

6<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

ITEM 3

GENERAL DEBATE

**Comment by Mr. Zohrab Mnatsakanian,  
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia  
*Geneva, 13 September 2007***

Mr. President,

While the delegation of Armenia aligned itself with the statement of the European Union, we would want to contribute to the general debate under this item with few additional notes.

The delegation of Armenia once again wishes to extend its appreciation for your hard work in ensuring progress for the finalization of the institutional building of the reformed Human Rights body of the United Nations. While we are cognizant of the remaining challenges in the institutional building process, we hope that this body at its subsequent session will be able to cover the entire scope of substantive human rights issues in a consolidated manner and with the full engagement of all stakeholders in the promotion and protection of human rights. This delegation would welcome, among others, the early engagement of National Human Rights Institutions in the work of the Council.

Mr. President,

In the previous Commission this delegation promoted the issue of prevention of genocide. We support fully the formulations in the General Assembly Resolution to the effect that this Council should address, among other things, situations of gross and systematic violations of human rights. If history teaches us anything, such violations lead to most heinous crimes against humanity, including the crime of genocide. Furthermore, we greatly support and admire the heavy human rights machinery with its bodies and mechanisms, that, whatever critics may say, has over many years proven to be an indispensable part in the development of a global system of promotion and protection of human rights. Early prevention of violations of various sets of rights becomes a prevention of proliferation of such violations and ultimately of gross and systematic violations. As you would recall, pursuant to Commission resolution 2005/62, the Special Adviser of the Secretary General on the Prevention of Genocide addressed this Council in November 2006. We found this report as most relevant and timely. We recognize that early warning must be clearly distinguished from early action and with respect to the latter a mandate of a different UN body, namely that of the Security Council, may be required. As far as early prevention is concerned, we believe that the United Nations human rights system bears the special responsibility of effective and continued engagements and consolidated interactions between the Special Adviser and this body, including its special mechanisms, the Office of the High Commissioner, and not least the treaty bodies. We would therefore advocate for continued efforts to promoting such a bridge between the Special Adviser and this body. We welcomed the decision of the Secretary General to appoint a new Special Adviser on Genocide and Mass Atrocities and

expressed our full confidence in Mr. Francis Deng. My delegation supports the reiteration of the invitation to the Special Adviser to address the Council on the progress made in discharging his duties, pursuant to Commission Resolution 2005/62 and the Council Decision 2/102.

Mr. President,

The delegation of Armenia addresses the sensitive issue of protecting cultural heritage in the context of full realisation of cultural rights. Cultural heritage is an important component of the cultural identity of communities, groups and individuals, of social cohesion and harmony. The protection of cultural heritage promotes respect between peoples, nations and cultures, and therefore is indispensable for peace and security at the local, national and international levels. It may effectively prevent serious violations of various sets of human rights, including, inter alia, advocacy and incitement of national, racial or religious hatred. Protection of cultural heritage is therefore not just an issue to refer to the relevant specialised agency of the United Nations, but deserves to be viewed through the broader prism of promotion and protection of human rights. Regrettably, the intentional destruction of cultural heritage continues to take place in various parts of the world and deserves serious consideration within this body.

Mr. President,

The delegation of Armenia reiterates its support for the continued work of the two Working Groups that we have inherited from the previous Commission, namely those on indigenous populations and on minorities. While we are open to engage in the deliberations for renewed formats for these groups, we believe they remain important fora for consolidated and focused information and analyses of vulnerability cases, thereby providing opportunities for early actions and responses.

Finally, Armenia benefits greatly from the effective operation of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights. Such engagements, coupled with the global arrangements, have been most instrumental in the difficult process of institutional construction of the human rights machinery at our national level. It is with this in mind that we fully support the encouragement for the promotion of regional and subregional arrangements to promote and protect human rights.

Thank you