

Statement by Canada: Universal Periodic Review
October 2, 2006

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Mr. President,

I would like to thank the ambassador of Morocco for his detailed report on progress made to date. We are very encouraged by the degree of consensus which we have seen here this afternoon. We appear to have consensus on the basic principles for UPR, including universality of coverage, equal treatment of all States, an emphasis on cooperation, based on interactive dialogue, with the full involvement of the country concerned and with consideration given to its capacity-building needs, and that the mechanism should complement and not duplicate the work of other human rights mechanisms.

Canada has submitted a proposal for the Universal Periodic Review, which is available on the Council's website. I will use this opportunity to comment on some aspects of our proposal.

The UPR's objective is to contribute to an improved implementation of international human rights obligations, standards and commitments by all UN Member States.

The basis for the review, in our opinion, should be the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the obligations arising under treaties to which the State is a Party, and commitments undertaken by the State through voluntary declarations and pledges.

The periodicity of the review should be three years, in keeping with the direction set out for Council members in resolution 60/251 to be reviewed during their term of membership, and to provide for equal treatment of all States and to ensure that all States are reviewed with sufficient frequency to have a beneficial impact on implementation and capacity-building.

To enable the Council to review all States every 3 years, some 65 States would need to be reviewed each year. We propose the establishment of 4 dedicated UPR committees each comprising 11 or 12 Council members to conduct the review. Each of these 4 UPR committees would review about 16 countries each year, with one three hour meeting allocated to each State. Each Committee would thus require about 10 meeting days per year, which could be spread throughout the year. Each Committee would report to the Council on a regular basis throughout the year, so that the Council would consider about 21 countries at each of its regular sessions.

The process to be followed would have the following six steps:

1. The OHCHR compiles a country dossier from existing information available from UN documents, including the periodic reports of States Parties to the UN human rights treaty bodies, the Concluding Observations of the treaty bodies, and reports from the special procedures and the OHCHR, and make this publicly available as well as to the state concerned. International and national human rights non-governmental organizations as well as national human rights institutions should also have the opportunity to provide input into the process.
2. The state under review prepares a statement to the committee prior to the dialogue.
3. The UPR committee holds an interactive dialogue with the state.
4. A committee rapporteur prepares a summary of the discussion.
5. The state reviewed prepares an official final written response.