

**STATEMENT**  
**by Ambassador Volodymyr Vassilenko**  
**in the Third Committee of the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the General Assembly**  
**on agenda item 67: Promotion and protection of human rights**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Ukraine aligns itself with the statement previously made by the European Union Presidency.

I would like to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his very informative corresponding reports. My delegation wishes to thank Ms. Louise Arbour for her work, which is strongly supported and encouraged by the Government of Ukraine.

We also commend the efforts of the Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts. As I speak, Special Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography Mr. Juan Miguel Petit is carrying out an assessment visit to Ukraine. We look forward to actively cooperate with other Special Procedures and Mechanisms of the UN human rights machinery, since Ukraine extended an open invitation to all of them.

Mr. Chairman,

The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document started a new era in our endeavours to promote and protect human rights worldwide. The Human Rights Council is tasked by the international community to enhance the efficiency of the United Nations human rights machinery.

It is an honour and privilege for Ukraine to serve in the Human Rights Council. We will spare no effort to ensure that this body meets the expectations that the people around the world are placing on it.

Having said that, I would also like to assure you of Ukraine's commitment to the full cooperation with the UN Member States in order to make the Human Rights Council an efficient body with a strong mandate to monitor and ensure the promotion and protection of all the human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. Furthermore, we stand ready to do our utmost to overcome the negative previous practice of the selective, politicized and double standard approaches in assessment of the human rights situations in various countries.

Mr. Chairman,

Poverty remains to be the most humiliating and invidious plague that prevents enjoyment of human rights by all. At the World Summit 2005 the international community has acknowledged that reducing poverty is a shared responsibility. However, this goal must be placed within the wider human rights context expressed in the Millennium Declaration, as the appropriate framework to counterbalance those inevitable effects of market globalization that exacerbate inequalities in peoples' access to growth and prosperity.

Next to poverty, discrimination constitutes another widespread source of denial of rights, freedom and dignity. Even though guarantees of non-discrimination figure prominently in the body of international human rights law, practice still tolerate discrimination, not least against women and girls.

Discrimination exposes many groups and individuals—from indigenous peoples to migrants to persons with disabilities—to systematic violations of their human rights, particularly in connection with dramatically unequal enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.

Racial discrimination is also ever present, and in some regions may even be growing, fuelled by fear of terrorism, or anxiety over competition for employment. Those fears are easily manipulated with results often difficult to predict or control.

Indeed, poverty and discrimination are among the most serious obstacles in advancing the human rights that cannot be stand off. They must be stopped.

Mr. Chairman,

Under the international human rights law, there exist certain imperatives that bind all States with no exception. These include the absolute ban on torture and death penalty.

The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture is the clearest repudiation of the attempts to erode the protection provided by the Convention against Torture. Recently Ukraine has become a Party to this instrument.

As a party to the Protocol to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms concerning the Abolition of the Death Penalty, we are committed to accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aimed at the abolition of the death penalty. Equally, we intend to become a party to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Ukraine warmly welcomes the recent adoption by the Human Rights Council of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and looks forward to its adoption by the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

Ukraine persistently supports the efforts aimed at promoting democratic processes in Europe. Democratic transformations in my country and our relevant steps on international scene are eloquent proofs of our sincere wish to contribute to this in practical terms.

To promote democracy at the regional level, Ukraine together with Georgia initiated a creation of the Community of Democratic Choice as a forum for a dialogue between governments and peoples within the region of Baltic, Black and Caspian Seas. The two meetins of the Community held recently in Kyiv and Vilnius marked a promising start for this regional initiative.

Another initiative called GUAM gained a new impetus by being transformed this May into a full-fledged international organization – the Organization for Democracy and Economic Cooperation – GUAM. Among the principle aims of this organization is fostering of regional cooperation in the fields of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Mr. Chairman,

Next year Ukraine will mark the 75th anniversary of one of the most horrific crimes ever known to the humankind – the Great Famine (Holodomor) of the early 1930s. Organized by the totalitarian Kremlin regime, the man-made famine was designed to exterminate the vital core of the Ukrainian nation and led to the death of seven to ten million of innocent men, women and children amounting to up to 25% of Ukraine's population.

For the decades the truth about this tragedy was suppressed in Ukraine, while the outside world by and large remained silent.

The tragedy of the Ukrainian nation is not a tragedy of ours, it is the world's tragedy. By making the truth about Holodomor and human suffering wide-known we show respect for the victims of this heinous crime and enhance the awareness of the international community in order to prevent similar catastrophes in the future.

Ukraine appeals to all States to support our endeavour in condemning Holodomor and achieving its international recognition, particularly by the United Nations, as genocide against the Ukrainian nation.

Mr. Chairman,

Protecting fundamental freedoms, preventing human rights violations and ensuring the respect for human dignity is indeed a challenging task.

Let me assure you that Ukraine – continuing cooperation with the international community – will be unrelenting in pursuit of this goal.

Thank you.