



CHAIR OF
THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
NINTH SESSION

Agenda Item 2

**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA, H.E. AMBASSADOR
JUAN ANTONIO FERNÁNDEZ PALACIOS,
ON BEHALF OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT**

(Check against delivery)

Geneva, 8 September, 2008

Mr. Chairman:

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, in this historic opportunity when we are welcoming for the first time in the Council our new High Commissioner for Human Rights: Mrs. Navanethem Pillay, a prominent daughter of the emblematic and friendly South Africa, a distinguished NAM member country.

Today we reiterate to you, Mrs. Pillay, the congratulations expressed to you by the NAM in the General Assembly, in New York, as well as the assurances of the full support of the NAM member states in the discharge of your duties.

Mr. Chairman:

The arrival of our new High Commissioner comes at a crucial moment in the evolution of the new architecture of the UN Human Rights Machinery.

As the Council embarks on its third year of work, there are important challenges ahead, both, for the Council, and for the Office of the High Commissioner.

While the institution building process ended on its essential elements, some more progress needs to be achieved in order to continue to improve the human rights machinery. As we have said in the past, it is not enough to establish a new body with new rules and institutions: The real change should take place in the thinking and in the way of handling human rights issues by those who turned the old Commission into a failed, politicised and illegitimate tribune for blaming and shaming.

At the same time, the unique and crucial event that represented the establishment of this Council, with a higher status than the old Commission, calls for the review of the relationship between the Council and the Office of the High Commissioner. Such exercise would contribute to reinforcing transparency, mutual cooperation and synergies in the work of the two bodies, while ensuring the independence of the Office of the High Commissioner.

Having that discussion in the Council is both urgent and necessary. However, since you have just arrived, Mrs. Pillay, and you are taking up your post, we should wait a reasonable time until you settle down

and prepare yourself and your staff for such debate. We look forward to your inputs on the evolving relationship between the OHCHR and the Council.

We are sure that with your strong will and commitment, proven by your well known background as a human rights and anti-apartheid activist, Mrs. Pillay, you will be able to face all the challenges ahead.

We are also sure that guided by the ancestral African wisdom, you will contribute to the consolidation of essential postulates for the success of the human rights machinery, such as non politicization, non selectivity or double standards, cooperative approach, independence, objectivity, respectful dialogue, and constructiveness in dealing with human rights issues.

Only on the basis of these postulates we will be able to strengthen the United Nations cooperation system on human rights, particularly in the context of the Universal Periodic Review, which though so far has been successful, it is still to be consolidated.

Mr. Chairman:

The Non-Aligned Movement has taken note of the ideas that have been put forward by some delegations, in order to have a Council meeting to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. We are ready to work constructively in order to identify the format and the modalities of such meeting, that we believe it is timing and necessary.

At the same time, this should also be an opportunity to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the "Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action", which complemented the Universal Declaration and, among other things, proclaimed that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated.

Finally, Mr Chairman, let me reiterate to you and to Mrs Pillay, the full cooperation of the NAM in the discharge of your duties. In achieving a world of dignity and respect for all, the international community can always count on the firm support and commitment of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Thank you