



United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

**HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
First Session**

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STATEMENT

BY

MR IAN McCARTNEY MP

MINISTER OF STATE RESPONSIBLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Geneva, 20th June 2006

(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me first congratulate you on your election, Mr Chair. I wish you well as you guide our work in the weeks and months ahead. Few Chairs can have occupied the post at such a historically significant time. You have the UK's full support.

You, and we, are charged with carrying forward a vision first articulated nearly sixty years ago.

In its preamble, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that:

“THE ADVENT OF A WORLD, IN WHICH HUMAN BEINGS SHALL ENJOY FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND BELIEF, AND FREEDOM FROM FEAR AND WANT, HAS BEEN PROCLAIMED AS THE HIGHEST ASPIRATION OF THE COMMON PEOPLE”.

That Declaration was written in the aftermath of a devastating war.

The world had witnessed human suffering on a previously unimagined scale.

Its people hoped that the institutions created from their misery would guard against such events ever occurring again.

But sixty years later, hundreds of thousands - perhaps even millions - are still denied their human rights.