



**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Sihasak Phuanketkeow  
(Thailand)**

**President of the Human Rights Council**

**Third Committee**

**Sixty-Fifth Session of the General Assembly**

**2 November 2010**

**New York**



**Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is a great honor for me to come before you today to present the report of the Human Rights Council. Following the practice of my distinguished predecessors, my report shall cover the activities of the Council during its fourth cycle, from the September 2009 session to the June 2010 session, under the presidency of Ambassador Alex Van Meeuwen, Permanent Representative of Belgium, as well as the addendum covering the latest session in September this year under my presidency.

In this regard, I shall also draw special attention to the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Council, in particular those requiring action by this Committee.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The past fourth cycle of the Council has been particularly intense and fruitful. The Council made progress in further defining certain rights and aspects thereof in the realms of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. The Universal Periodic Review, which is one of the most meaningful and successful innovations of the Human Rights Council, has now passed the two-thirds point in its first 4-year cycle, with 127 UN member States reviewed so far.

Issues addressed by the Council range from traditional issues such as human rights education and training; the rights of the child, women, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities; the right to safe drinking water and sanitation, the right to food and the right to development. The Council also addressed other important issues including the response to pressing situations that have impacts on human rights such as the impact of the global economic and financial crises on human rights; the protection of journalists in situations of armed conflicts; and the adverse effects of toxic waste on human rights.

The Council was also seized with human rights situations occurring in various parts of the world, including support for the post-earthquake recovery process in Haiti, the Israeli attack on the Flotilla as well as the human rights situation in Somalia.

Two additional Special Procedure mandates have been established, namely, a Special Rapporteur on the rights of freedom of association and of assembly and a Working Group on the elimination of discrimination against women in law and in practice.

Furthermore, the Council equipped itself with new inter-governmental working groups to advance its standard-setting, namely a Working Group to draft the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training and a Working Group to consider the possibility of elaborating an international regulatory framework in relation to the activities of private military and security companies. It also extended the mandate of the Working Group tasked with the elaboration of an Optional

Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to provide a communication procedure.

### **Excellencies,**

During the reporting period, a total of 81 resolutions, 72 decisions and 3 President's Statements have been adopted. Your Committee is seized with the consideration of recommendations formulated in these documents.

In particular, I would like to draw your attention to the first chapter of the addendum to the annual report containing the outcome of the 15th session of the Council. This addendum includes seven resolutions recommended for further actions by the General Assembly, namely;

- resolutions 15/1 on follow-up to the fact-finding mission on the incident of the humanitarian flotilla
- resolution 15/7 on human rights and indigenous peoples
- resolution 15/10 on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy.

These resolutions contained specific requests and invitations addressed to the Assembly.

In addition, there are

- resolution 15/18 on arbitrary detention;
- resolution 15/21 on the rights to peaceful assembly and association;
- resolution 15/23 on the elimination of discrimination against women, and;
- resolution 15/26 on the regulation, monitoring and oversight of the private military and security companies,

which establish new mandates or activities giving rise to additional resource requirements. In resolutions 14/ and 14/10 respectively, the Council also recommended the General Assembly to proclaim International Days for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims, and of the Victims of enforced Disappearances.

### **Excellencies,**

As you know, the Human Rights Council is now entering its fifth cycle. This cycle is a challenging one in many aspects. We have to maintain the pace and progress of the regular work of the Council. At the same time, we have to embark on the review process of the Council.

At the beginning of my presidency, I stated that I would be guided by the following principles and let me repeat them here. First, the importance of taking

constructive and cooperative approach to all human rights issues and situation. Second, maintaining and strengthening the capacity of the Council in terms of making a real difference on the ground and enhancing the capacity of the Council to react to urgent human rights situations in an even handed way. And third, ensuring that the work of the Council provides for inclusiveness of all stakeholders whose role is recognized as instrumental to advancing the course of human rights.

### **Excellencies,**

Before concluding, I would like to seize this opportunity to share with you some thoughts on the review process of the Council, to which both the General Assembly and the Council are called to pronounce themselves, in a complementary and mutually-reinforcing manner in 2011.

Last week, with the holding of the first session of the Review Working Group, the Council has officially commenced its review on the work and functioning of the Council, as provided for in operative paragraph 16 of General Assembly resolution 60/251.

I expect this process to be pragmatic and realistic, and provide us all with a unique opportunity to assess the way in which the Council works and functions, and identify areas where the effectiveness of the Council can be enhanced. Our focus will be on how to create more impact on the ground, how to better address both chronic and emergency human rights violations, as well as how to make best use of the time and resources we have to fulfill the mandates given to the Council.

As you will appreciate, one aspect to be addressed jointly between the review process here in the General Assembly and the review undertaken by the Council will be the working relationship between the Council and the General Assembly. The quasi-standing nature of the Council implies that mandates may be created at any time during the year, while the General Assembly has in the past been considering proposals of the Council only once a year, when required. This may result, unfortunately, in delayed resourcing of new mandates and activities. Efficient support from the General Assembly is even more critical when the Council deals with urgent human rights issues.

In concluding, Mr. Chairman, I wish to assure you of my commitment to the efficient functioning of the Council in the up-coming cycle, as well as my full support to the on-going review process.

I thank you.