



Permanent Mission of The State of Eritrea
To the United Nations, New York

Check against delivery

Statement
by
H.E. Mr. Girma Asmerom
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Eritrea to the United Nations

On agenda item: 63

Report of the Human Rights Council
69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York
17 November 2014

Mr. President,

My delegation wishes to welcome the President of the Human Rights Council and takes note of his report to the General Assembly.

Eritrea associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Mauritania on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. President,

I like to take advantage of the presence of the President of the Human Rights Council to express Eritrea's view on certain issues concerning the activities of the Human Rights Council.

1. Concerning the principles and procedures of handling human right issues

- Eritrea believes and as it is clearly and strongly stressed by the African Group, Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and other regional groups, on a number of occasions, **Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** remains a valid mechanism in enhancing constructive dialogue and cooperation between Member States. This has been and is a novel approach where every country rich or poor, big or small, human rights' record is put under scrutiny. Objectivity and impartiality must be the guiding principles.
- Article 2 of the UN Charter which clearly stresses the non interference in the internal affairs of states must also be the guiding principle of the Human Rights Council.
- Human right is a universal concept. As clearly articulated by the African Group and NAM, selectivity, naming and shaming country specific resolutions must be rejected.
- It is because these principles were violated and abused by certain countries for political expediency that, in 2006 the Commission on Human Right was dismantled and replaced with the Human Rights Council. We were sure that we were establishing a new body with higher standards of principles and procedures than the defunct Commission on Human Rights.
- Yet today, history is repeating itself. The Human Rights Council is once again becoming a forum where some countries are using it to advance their interest and geopolitical agenda, including that of regime change. Naming and shaming declarations and country specific resolutions are becoming the norm rather than the exception. This has to stop.

- The Human Rights Council should not allow itself to be used by any country big or small rich or poor.
- Eritrea is deeply concerned by the current behaviour of some members states in the Human Rights Council in the implementation and interpretation of the rules of procedures of the Council. This is a serious challenge that has to be addressed by the Human Rights Council in order to uphold its **credibility and legitimacy**.
- I hope when the President goes back to Geneva that he would ask the Council to verify the credibility and reliability of the allegations and the accusers.

2. Concerning disbursement and rationalization of funding

- Every year the number of country mandate resolutions adopted by the Human Rights Council is growing. These **proliferation of country mandates** ought to be reviewed as a way of saving expenditures and rationalizing the work of the Human Rights Council. For example, the establishment of a Special Rapporteur and a Commission of Inquiry for the same issue and for the same country, in this case Eritrea, is not only redundant, but it is also waste of time and resources that cannot be justified and rationalized.
- Given the fact that there are no nations or governments that do not have human rights issues and problems, it is not possible to create country mandate holders for all member states of the United Nations. The fund allocated for such redundant activities can be utilized for enhancing other important activities the Human Rights Council is engaged, such as technical assistance for capacity building. Given the fact that the Human Right Council is facing a major financial constraint to fully implement its mandated activities, this is an area where unnecessary expenditure can be cut.
- The Human Rights Council must avoid overlapping of mandates and activities. Before asking for extra funding, it must address issues of redundancy and duplication seriously. It must clearly articulate, justify and rationalize its expenditures before coming up with the lump sum amount. The fifth Committee, ACBQ and other concerned UN bodies must carry a thorough discussion whether the Council's funding request is justifiable and cost effective.

3. On modus operandi or rules of engagement of the Human Rights Council

- Eritrea strongly believes the Human Rights Council must follow a clear procedure that will safeguard it from certain politically motivated resolutions being railroaded under the pretext of human rights violations. In particular when it is done at the last minute while the concerned state is going through the UPR process.
- The Human Rights Council that is mandated by the UN General Assembly to make sure that all types of human rights are respect and protected must implement the letter and spirit of the rule of law. It must give an opportunity for the concerned and accused state to defend itself and explain the human rights situation in the country. The dictum "you are innocent until proven guilty" must be respected by all member states, including the Council. The Council must be constantly reminded that according to the UN Charter it does not have the right and the mandate to intervene in the internal affairs of any member state. The political independence and sovereignty of any member states must be respected.
- The Council must base its decisions and resolutions on concrete information and evidences rather than on a politically motivated sweeping statements or allegations compiled by one or two individuals in the name of a Special Rapporteur or Commission of Inquiry.
- To depend on the report of the one or two individuals is procedurally wrong and substantially travesty of justice.
- The members of the Council should thoroughly interrogate the country mandate holders to ascertain the facts.
- The Council must look into the specific situation and stage of development of each country. Its analysis of the Eritrean situation is not only off the mark, it does not take into consideration that certain parts of sovereign Eritrean territory, including the town of Badme is occupied and unjust sanctions are imposed on the people. They are important and relevant human rights issues that the HRC must deal with. Eritrea's right to development must be respected.
- The Human Rights Council as a mandated body to enhance and promote human rights, must be reminded that its decision and resolutions have

serious financial and political ramifications. Its noble mandate should not be compromised under any circumstances or pretext.

- In conclusion, Eritrea is fully committed to the human rights values and principles. As a result, to mention a few of its achievements:
 - Women's right is fully respected. They have the right to own property. Get equal pay for the equal work and FGM is criminalized.
 - On Education, with the motto, "Education for All", it is free from kindergarten to tertiary level.
 - Eritrea has achieved the Health MDGs 4, 5 and 6 and is on track on MDGs 2,3, 6 and 7.
 - Eritrea is the most peaceful country in the volatile Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region. It must be commended not targeted.
- Once again Eritrea's right to development must be respected.

Thank you Mr. President.