

Introduction: South African High Commissioner ^{Keynote speaker} (1)

Let me begin by associating my delegation ^{with} to the statement made by H.E., the Ambassador of Egypt on behalf of the African Group and the Ambassador of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

My delegation would like to thank the High Commissioner for her ^{current} reports and look forward to her annual report which will be more comprehensive and global in its coverage.

My delegation strongly support the establishment of the Women's Human Rights Ad Hoc Expert Group. We look forward to the effective implementation of its mandate to monitor and coordinate the work of the Office of the High Commissioner.

We appreciate the support that the High Commissioner and her Office provided to the Bureau of the PreComm for the Durban Review Conference and look forward to their continued support and close engagement in the preparatory processes leading to the Conference in 2009.

Similarly, we are encouraged by the efforts of the High Commissioner to give support to the Council in the conduct of the Universal Periodic Review. We believe that the universality ^{application} of the UPR ^{to all UN Member States} will ensure the global protection of human rights.

Mr. President: We urge the High Commissioner ^{assist countries self-empower themselves} to continue her efforts to promote and protect human rights. ~~We are pleased with the acknowledgment of progress in various African countries.~~ While South Africa looks forward to the High Commissioner's visit to Sri Lanka, we note the cooperation that the Government of Sri Lanka has extended to the UN human rights mechanisms. It is our understanding that the Special Rapporteur on Torture; Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the human rights of IDPs; including

The delegation from the Inter-Parliamentary Union are scheduled

to visit Sri Lanka over the coming months.

We commend the Government of Sri Lanka for its openness to engage with the UN human rights system.

~~In this regard,~~

In closing, we look forward to a discussion on the institutional relationship between the Council and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

I thank you