



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THAILAND
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Statement

by

H.E. Khunying Laxanachantorn Laohaphan

Ambassador and Permanent Representative

of Thailand to the United Nations

at the Informal Plenary Meeting

of the General Assembly on the Human Rights Council

New York, 24 October 2005

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Intervention by H.E. Khunying Laxanachantorn Laohaphan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand at the Informal Plenary Meeting on the Human Rights Council, on 24 October 2005 (on status, size, composition and membership)

Co-Chairmen,

Thank you for giving me the floor. Like other speakers before me, I wish to share a few comments on the status, size, composition and membership of the Human Rights Council as follows:

On the status – My delegation remains flexible on whether the Human Rights Council would be a principal organ or a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. To initially set up the Human Rights Council as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly might be more realistic though given the divergent views of Member States. After all, it may not matter much what status the Human Rights Council has, but what is more important is what the Council actually sets out to accomplish and does.

As for whether it would be a standing body and meets throughout the year, my delegation feels that instead of devoting our attention to only a six-week event, perhaps two regular sessions, each for three weeks, can be held in Geneva. The Council can also convene a special session if its members so wish over the year to address urgent situation that requires prompt attention. The Council's subsidiary bodies which will be set up can also meet over the year just like in the case of the current CHR.

Also as a food for thought, I wish to suggest that the Council increases its work at regional levels by holding thematic discussions in different regions of the world over the year. The topic of such regional discussion should be decided by the Council members from that regional group in consultation with non-Council member countries of the regional group in order to increase the sense of participation and ownership. Through such regional mechanism, countries in the region can share best practices and experiences and would be able to identify obstacles facing the region and how to address them. While the HRC members from outside the region can of course participate in the regional discussion, the principal role should be left to the HRC members from within the region and countries from the region themselves. At the same time, countries outside the region who are not members of the HRC may also attend the regional discussion as observers. Mechanisms should also be worked out to involve national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations in this kind of regional discussion, while ensuring that the discussion will be undertaken in a cooperative spirit and a non-confrontational manner.

My delegation believes that the more we involve actors in each region and the more we bring human rights closer to home, the better we can ensure that human rights are well respected, promoted and protected. This will, of course, involve much logistical support by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, but I believe in the long run it will help as a prevention and early-warning mechanism to detect and

prevent grave human rights violations. Countries in each region also stand in a much better position to understand differences and constraints and may have ways and means as peers to influence or help any country concerned within the same region to address its human rights situation in a timely manner.

On the size/ composition/and membership of the HRC – my delegation is also flexible, but would think that given the number of the United Nations' Member States as present, should we wish to uphold the principle of representation, then the size of the Human Rights Council should be comparable to the size of the current CHR or the ECOSOC or at least not too much smaller. The membership should take into account an equitable geographical representation, proportionate to the current size of each regional group. We are also flexible on whether members should be elected by a simple-majority or a two-thirds majority. Should Thailand wish to join the Human Rights Council, she will stand ready to work hard to prove that she is entitled to a seat and will be ready to work for a two-thirds majority.

We, however, do not feel that setting up fixed criteria will be useful. We feel that human rights do not belong to any group of countries and the more countries wishing to become engaged in the human rights work, the more useful it will be to the world community. In this regard, we feel that voluntary pledges by prospective members should be encouraged. Countries wishing to participate in the work of the Council should pledge to undertake serious commitments to promoting and protecting human rights, for example, if possible, by becoming a State party to international human rights conventions, organizing international or regional human rights seminars, workshops or conferences, and engaging in human rights dialogues and sharing best practices, etc.

As for the term of membership, it should be three years as in the current CHR and should be renewable.

I thank you, Co-Chairmen.