

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**Mission Permanente du Royaume  
d'Arabie Saoudite auprès  
des Nations Unies  
Genève**



الوفد الدائم للمملكة العربية السعودية  
لدى المقر الأوربي للأمم المتحدة  
جنيف

**Address by**

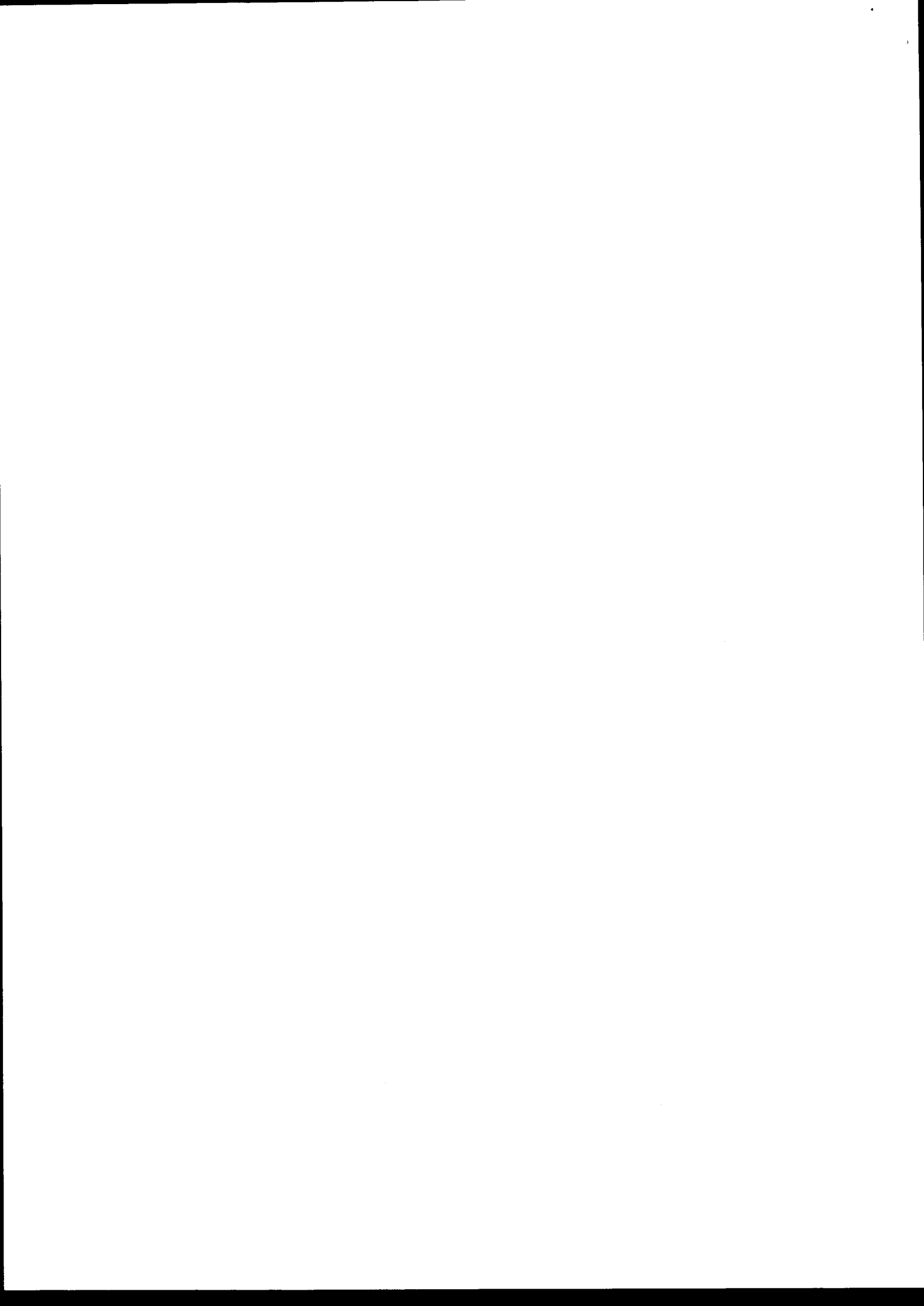
**H.E. Dr. Bandar bin Muhammad Al-Aiban**

**President of the Human Rights Commission**

**at the 13<sup>th</sup> session of the**

**United Nations Human Rights Council**

**Geneva, 1-26 March 2010**



In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to begin by extending, on behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, our sincerest congratulations to Mr. Alex Van Meeuwen of the Kingdom of Belgium on his assumption of the presidency of this session. I am confident that his wisdom and experience will help to achieve the results to which we are all aspiring. I also wish to express our appreciation for the endeavours made by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, which enjoy the full support of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your distinguished Council's adoption of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's UPR report constitutes a further successful achievement by the Kingdom in the field of human rights and will provide us with an incentive to continue the pursuit of our policy of promoting and protecting human rights in accordance with the directives, and by virtue of the ongoing patronage and support, of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has laid the foundations for a new globalized approach to dialogue among the followers of divinely-revealed religions, civilizations and cultures in which the concept of human dialogue is enshrined and goes hand-in-hand with a culture of internal dialogue. Not so long ago, from 30 September to 1 October 2009, the City of Geneva hosted the third forum of the Initiative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for dialogue among the followers of religions and civilizations which constituted a further step aimed at building bridges of dialogue and constructive cooperation between peoples and civilizations.

Mr. President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

With a view to promoting greater awareness of human rights, the Kingdom has adopted a four-year programme, beginning in 2010, the objective of which is to disseminate a culture of human rights in a spirit of brotherhood, tolerance and compassion and to build institutional capacities in the governmental and private sectors in order to enhance their performance in a manner conducive to the promotion and protection of human rights.

In continuation of its endeavours to promote the principles of human rights, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia recently promulgated a legislative instrument entitled "Suppression of the Traffic in Persons Act" for the purpose of protecting the categories of persons most vulnerable to exploitation. With a view to putting an end to these criminal activities, a Standing Committee comprising representatives of a

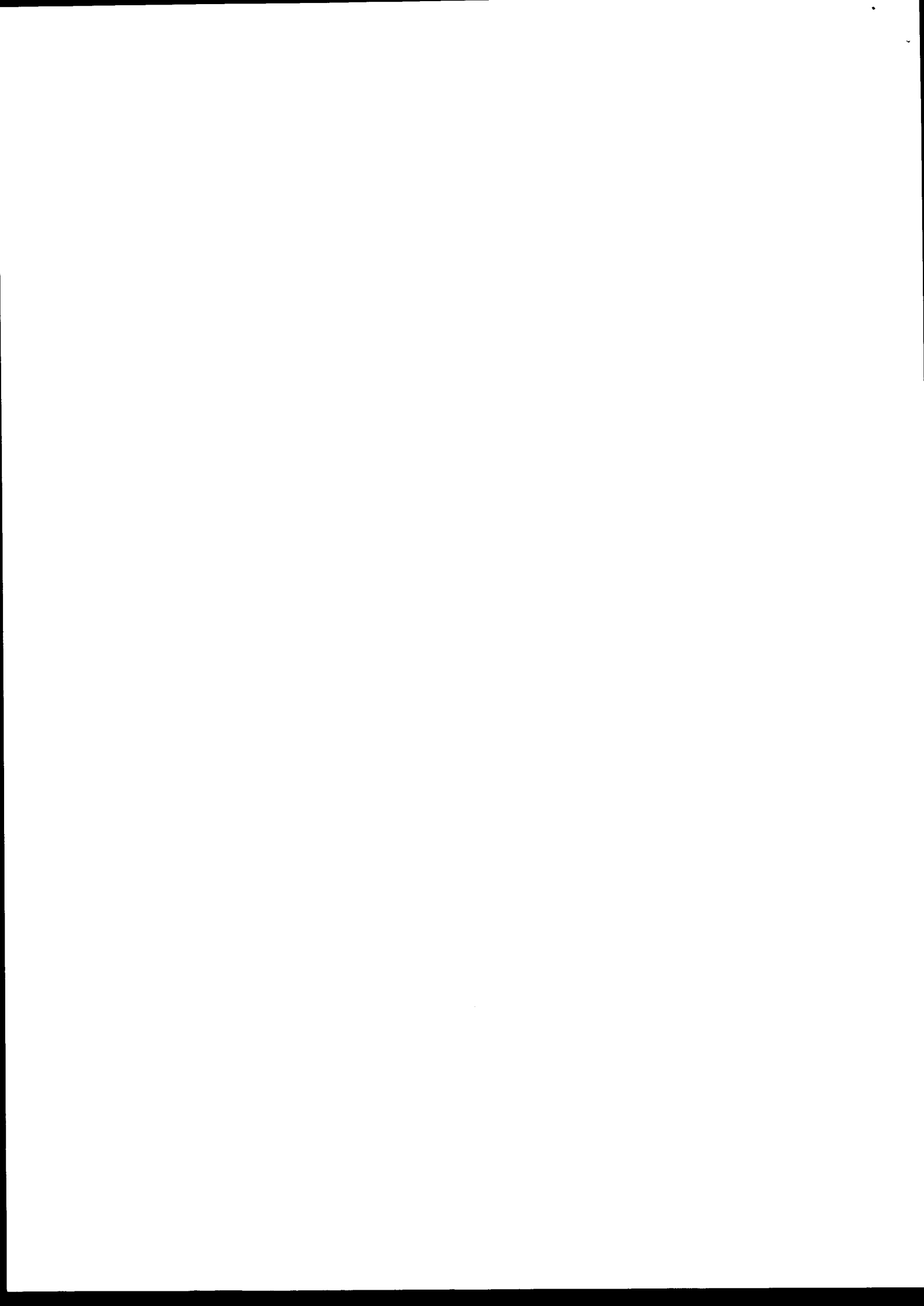


number of governmental authorities has been established in the Human Rights Commission to monitor the situation of victims of the traffic in persons, ensure that they are not harmed again, formulate a policy to promote an active search for, and provide training in ways to identify, victims and undertake research, information gathering, media campaigns and socio-economic initiatives to prevent and suppress the traffic in persons. This Act, representing the culmination of the Kingdom's endeavours to safeguard human dignity, forms part of a series of successive and ongoing initiatives to protect and regulate the exercise of human rights.

Mr. President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The adverse effects of the global financial crisis on development and the enjoyment of human rights necessitate ongoing diligent endeavours by our distinguished Council to mitigate their negative impact and repercussions on human rights and dignity. The global financial crisis has led to an increase in poverty rates and has impeded the progress of programmes designed to enhance access to education and health care in most countries of the world and to counter the devastating effects of natural disasters. We therefore need to support the international efforts that are being made to mitigate the adverse implications of this crisis.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has already contributed, on several occasions, to the adoption of initiatives to mitigate the negative impact of the global financial crisis with a view to enhancing human development programmes, particularly by alleviating the debt burden of the developing countries. In this context, the Kingdom has waived more than US\$ 6 billion in debts due to it from the least developed countries and has donated an amount of US\$ 500 million to the World Food Programme to help those countries to meet the rising costs of basic foodstuffs. With regard to the promotion of education, the Kingdom has announced the allocation of US\$ 500 million for education projects in developing countries. With regard to support for child health programmes, the Kingdom has contributed US\$ 30 million to the initiative to eradicate poliomyelitis worldwide. With regard to disaster response, and limitation of the humanitarian consequences of disasters, the Kingdom has contributed US\$ 50 million in relief assistance for the people of Haiti and we are calling for an intensification of international endeavours to alleviate this grievous humanitarian disaster. Finally, yesterday, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia allocated US\$ 1 billion to assist the Republic of Yemen. Hence, the non-recoverable assistance and loans that the Kingdom has provided during the last three decades amounts to more than US\$ 90 billion from which 87 developing countries have benefited. This amount, equivalent to 4% of the Kingdom's GDP, is far in excess of the target set by the United Nations.



Mr. President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our present session is being held at a time when the need to address important current issues should prompt us to make every endeavour to promote a more active role by the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms. The Council has already made numerous major achievements during this session and we emphasize the need to support the efforts that the Member States and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights are making to enhance the working methods of the Council and develop its mechanisms, which are due to be reviewed in 2011. A number of meetings, in which the Kingdom has participated, have been held to this end including, most recently, the successful meeting in Algiers.

Mr. President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The tragic circumstances from which the Palestinian people are still suffering in the occupied Palestinian territories and the gross violations of their rights due to the ongoing occupation and the settlement policy constitute flagrant breaches of international law and the relevant international instruments and resolutions. Israel's recent decision to annex the Islamic holy places in the city of Hebron in an attempt to obliterate more than 14 centuries of Islamic heritage in the occupied Palestinian territories constitutes a further episode in the series of recurrent acts of aggression against Islamic holy places, against the Palestinian people and against international customs and conventions and the will of the international community.

Your distinguished Council has adopted Justice Goldstein's report on Israel's large-scale violations of the laws of war during its aggression against Gaza. In this regard, we are calling upon the international community to endorse Justice Goldstein's report, together with its recommendations for the prevention of any recurrence of such inhuman violations, and to support the continuation of the commendable endeavours that your distinguished Council is making to end the injustice, persecution and sufferings that the Israeli occupation has imposed on the Palestinian people.

Mr. President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The campaigns through which certain parties are seeking to defame religions, as well as the escalation in acts of violence and discrimination against minorities on the basis of religion and race, necessitate joint action by all of us to combat these forms of discrimination which are prohibited by international legal instruments.

I would like to conclude my address by reaffirming that the promotion and protection of human rights is a strategic option to which the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is committed by virtue of its truly Islamic ideology which is consistent with universal human rights concepts. The Kingdom's achievements in this field, far from signifying the end of the process and satisfaction with what has already been achieved, provide

