



The Permanent Mission of Iceland to the United Nations

**Statement by
Ambassador Hjálmar W. Hannesson
Permanent Representative of Iceland
to the United Nations**

at the

**60th GENERAL ASSEMBLY – 72nd Plenary Meeting
ADOPTION OF THE RESOLUTION CREATING THE HUMAN
RIGHTS COUNCIL**

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Mr. President,

Iceland has the following comments on the resolution on the establishment of the Human Rights Council, adopted earlier today.

The establishment of the Human Rights Council marks the fulfilment of one of the major tasks which the General Assembly was mandated to carry out by Heads of State at the Summit in 2005.

Recognising that the establishment of the Council here today is a result of long and difficult negotiations, it is inevitable that compromises have had to be made. Indeed, I feel obliged to register disappointment that the final outcome does not match the ambitions in the clear and principled approach proposed by the Secretary General in his original report.

Iceland supported the resolution because the alternative of falling back on the Commission is unacceptable and not in the interests of human rights. Despite our reservations, Iceland has also been encouraged by the views of human rights NGOs like Amnesty International.

The status of the Council as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly is a step forward and we look forward to the review of the status within the next five years, with a view to elevating it to a principal organ of the UN. We also recognise that its more frequent meetings will better equip it to address urgent human rights issues.

The resolution also preserves key strengths of the Commission, including its unique system of independent experts known as Special Procedures, as well as the important arrangements and practices for NGO participation in its work.

From the outset it has been the firm belief of Iceland that the composition of the Council and the quality of its membership will have an impact on the functioning of the Council and the credibility of its work. We still are of this view. Indeed, Iceland will not vote for any candidate country that is under sanctions imposed by the Security Council, for human rights related reasons or any country that is considered to be committing gross and systematic violations of Human rights.

Mr. President,

I would like to thank you and your two Co-chairs, Ambassador Kumalo from South Africa and Ambassador Arias from Panama, for your tireless efforts and determination in bringing our long process to a successful conclusion. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his endeavours in this exercise.

Thank you.