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Statement by

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at the High Level Segment of the
40th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

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MMe Vice President,
Excellencies,
[High Commissioner,]
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to address you and this Council today. Slovenia has been active on the Human Rights Council since its establishment, and after three years of membership, Slovenia even more strongly believes that the Council is a key global forum protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms. We are determined to continue to pursue its strengthening through cooperation with all UN Member States and the UN system.

In this light, I wish to thank the High Commissioner for Human Rights and her Office for their highly valued work and important contribution to promoting and protecting human rights worldwide. Slovenia remains a staunch supporter of the High Commissioner's mandate and independence.

Let me also express our sincere appreciation to the many civil society representatives that are here with us today. Slovenia is conscious of your vital role in the work of the Council, and applauds the often difficult work of human rights defenders. Any attack on them should be strongly condemned.

Mr President,

I would like to congratulate you on your election. Important progress has been achieved in ensuring the Council's increased efficiency and effectiveness, also last year, when the Council was presided over by the Slovenian Permanent Representative. Slovenia is hopeful that these improvements will be a cornerstone of further advances in the functioning of this body. We wish the new Bureau every success in continuing this process.

In these challenging times for multilateralism, it is crucial to show that a rule-based international order and multilaterally agreed commitments are still essential for ensuring peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While reiterating that all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural, are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, Slovenia will – also as an observer – continue to pursue its thematic priorities:

With the upcoming 40th anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, I wish to reassure you that empowering women and girls remains Slovenia's priority both at home and abroad. Women and girls hold immense potential for improving the global future, and the key to unlocking this potential lies in ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights by all women and girls, including their sexual and reproductive rights, and in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Furthermore, the devastating effects of environmental degradation, also due to climate change, should encourage us to strengthen our efforts for the global

recognition of the right to a safe and healthy environment, and to better implement the rights to safe drinking water and sanitation.

I would also like to bring your attention to the rights of older persons. As our societies age, it is becoming increasingly important to step up our efforts to create an environment which offers opportunities for older persons, values their contribution to society, and fully addresses challenges to the protection and implementation of their rights. We should consider how to act in the best interests of older persons.

This year, we are celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This most ratified international human rights instrument has set important standards in ensuring respect for children's rights. This anniversary offers an excellent opportunity to further promote the guiding principles of the Convention, particularly the best interests of the child.

Slovenia will also continue to promote the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and human rights education and training as indispensable for a just and peaceful society. Let me also stress the crucial role that young people play in realizing human rights, peace and sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Human Rights Council has proven over the last thirteen years that it can respond swiftly to human rights situations around the globe. This is one of its greatest achievements, and we look forward to further exploring its preventive role. The Council's actions have encouraged the understanding that addressing human rights violations contributes to sustaining peace and security. Many more have come to recognise that gross human rights violations may lead to atrocity crimes and spark conflicts and crises. In this regard, I wish to recall the responsibility of states to protect their populations.

Slovenia attaches great importance to the established international mechanisms that deal with alleged human rights violations and abuses. We call on all actors to fully cooperate with them.

Last year, we witnessed how cooperation within and between regions yields best results in terms of Council action. For instance, at the 39th session, a cross-regional group contributed to the successful establishment of the independent mechanism for Myanmar, which will further address the grave human rights violations in the country. We also commend the regional initiative to address the situation in Venezuela, where respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and humanitarian principles, as well as the restoration of democracy through free and fair elections, should be secured.

Slovenia remains concerned over the dire situations in Yemen and Syria, which urgently call for respect for international human rights and humanitarian law. Slovenia condemns the continued systematic, widespread and gross violations and abuses of human rights and the failure of the parties involved in conflicts to abide by international law. Those responsible must be held accountable. We are particularly concerned by grave violations against children, and we call for the facilitation of the immediate provision of humanitarian aid.

We share concerns over reports of excessive use of force against civilian protesters in Sudan, and call on the authorities to abide by international human rights obligations. Slovenia also remains vigilant about human rights abuses in conflict-affected areas of Ukraine. We call on all parties to the conflict to adhere to the ceasefire and to implement the obligations arising from the Minsk Agreements.

Mr President,

The Council's other great success is the Universal Periodic Review. Slovenia considers this peer-review mechanism as an important tool for strengthening respect for, and the promotion of, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Slovenia will undertake its third review this November.

Equally, we highly value the work of special procedures, and call on states to cooperate fully with the mandate holders. Slovenia has extended an open invitation to them. Last year, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues visited Slovenia, and his report will be presented at this session.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last but not least, it is my pleasure to announce that Slovenia has announced its candidacy for membership of the UN Human Rights Council for the 2026–2028 period. Slovenia's interest in becoming a member of this prominent UN body again is driven by the positive experiences of the last membership and last year's presidency of the Council. I trust that we have demonstrated our commitment to human rights and to this Council, and that we may count on your support.

Thank you.