



**Permanent Mission  
of the Arab Republic of Egypt  
Geneva**

**Sixth Session  
of the Human Rights Council**

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**Dialogue with  
the High Commissioner for Human Rights**

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**Statement by  
H.E. Ambassador Sameh Shoukry  
Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt  
on behalf of the African Group**

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**Geneva, 13 September, 2007**

*Please check against delivery*

Thank you Mr. President,

I have the honor to take the floor on behalf of the African Group.

At the outset, I would like to thank the High Commissioner for her statement, and indicate that the members of the African Group are always eager to receive her comments, and interested in being afforded the necessary time to reflect and address the issues that are raised.

The African Group shares the importance she attaches to the fact that this session adopts the necessary decisions and modalities for the effective functioning of the Council and the smooth operation of all its bodies and mechanisms.

The African Group believes in the importance of a successful completion of the institution building process. To that end, the Group has engaged constructively during the ongoing consultations, and in this context, would like to extend its appreciation to the staff of her office for their efforts in supporting the Council during this important phase of its history, including in the informative simulation carried out yesterday on the UPR selection process.

The African Group strongly believes that the success of the Human Rights Council is a collective responsibility of all parties, and that the UPR will play a central role in this regard. The African Group emphasizes the importance of implementing GA resolution 60/251, and HRC resolution 5/1, in all their aspects, chief among which is ensuring the universality of coverage and equal treatment of all states and their full involvement in the UPR process, as well as the <sup>reliance</sup> ~~adherence~~ by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights <sup>on</sup> ~~to the~~ objective and reliable information in the compilations and summaries to be prepared by the Office as part of the UPR.

Mr. President,

While we agree that identifying and closing protection gaps in the special procedures system is important, the African group reiterates its view that the immediate objective remains the review, rationalization and improvements of mandates, and in this regard, the Group would like to emphasize the need for the implementation of the recently adopted Code of Conduct for special procedures mandate-holders.

With regard to the Durban Review Process, the African Group welcomes the appointment of the High Commissioner as the Secretary-General of the Durban Review Conference, a role in which she and her Office, will assume a strictly secretarial role. The Group urges the High Commissioner to ensure the mobilization and provision of all needed financial and technical assistance throughout the process, including for regional preparatory meetings, and for the participation of relevant UN mechanisms and civil society organizations. We believe that the Durban Review Process should be treated no less favorably than the other UN conferences and summits review processes held thus far.

Mr. President,

The High Commissioner has referred to her earlier visit to the Great Lakes Region. In this context, she has expressed her continued concern with the lack of progress in the DRC with regard to the issue of impunity. The African Group would like to express its solidarity with the DRC in its quest to improve its human rights situation, and calls on the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that its presence in the country is effective, and focused on assisting the authorities of the DRC in their efforts through meeting their capacity building needs in this field, including in the area of combating impunity. We regret the fact, that ~~both~~ <sup>neither</sup> the mandate of the independent expert on the human rights situation in the DRC, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> the mandate-holder himself, have ~~not~~ been able to be of use to this African Country and that the mandate holder has not made himself available to engage this Council. It is incumbent upon all of us to collectively think of more objective and effective means to help the DRC overcome its difficulties.

In addressing the work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights field offices in the African Region, the High Commissioner recognized the active role of the Office in Togo, and the progress made in the establishment of the Regional Office for West Africa In Dakar.

In referring to the Regional Office in Northern Africa, the <sup>African</sup> group is unaware of any difficulties that were posed in this process, in light of the fact that consultations on this matter were conducted by the Government of Egypt in good faith and absolute transparency. It was the considered opinion of the Government of Egypt, and after careful reflection, to give prominence to the principle of equitable geographic distribution of UN regional offices since Egypt is already host ~~to~~ a large number of these

offices. The aforementioned fact was duly and officially transmitted to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights so that other countries in the region could be accorded the opportunity to host the said office. The Group reiterates the importance that the Office of the High Commissioner, when considering the establishment of regional offices, conduct comprehensive consultations with members of the region, on both the relevance of the establishment of this office and its venue, with a view towards reaching a consensual understanding.

Finally, we look forward to addressing the institutional relationship between the Council and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The African Group has repeatedly requested an in depth discussion of this matter. We still believe that clarifying such a relationship is a prerequisite for the success of the work of both the Council and the Office. We expect such a discussion to take place in this session in order to ensure that the activities of the Office are in line with existing United Nations rules and practices and conform with the intergovernmental nature of the organization.

I thank you.