



**STATEMENT**

**BY THE HON. ANTHONY ABELA, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY**

**AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS - MALTA**

**AT THE HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE**

**FIRST MEETING OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**GENEVA, 21 JUNE 2006**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address you today on this auspicious First Meeting of the Human Rights Council. We are here gathered in our commitment to move on from the important role played by the Commission on Human Rights which for 60 years strove to promote and protect human rights.

The adoption of resolution 60/251 on 15 March 2006 by the United Nations General Assembly gave birth to a new organ - the Human Rights Council - and entrusted it with the noble and bold aim to further strengthen the United Nations human rights machinery, as mandated by the 2005 World Summit Outcome. This is a historic achievement and the result of a global effort that emphasizes the need to attend to human rights issues across the spectrum of multilateral activities. The negotiations that led to the establishment of the Human Rights Council have been open, transparent and inclusive. The elections of 9 May which formally selected the first forty-seven members, as well as the pledges and contributions made in the run-up to these elections, have shown that the community of nations is giving careful thought to this new organ. Significantly, the members elected have accepted to have their own human rights record reviewed.