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## **S T A T E M E N T**

**by Mr. Andrey. I. Denisov**  
**Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations**  
**in the Third Committee of 59<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly**  
**on the agenda item 105 (b, c, e) "Human rights questions"**

**1 November 2004**

Mr. Chairman,

Last year the international community marked the 55-th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 10-th anniversary of the World Conference on Human Rights which adopted an important document on human rights protection - Vienna Declaration and the Program of Action. Unfortunately it has to be admitted that we are still very far from the time when the standards formulated in the above mentioned instruments can become a reality of our everyday life, a target that all nations with no exception should strive to achieve in resolving internal or external policy issues.

Moreover, the human rights questions are more and more often politicized and fall victim to conjuncture considerations and interests. In fact, usually those who see their rights and liberties guaranteed by international legal acts, who are expected to find support and protection from the state and the international community inevitably find themselves among the victims.

The Russian Federation is strongly convinced that the discussion of human rights questions should facilitate rapprochement of countries, be held on an exclusively equal footing and mutual respect in strict conformity with the UN Charter. At the same time this area of international relations is largely characterized by "double standards" and is used by certain countries to meet their political ambitions.

As a result, the human rights are now grasped as disuniting rather than uniting factor in world affairs thus provoking confrontation and division of civilizations. This is further exacerbated by persistent attempts to treat human rights exclusively from the viewpoint of individualism and liberal values, while what is really important here is to take into account historical, cultural, and religious specificities of separate countries and regions, diversity of their political and economic systems.

We believe that at the time of new challenges and threats that confront directly the humanity in the 21st century what is needed is to abandon the practice of imposing one-sided approaches to the human rights, to renounce a mentor and edifying tone and to start acting in the spirit of a true international solidarity with an emphasis on finding solutions to topical relevant questions.

In this connection we pin much hope on Mrs. Louise Arbour, the new UN High Commissioner for Human Rights that in her activities she will be seeking to establish cooperation in this area free from being politicized and thus to facilitate the establishment of a just world order. Russia, for its part, is prepared to render the High Commissioner all-round support, which will be proved by the official visit of Mrs. L. Arbour to the Russian Federation next February. We are sure that her trip will help the international community form a non-partisan perception of the situation in our country.

Mr. Chairman,

The terrorist acts which have swept throughout the world put on the agenda the question of recognizing general right on protection from terrorism. Time and again we stated Russia's preparedness to strengthen interstate cooperation in antiterrorist sphere, in its human rights protection aspect. The prospects of such a cooperation

more often than not run into the problem of terrorists being divided into "good" and "bad", political asylum being provided to them in breach of the principle "either extradite, or try" and the refusal to recognize them as human rights violators.

All this is nothing but a speculation on the sufferings of victims of terrorist attacks and yet one more manifestation of political situation. As Mr. Sergei.V Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, noted during general debate at the current session of the UN General Assembly, the states bear collective responsibility for the eradication of terrorism and terrorist threat. Therefore, we hope that all members of the international community will approach this problem with the extent of responsibility necessary to meet the current difficult situation and the global character of the terrorist threat, including the regime of compliance with and enhancement of human rights and freedoms.

It is for the desire to reinforce this regime that the Russian Federation has decided to launch the Human Rights and Terrorism draft resolution at the current session of the General Assembly. We hope that our initiative will be widely supported by those who not in theory, but in practice advocate the eradication of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Mr. Chairman,

The work of the 60-th Session of the UN Commission for Human Rights that took place in a situation of increased confrontation, once again showed that human rights are used as a pressure lever in international relations. We believe that it is highly damaging for the efficiency of the UN main human rights body and conducive to the use of the universal human rights system as an arena for settling bilateral disputes. The campaign launched in recent years to search for new "offenders" in human rights area does not at all help to remedy the situation, on the contrary, it makes it worse.

No doubt the Commission's efficiency should be increased through reforms. However, institutional and technical measures alone can hardly resolve the above problems. What is needed, first of all, is that states, NGOs and other members of the international community adjust their approaches to the current human rights agenda.

In this context I would like to dwell on the functioning of special procedures of the Commission and treaty bodies for human rights. While recognizing their important monitoring function we cannot help noting that the establishment of a growing number of new bodies and mandates has caused the duplication of their work and lack of financial resources appropriated from the UN regular budget.

In this regard it would be expedient to introduce moratorium on the establishment of new mechanisms and to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the existing system of treaty bodies and special procedures of the Commission in order to increase its effectiveness and ensure coordination between overlapping mandates. Another matter of concern is the politics-driven character of the activities pursued by certain special procedures and treaty bodies and the use of unreliable information in their dialogue with states. We suppose that it is time to reconsider the procedure for the appointment of special reporters, chairpersons of working groups and independent experts to make it more transparent.

While generally welcoming the of NGOs' active involvement in the consideration of periodic reports within treaty bodies, we cannot help underlining that lately experts of the committees have been drawing their concluding observation solely based on the so called "alternative reports" of NGOs without taking into account the dialogue with official delegations of respective states. Furthermore, there have been totally unacceptable cases when such observations were prepared by the staff of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights without any participation of experts of the committees. Such facts seriously compromise both the Office itself and the treaty bodies and undermine the credibility of the High Commissioner's institute.

We hope that, in view of the importance of these bodies and mechanisms, Mrs. Louise Arbour will take specific targeted steps to improve their activities. At the same time, we should bear in mind many people base their judgment about the effectiveness of the UN human rights system as a whole largely on the performance of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and its ability to establish a dialogue with the states and civil society.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.