



UNITED NATIONS

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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE TO THE SECOND SESSION OF THE HUMAN
RIGHTS COUNCIL**

Geneva, 18 September, 2006

My dear friends,

This time last year, your heads of state and government took the remarkable step of deciding to create a new Human Rights Council, to promote 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. They agreed that the Council should address

situations of violations of human rights, including gross and systematic violations. They looked to you, in other words, to give voice to the voiceless victims of abuses throughout the world.

Today, after your historic inaugural session in June, you meet to pursue your task of reforming and reinvigorating the United Nations human rights machinery. The Council was established by a resolution of the General Assembly, but you yourselves will lay its true foundations, through the decisions you take during these crucial weeks. In particular, you will be discussing the new universal periodic review mechanism and the strengthening of the special procedures – two vital elements of the Council’s work. To reach agreement on these will not be easy. It will require patience and determination. You will need to foster an atmosphere, not of confrontation and distrust, but of cooperation and mutual respect.

The world is watching your deliberations with keen interest. Do not forget why you are here. With great effort, Member States

established this new Council to mark a new beginning. In the founding resolution of the Council they explicitly recognized the importance of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity, and of eliminating double standards and politicization.

In your inaugural session, and again in the special session you held in July, you were rightly concerned with the tragic events in the Middle East. I trust you will focus the same vigilance on violations and abuses wherever they may occur. At the present time I feel I must draw your attention especially to those to which the people of Darfur are being subjected, and which threaten to get even worse in the near future.

Distinguished Delegates, do not disappoint the hopes of humanity. During the next three weeks, as you work to build an effective and credible Human Rights Council, let the founding resolution be your guide.

Kofi A. Annan