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PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA TO THE UN, GENEVA

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

12TH SESSION (14 Sep-02 Oct 2009)

Statement by UNHCHR, Ms Navanethem Pillay

(15 Sep 2009)

Statement by India

Mr. President,

We would like to express our deep appreciation to the High Commissioner, Ms Navanethem Pillay, for her statement highlighting pressing human rights issues of concern, lying at the root of “chronic human rights conditions” and which would form her thematic priorities over the next two years. The High Commissioner has chosen to focus on the need for stronger enforcement of national laws in line with established human rights standards, discrimination against minorities, women’s rights, human rights violations in situations of armed conflict, economic, social and cultural rights, migration, impunity and human rights defenders. Mr President, we welcome the High Commissioner’s focus on these issues and assure her of our continuing support in addressing any human rights matter in an impartial and non-selective manner. We would, however, make the following three points:

- a) One, given that the High Commissioner has now spent one year in office, we would have preferred to see, as a natural progression to her preliminary thoughts in her address to the Council at the 9th Council session in September 2008, a more robust, comprehensive, detailed and clear articulation of her vision, priorities and specific plans as to how she intends to take the human rights agenda forward under her leadership, as also on how she proposes to make her office more effective, efficient and transparent. In this regard, we feel that it would be desirable to attempt laying down benchmarks against which she can measure and apprise the Council of progress of her plans, both regarding thematic human rights agenda and her office;

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- b) Two, it would be useful if the High Commissioner were to consider including in her periodic updates to the Council her perspectives on the various specific issues constituting the agenda for a particular Council session, including, to the extent possible, what she views as salient outstanding issues and challenges pertaining to each agenda item;
- c) Three, we share the sentiments that she expresses about the importance of human rights treaty bodies and the need to reflect on systemic ways to improve their functioning, both in terms of their qualitative output, efficiency and effectiveness; and their coordination with each other and the rest of the human rights machinery.

Finally, Mr President, we express our appreciation to you for your efforts to reach out to the regional groups on different issues, and to improve the flow of information from the secretariat, as is evident from the greater information that is now available on the Council website and the initiative to keep the members updated through modern means. We would, however, register our deep disappointment at the continuing delay in posting of reports to be considered during the Council session, especially on sensitive issues like the *Fact-finding Mission on Gaza* that need to be examined in much greater detail than may now be possible. We would, once again, urge you to take corrective steps in this regard.

Thank you, Mr. President.