

NO FAITH GAIN

**PROGRESS REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF OP 6 OF GA RESOLUTION 60/251
3 OCTOBER 2006**

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF SINGAPORE

Mr President,

- Singapore fully supports the statement by the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Asian Group. We also thank the facilitators of the Working Group on the implementation of OP6 of GA resolution 60/251 for their reports on the progress made so far.
- We welcome the proposed schedule of formal meetings of the intergovernmental Working Group on the review of mandates and mechanisms established by Decision 2006/104. We appreciate the proportionally higher number of meetings dedicated to this Working Group as compared to the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, given that the review of mandates and mechanisms has unfortunately not received as much attention so far. Both processes must proceed in parallel so that the final outcome is an enhanced and coherent human rights system.
- Given the President's request that we not repeat the general debate that we have already had in the informal consultations, we would like to pose three questions for reflection.
- First, on the review of mandates, many delegations have highlighted the need for a comprehensive and official Code of Conduct for all mandate holders. Coincidentally, the Coordination Committee of the Special Procedures has circulated its own draft revised Manual for comments by States by 31 December 2006. The question is whether the Coordination Committee should be working in isolation from Working Group on review of mandates. Since mandates are created by the Council, it only stands to reason that the content of any Manual or Code of Conduct be subject to the approval of the Council. The fact that the deadline is set before the expected conclusion of the work of the Working Group also begs the question of whether the Coordination Committee is prejudging or pre-empting the mandated review.

- Second, some delegations have argued that the need to preserve the independence of mandate holders precludes any possibility of States being involved in their selection. Yet, the members of the treaty bodies have traditionally been elected by States Parties. Are these treaty body members any less independent because of the election process? And is the previous system of leaving the appointment of mandate holders in the hands of three individuals – namely, the President of the Commission, the Secretary-General or the High Commissioner – necessarily more independent? One of the reasons many states do not respond to mandate holders is because mandate holders are seen to lack credibility and legitimacy. If mandate holders are elected by States, then there would be no question of their legitimacy to do the job they have been elected to do.
- Finally, there is an emerging consensus that the burgeoning number of mandates needs to be streamlined to enhance the effectiveness of the Special Procedures. Proposals have been made to do away with country-specific mandates entirely, while many have argued strongly that this would in fact dilute the ability of the Council to address gross and systemic violations of human rights in countries. A key question to ask is whether this function could in fact be worked into an improved complaints mechanism and a new system of universal periodic review. If they are worked into the UPR, do we really need country specific mandates? The key issue with country specific mandates is that they contribute to the perception that the Council is selective and politicised. And such a perception in the long term will inevitably lead to a decline in the credibility of the Council and the UN human rights system as a whole.
- My delegation looks forward to making more substantive contributions when the formal meetings of the Working Group are convened.

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