

## Draft OIC statement in the General Segment of the Human Rights Council

2/4

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

I will like to extend to you felicitations on behalf of the member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on your election as the first President of the Human Rights Council. This is a singular honour. The OIC countries have full confidence that under your leadership we will lay solid institutional foundations of the Council.

The Human Rights Council is a new beginning. Inspiration of the OIC for contributing in the work of the Council emanates from the tenets of Islam, which emphasizes the realization of human rights for all human beings without any discrimination.

We have been pursuing reform of the international human rights machinery with a vision and determination. We now have a historic opportunity to take measures to extricate human rights from the bitter past legacy and move it to a higher place of dialogue, cooperation, education and awareness raising. The Islamic countries will strive to realize this vision through effective actions and in conformity with the principles and purposes of UN Charter and international law.

Today, we are at an important crossroads in the evolution of the human rights movement. The Commission on Human Rights has completed its life and the Human Rights Council has begun its journey. This is indeed a delicate moment. We need not exhaust ourselves in the debate of old versus new. The Commission on Human Rights did some important work during sixty years of its existence, which must be preserved and integrated in the work of the Human Rights Council. Its deficits should be redressed.

The widely diagnosed maladies of the international human rights system have been politicization, selectivity and double standards. The fault was not in the CHR structures, agenda or programme of work. It was in the practice of tabling resolutions targeting developing countries, lopsided focus on civil and political rights, lack of respect for religious and cultural diversity, imbalance between promotion and protection aspects, working of the Office of the High Commissioner distorted by donor priorities, and multiplicity of special procedures and their incoherent working methods.

We have to collectively address these problems as we embark upon this process of institution and programme building in the Council. Our actions in this regard should reaffirm the essential principles and directions outlined for us by our leaders in the September 2005 outcome document.

We should discard a punitive approach by targeting countries on arbitrary basis which had become the most insidious manifestation of confrontation and politicization at the Commission on Human Rights.

The General Assembly Resolution A/60/251 provides clear guidelines for construction of Council's architecture, its agenda and the working methods. Selective or self-serving

interpretations will not only make our work difficult but would tend to politicize the Council. The OIC has consistently emphasized that the Human Rights Council should have a "constructive and remedial" and not a "judgmental and selective" approach.

The Council's structures and working methods should conform to the purposes and principles of the Charter, including developing friendly relations among nations based on the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. It should conduct itself through achieving international cooperation and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Council will ultimately be judged by the results. It will be required to demonstrate capability to effectively combat the contemporary human rights challenges. In this regard, the Islamic world will be looking towards the Council with great optimism and hope in effectively addressing some of its major and longstanding human rights concerns.

The OIC's call for cooperation and dialogue is not meant to create a culture of impunity or acquiescence in the gross and consistent violations of human rights. On the contrary, we urge the international community to help address egregious violations of human rights.

Violations of human rights, and the consequences and implications of occupation, in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories remain a matter of deep concern for the Islamic world. The Human Rights Council, through effective and timely consideration, of this issue will make an important contribution towards alleviation of the suffering of Palestinian people and towards achieving a durable peace in the Middle East.

The deteriorating human rights situation in Palestine must be stemmed. Efforts to promote and protect human rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir must be intensified.

Muslim countries are seriously concerned over the rise in Islamophobia and stereotyping of Muslims. Ironically, the tide of defamation of Islam has become even stronger in recent years. The publication of caricatures in several European newspapers, that targeted Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) exposed the explosive dimensions of this issue and highlighted the urgent need for developing an effective approach to combat defamation of religions and promote respect and tolerance.

The Human Rights Council should take action to combat defamation of all religions. The UNGA resolution A/60/251 affirmed the need for all States to continue international efforts to enhance dialogue and broaden understanding among civilizations, cultures and religions.

Mr. Jan Eliasson, President of the United Nations General Assembly has given a clear and unifying message to combat the mistrust and tensions and to promote respect for religions. He advised that "it will be important that the relevant organs of the United Nations including the Human Rights Council make positive contributions in this respect and promote a much needed dialogue on these important and sensitive issues". It is important that the Council adopts a strong and consensual approach to promote initiatives such as "Alliance among civilizations".

Mr. Chairman,

4/4

In December 2005, at the Third Extraordinary Islamic Summit, OIC leaders outlined a ten year road map for human rights. They declared that they would strive for enlargement of political participation and ensure equality, civil liberties and social justice. The OIC is considering establishment of an independent permanent body to promote human rights in the member states in accordance with the provisions of Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam and to elaborate an OIC Charter on human rights. We are also committed to national laws and regulations to guarantee respect for human rights in member states.

Mr. Chairman,

On June 19, the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in Baku in a message to the Human Rights Council underlined the principles of (a) universality, objectivity and non-selectivity (b) cooperation and genuine dialogue to strengthen the capacity of states to comply with human rights obligations and (c) enhanced dialogue to broaden understanding among civilizations, cultures and religions. We should all heed this call.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.