

**The following is an excerpt from the official meeting records of the General Assembly on March 15, 2006.**

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**Mr. Berruga** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): This is a day of special importance for the United Nations. The establishment of the Human Rights Council represents the most significant advance and update of multilateral endeavours to promote human rights in recent decades. This decision of the General Assembly consolidates the importance of human rights as one of the three main pillars underpinning the collective action of the international community today.

As agreed by our leaders at the 2005 world summit, the promotion of human rights constitutes the firmest foundation upon which to achieve the security and well-being that our peoples need. A peaceful, prosperous and democratic world will be achieved only to the extent that its inhabitants are guaranteed the basic conditions in which fully to exercise their human rights.

The strengthening of the United Nations machinery in this area became a vital objective as a result of the loss of efficiency and credibility of the Commission on Human Rights. For that reason, the main challenge of the reform effort was to ensure that the new Council would be a substantially better mechanism than the old Commission. This objective has been achieved.

The negotiating process that has come to an end today provides a clear picture of the multiplicity of perceptions that exist in the world on this complex issue. The resolution reflects not an ideal world, but the world that exists. In this regard, we can affirm today that there is a clear divide between those who regard human rights as the best way to promote dignity and larger freedom and those who see them as an inconvenient obligation, or one that is hard to comply with in the face of certain customs, ideological postures or ways of exercising public power. The next challenge for the international community, therefore, which will be faced in the new Council, will be to close that gap so as to achieve the universality and effective promotion of human rights.

In practice, the Council will have to put an end to flaws and distortions that had become the currency of the Commission, in particular the application of double standards, selectivity and the failure to apply its recommendations and resolutions on the ground. Mexico believes that the new Council is significantly better in the following ways.

It raises the standing of human rights within the Organization's structure. In the election of its membership, it establishes the requirement of maintaining high standards of respect for and commitment to human rights, which must be met by those States that wish to become members of the Council. This means that candidatures will be appraised on the basis of the merits of each State. Dialogue and cooperation are the primary guidelines of the work of the Council so as to enhance the capacity of States to fulfil their obligations and meet international human rights standards. The Council now includes an effective mechanism to request the General Assembly to suspend the rights of members that gravely and systematically violate human rights. There is no doubt that one of the Council's major assets is the mechanism for a universal periodical review, which will provide more refined evaluation parameters while extending greater assistance to States requesting help in meeting their obligations.

It is for those reasons that Mexico supports the creation of the new Council. We welcome the decisive step taken today by the international community.

Human rights comprise one of the fundamental themes of my country's foreign policy. Accordingly, and in the founding spirit of this mechanism, the Government of Mexico has decided

to adopt a policy of refraining from exchanging votes on candidatures in the election of the members of the Human Rights Council. The purpose of that step is to resolutely direct Mexico's support towards candidates who, as set out in the resolution, possess the most merit and demonstrate the highest level of commitment to, and observance of, the cause of human rights. Moreover, Mexico will refrain from disclosing its voting intentions in advance, in order to avoid the influence of factors other than human rights at the time of deciding whom to support. By adopting that policy, we hope to be able to preserve and promote the highest international standards in protecting the dignity of human beings.

Now that the Human Rights Council has been established, it is up to each of our Governments to put in place a Council that is up to the tasks required of the United Nations in this sensitive area. In that regard, Mexico would like to express its profound gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for his good judgement and for introducing proposals that have garnered the widest possible consensus to create the new Human Rights Council. My delegation would also like to express its gratitude for his decisive leadership in guiding the process through extensive, open and always transparent negotiations.

In the light of that experience, Mexico reaffirms its belief that that type of negotiation is the most equitable and effective mechanism at the disposal of the General Assembly to carry the entire reform of the United Nations with the necessary support for legitimacy and respect for the sovereign equality of States.