MESSAGE ON HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

New York, 10 December 2005

On the occasion of Human Rights Day, I wish to recall that our Heads of State at the 2005 World Summit acknowledged that peace and security, development and human rights are the pillars of the United Nations system, and the foundation for collective security and well-being. They recognized that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

The 2005 World Summit also resolved to strengthen the United Nations human rights machinery to ensure effective enjoyment by all of all human rights and civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development. Our Leaders resolved to strengthen the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights through the doubling of its regular budget resources over the next five years.

In order to further strengthen the human rights machinery, our Heads of State resolved to create a Human Rights Council responsible for promoting universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind and in a fair and equal manner. The Council is also to address situations of

violations of human rights, including gross and systematic violations, and to promote effective coordination and the mainstreaming of human rights within the United Nations system.

Member States are now in the midst of intensive negotiations on the establishment of the Human Rights Council. This is an historic opportunity to build on six decades of work by the Commission on Human Rights, which includes a legacy of human rights standards and mechanisms, among them the system of special procedures and NGO participation. The new Human Rights Council should be efficient and its work should have a concrete impact on the ground.

I call upon Member States and the international community to rise to the occasion and work together in a consensual spirit towards the prompt establishment of the Human Rights Council.

Jan Eliasson