. I hope that the Council will provide a forum for dialogue between civilizations to promote the human rights of all, including women, children as well as ethnic, religious, sexual and other minorities.