



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**Introductory remarks by General Assembly President Jan Eliasson
Human Rights Council Elections
9 May 2006**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

By adopting resolution 60/251 on 15 March, the General Assembly established the Human Rights Council and by that further strengthened the United Nations human rights machinery – as mandated by the 2005 World Summit Outcome. You agreed to start a new era in the United Nations endeavours to promote and protect human rights. By creating the Human Rights Council as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, you also decided to elevate the institutional standing of the work on human rights.

It is now time to implement this historic achievement. We are here today to elect the first members of the Human Rights Council. The first forty-seven members will play a crucial role since they will operationalize and take the first decisions of the Council. I am confident that our distinguished colleagues in Geneva will continue to bring this process forward once the members of the Council are elected. It is important that the Council is off to a good start on 19 June.

I am encouraged that Member States from the start have been guided by the letter and the spirit of the resolution. The fact that all candidates for election have presented pledges and commitments in accordance with the resolution is indeed very encouraging. These pledges and commitments have been circulated as official documents and have been posted on the UN website to assist you in this election. I wish to recall that in accordance with resolution 60/251, when electing members of the Council, Member States shall take into account the contributions of candidates to the promotion and protection of human rights and their voluntary pledges and commitments made thereto.

We will now proceed to this election, the largest ever conducted in the General Assembly.