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Statement

by

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the Islamic Republic of Iran**

before

**the High Level Segment of
the 10th Session of the Human Rights Council**

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**Mr. President,
Madam High Commissioner,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This is a privilege and honor for me to once again address this august body, the main UN human rights forum. I also avail myself of this opportunity to exchange views on the most urgent and daunting human rights challenges facing us today, requiring our careful and urgent consideration, with a view to finding the appropriate means of overcoming them.

On behalf of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I would like to reiterate our firm commitment to work toward making the Human Rights Council a strong, effective and efficient body capable of promoting and protecting all human rights for all on the basis of inclusion, justice, equality and human dignity, in cooperation with other members of the international community.

Mr. President

The establishment of the Human Rights Council, based on valuable experiences learned from the past, has opened a new chapter in the cause of international human rights with mixed reactions: high expectations along with a degree of skepticism. We note with satisfaction that in its initial years of work, the Council has mostly been able to meet those expectations. The consensual adoption of the institution-building package and successfully launching and operationalizing the Universal Periodic Review are among the achievements.

The further critical circumstances in which those efforts were carried out makes them all more remarkable. Since the Council's establishment, in addition to 10 regular sessions, it has managed not only to successfully hold a number of Special Sessions to address the most urgent and alarming human rights situations, it has also proved to have the well-deserved credit for professional and efficient convening of two thematic Special Sessions on "The negative impact on the realization of the right to food of the worsening of the world food crises, caused inter alia by the soaring food prices" and "The impact of global economic and financial crises on the universal realization and effective enjoyment of human rights". The Council has thereby shown that it is ready at all times to respond swiftly to emergencies. What we need now is to ensure that the outcomes of those Special Sessions are properly followed up and implemented. However, it is a cause of concern that the Human rights Council has not been able to implement its decisions.

In this connection, we welcome the outcome of the Ninth Special Session of the Human Rights Council on the "Grave Violations of Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory including the recent aggression in the occupied Gaza Strip". In the same vein, we strongly support the Human Rights Council for its decision to dispatch an urgent independent international fact-finding mission to investigate all violations of international human rights law and international Humanitarian law by the Israeli occupying power against the Palestinian people

throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip. Decisive implementation of Human Rights Council's decisions and resolutions such as those addressing the gross violation of the rights of Palestinian people by the Israeli occupying regime will certainly lead to further enhancement of credibility of the Council.

Mr. President

In the latest round of its habitual brutalities, the illegitimate Zionist regime launched a full-fledged war on the defenseless population of Gaza under the pretext of "self-defense", aiming at crushing the legitimate resistance of people against overthrowing their democratically-elected Government of Hamas. As a result, about 1400 Palestinians were killed in a series of indiscriminate mass killings, while thousands – many of them, women and children - remained hospitalized, with many maimed and handicapped for life.

Intentional targeting of civilians by the Zionist regime which was founded on the basis of unleashed terrorism, led by former leaders of terrorist organizations, against the defenseless people of Palestine is not a new phenomenon.

The current situation in the Gaza Strip is a matter of urgent and extreme concern to Iranian people and the Government and the whole world. The whole population of Gaza under crippling blockade, starvation and deprivation of the most basic supplies in recent months, have been strangled and slaughtered by a barbaric occupying regime which does not pay the faintest respect for humanity and human rights. It is evident that, once again, the Israeli regime by committing these severe crimes, has blatantly ignored the values of the international community and the civilized world and has undermined the most basic values for which the civilized world stands.

Deliberate and indiscriminate attacks by the Israeli military against civilian targets in the Gaza Strip and the massive use of prohibited weapons are grave violations of international humanitarian law which constitute war crimes. Despite Zionist regime's claims, the widespread use of force and violence is aimed at the whole population of Gaza Strip, and as such, it amounts to genocide. There is also no doubt that the Israeli regime's atrocities against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip are tantamount to a crime against humanity.

We firmly believe that an urgent action needs to be taken by the United Nations to defend the Palestinian population "being collectively punished by policies that amount to a crime against humanity" as rightly characterized by the United Nation Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on human rights in Occupied Palestinian Territory. It should be reminded that the afore-said report was presented well before the recent 22 – days – long shocking atrocities against Palestinians. The outrageous crimes committed during those 22 days have left no excuse for the international community not to take urgent action to stop Israeli crimes against humanity and to prosecute its leaders. The Israeli regime's leaders and military commanders must be indicted and prosecuted for grave violations of international law and for committing multiple crimes against humanity and war crimes. The Security Council and the International Criminal Court should exercise their responsibility to bring the criminals to justice and prevent impunity. The General Assembly, for its part, may also take necessary measures to put in place an arrangement or mechanism

under Article 22 of the Charter to investigate the crimes committed by the Israeli regime against the Palestinian People in the Gaza Strip.

Mr. President,

As for the ongoing challenge of global economic and financial crises which is having a disproportionate impact on the livelihoods of the most vulnerable and already marginalized groups of society, a human rights approach is needed to make more durable short and long term solutions. It is necessary to identify the specific needs of vulnerable groups and individuals, particularly women and children, migrants, refugees, indigenous peoples, minorities and persons with disabilities.

The urgency shown by developed countries to tackle the financial meltdown stands in stark contrast to their foot-dragging and broken promises over aid and poverty alleviation, human rights and climate change.

It is too soon yet to predict exactly how badly the poorest countries will fare in the financial crisis and resultant economic downturn. But it is clear that reduced level of exports from developed countries and this lower foreign investment will mean less growth and government revenue for already-fragile social protection and services in least developed countries.

Worse could follow if developed countries decide to use the financial crisis as an excuse to cut aid and trade. History gives us cause for concern. A replay of that in 2009 would be a disaster for developing countries. Reduced aid and trade flows could mean that people in the poorest countries pay the highest price for the profligacy of the credit bubble in North America and Europe.

Human rights are not a luxury for good times. Inaction in the face of climate change is not a viable option. Global poverty does nothing for global stability. Developed countries will be following a myopic and self-defeating strategy if they ignore the most pressing challenges of our times and focus solely on narrow financial interests.

Mr. president,

The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the timely decisions of the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council for holding Durban Review Conference in 2009. We are of the view that the Durban Review Conference and its preparatory process can provide the international community with an ample opportunity to take stock of the Durban commitments as well as to further strategize in the global fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and to address their contemporary forms and manifestations with the view to adopting further initiatives and actions.

The normative gap in the struggle against racism has led to persisting manifestations of racism and intolerance, including racial and religious profiling, and the rise in Islamophobic incidents in certain parts of the world. It would be vital for the review process to address the gaps in the existing normative framework and to deal with racism in a comprehensive manner. In this regard we highly value the mandate and the work of the Ad hoc Committee on Elaboration of Complementary Standards.

Mr. President,

In its pursuit of realization of all human rights for all, the Human Rights Council must take into account the inter-linkage and mutually reinforcing nature of

human rights , development , peace and security . These together have been recognized by world leaders as constituting the three pillars of the United Nations system. To this end, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran wishes to underline the importance of following points:

Since Human Rights are interrelated and interdependent, the enjoyment of them all, goes hand in hand with sustainable development and while taking stock of what tangible results has already been achieved, the Human Rights Council needs to reinvigorate the efforts of international community for transforming more vigorously into reality their commitment to the right to development, since the progress toward its full realization, thus, has far been tardy and far from adequate.

The full enjoyment of human rights is only possible in an environment of peace, security, tranquility, justice and equality, where in the absence of a just international order, there would be no peace and achieving durable peace remains inaccessible ideals.

Mr. President

The Islamic Republic of Iran as a committed and active member of the United Nations and based on Divine teachings of Islam and in accordance with its international obligations, has continuously pursued the promotion and protection of human rights through , reviewing the existing legislation and adopting the new ones as well as undertaking necessary measures . Our commitment to human rights stems from our firm belief and it is aimed at realizing our goal which is the "inherent dignity of man".

To this end, we have embarked on a series of initiatives to help our institutions to stand up to current human rights challenges. These initiatives include inter- alia concrete measures in capacity building, reviewing the existing legislations and consolidating the civil society with the aim of creating a comprehensive and broad based structure to further promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this context, we have managed to maintain and further develop the bilateral and multilateral dialogue with various countries in different regions. International cooperation and dialogue has always been the strategic approach in our foreign policy. We are of the firm view that pursuing such a policy by Human Rights Council can go a long way in strengthening our collective strive for achieving the common objectives of promotion and protection of human rights worldwide.

Mr. President,

In conclusion , I would like to reiterate that in this crucial juncture , in which we are facing real human rights challenges , the Council relying on principles of objectivity , impartiality , transparency and consensus should , in discharge of its mandate , undertake to address global human rights challenges and rectify the present shortcomings of the UN human rights machinery . In this regard, we are determined to continue our constructive contribution to and cooperation with the Council for the promotion and protection of human rights all over the world.

Thank you.