Check Against Delivery



Statement by

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**of the Republic of Slovenia**

at the

**High-Level Segment of the 46th Session**

**of the UN Human Rights Council**

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Madam President,

Madam High Commissioner,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The year that has just passed had been marked by a devastating pandemic, bringing grief to so many families, challenging the health systems and changing our way of life.

Sadly, it also exposed the dire situation, which parts of our societies have been pushed into. Further deepening of the pre-existing inequalities is one of the most tragic consequences of the pandemic.

It is imperative for the international community and for the Human Rights Council to address the challenge of fair and just protection of human rights. They are and must remain inalienable, universal and indivisible. It is our responsibility to address this issue without any hidden agenda.

In this respect, I greet the new members of the Human Rights Council. I wish the new composition of the Council to work swiftly, efficiently and with extensive support from all of us.

Slovenia welcomes the recent decision of the USA to re-engage with the Human Rights Council. We look forward to constructive cooperation and joint efforts to enhance Council's efficiency with global protection of human rights as our common goal.

Let me stress that Slovenia, too, stands ready to take its part in international human rights efforts as a member state of the Human Rights Council in the period from 2026 to 2028.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Slovenia is concerned about the overall effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the human rights of groups in vulnerable situations. It is important to pay a special attention to the root causes, which pandemic has so bluntly exposed and enhanced.

We should go beyond the pain the pandemic caused and look for the opportunities instead. The recovery after pandemic should include actions aimed at achieving greater equality, loyal solidarity and social protection.

For building back safe, healthy and sustainable environment, the globally recognized linkage between human rights and environment should become one of our common goals.

Slovenia, together with other members of the Core group on the subject, is stepping up its work in the process of the global recognition of the right to a healthy environment. This process is now reaching its most important stage. I call upon all countries to provide their highly valuable and needed support.

More than 150 countries already include the right to a healthy environment in their national legislations. Additionally, the support for action by the interested public is wide.

The pandemic has also served as a wake-up call for worldwide action on environment, for our benefit, but even more so for the benefit of the future generations. We have to take this opportunity to act now.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The impact of new technologies and digitalization on the human rights is becoming a topic that increasingly demands our full attention. Rapid development of break-through technologies and artificial intelligence present both many opportunities as well as a number of potential risks.

Through its International Research Centre for Artificial Intelligence under the auspices of UNESCO, Slovenia strives for responsible, human-centred and human rights-based development of Artificial Intelligence.

Last but definitely not least: the Human Rights Council has the mechanisms and responsibility to respond swiftly to human rights violations around the globe.

Deteriorating human rights situation in Belarus demands our continuous active engagement and response. The on-going violations, among them harassment and arrests of representatives of civil society, independent media and political opposition, are unacceptable. Those responsible must be held accountable.

Slovenia is concerned by the recent verdict against the Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny and calls for his immediate and unconditional release. The same goes for all peaceful protesters and journalist, who have been detained while exercising their rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression.

When speaking about democratic political processes, let me also recall that the EU closely monitors the situation in Hong Kong and has urged the authorities to respect the rule of law, human rights, democratic principles and high degree of autonomy under the ‘One Country, Two Systems’ principle.

The situation Myanmar, following the military coup and the removal of the civilian Government, is a matter of concern as well. The military must restore democratic institutions and return elected authorities to power.

30 years ago, Slovenia’s independence was built upon our nation’s aspirations to fully enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms and to determine its own future through democracy.

This is why Slovenia remains sensitive to violations of human rights and rule of law, wherever they may occur, and will continue to voice its concern over such situations.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that in the past years, important steps have been taken to ensure higher efficiency of the UN human rights pillar.

We are all aware that there are still challenges to address and improvements to be made. Securing stable and adequate funding of the Council and the Office of the High Commissioner is a part of these efforts.

The effectiveness and reputation of the Council depend on its willingness and capacity to contribute to the prevention of human rights abuse and to ensure full respect for the principles of democracy and the rule of law.

Their promotion and protection worldwide should be our common goal.

Thank you.