



Finland's EU Presidency

Sixty-first Session of the General Assembly
Third Committee
Agenda Item 68 Report of the Human Rights Council
UNITED NATIONS

Statement on behalf of the European Union

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Ambassador
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New York, 10 November 2006

(check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

*) Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Mr Chairman,

Today in the morning the General Assembly Plenary heard the presentation of the report of the Human Rights Council by the President of the Council, Ambassador de Alba. The consideration of the report in the Plenary meeting took place in accordance with the decision made by consensus in the General Assembly Plenary on the allocation of the item 68, entitled "Report of the Human Rights Council".

Based on that decision, it is the understanding of the European Union that the Third Committee is only to consider and act on the recommendations of the Human Rights Council to the General Assembly. At this time, the two recommendations to be considered by the Third Committee are on the adoption of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and on the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The European Union also wishes to note that the decision made by the General Assembly Plenary on the allocation of the Report, as well the decision made by the Third Committee to invite Ambassador de Alba to address the Committee with the recommendations contained in the report, are transitional arrangements, and should not set precedents for the future.

Mr Chairman,

The establishment of a comprehensive framework of international human rights law is one of the major accomplishments of the United Nations. In this regard, the European Union attaches great importance to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which have been submitted for adoption to this

session of the General Assembly by the Human Rights Council and contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights.

The Convention on enforced disappearances, adopted by the Human Rights Council by consensus at its first session, addresses a phenomenon which despite all efforts continues to exist, affecting people all over the world. By defining the crime of enforced disappearances, organising the fight against perpetrators, both at international and national levels, and describing the preventive measures against this crime, the Convention represents a step forward in the promotion and protection of human rights. We are convinced that it will be a powerful tool to prevent enforced disappearances and fight impunity for this crime in the future.

Mr Chairman,

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the result of a long and thorough drafting process, which involved representatives of indigenous peoples on an equal basis with member states, and is in this regard unique in the UN standard setting practice. The final text of the Declaration, as adopted by the Human Rights Council, reflects this inclusive process. The European Union considers the Declaration a valuable addition to the UN instruments for the protection and promotion of human rights. We believe its adoption will advance the rights and ensure the continued development of indigenous peoples around the world.

Mr Chairman,

The European Union therefore gives its full support to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples aimed at strengthening the human rights within the UN system and calls for their prompt adoption by this Committee and the General Assembly at its 61st session, as recommended by the Human Rights Council.
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.