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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
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**IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 60/251
OF 15 MARCH 2006 ENTITLED "HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL"**

**Written statement submitted by United Nations Association of China (UNA-China), a
non-governmental organization in general consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is
circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 June 2006]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the
submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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NGOs' Participation in Human Rights Council

The General Assembly Resolution that created the Human Rights Council notes that the participation of and consultation with observers such as non-government organizations (NGOs) shall be "based on arrangements including the Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996 and practices observed by the Commission on Human Rights". In other words, NGO participation should be, at the beginning of the Council, at least the equivalent to participation at the end of the Commission.

The Council will hold a minimum of three sessions of at least ten weeks in total across the year. The longer meeting time and more frequent meetings could, on one hand, create greater opportunities for NGOs to be better and deeper involved in the human rights issues. But on the other hand, the arrangements could pose greater challenges to those southern NGOs who lack financial and human resources. The southern NGOs face the risk of being further marginalized.

Generally speaking, there exists a sizable gap both in terms of number and energy between NGOs in the developed countries and their counterparts in the developing countries. Due to historical, economic and cultural conditions, NGOs emerged late in the developing countries and remain limited in resources. Many NGOs remain biased towards northern agendas, with south-based civil society groups often lacking the resources to represent themselves adequately.

The situation is even worse in the human rights field. It was difficult for many NGOs from developing countries to participate in the Commission's sessions because of the costs of travel and stay in Geneva. The extensive participation of numerous northern NGOs in the human rights has reinforced the voice of the developed world. Essentially, the NGO impact on the human rights issues is more in favour of the taste of the north while the concerns of the south are inadequately reflected. Many NGOs in the developing world have showed their anxiety that the broader and deeper participation by NGOs in the Council will further widen the existing gap and intensify the marginalization of the southern NGOs.

The participation of the civil society seems democratic and many civil society organizations claim themselves as "We the Peoples". The unbalanced participation by NGOs, however, can not reflect the real picture of the whole civil society. The weak participation of the southern NGOs will be a shame for the new Human Rights Council. Efforts must be made to create a level playing-field for the southern NGOs. The situation could be improved through multifaceted approaches. The Council and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to take the responsibility of promoting the capacity building for the southern NGOs and to allocate some amount of its budget to conduct training courses for them and finance them for their participation. A special fund is beneficial in this regard. Bilateral cooperation between NGOs from the north and the south, based on our own experience, can contribute to the solution of this issue. And governments, global institutions, and other donors should be encouraged to provide increased aid to strengthen southern organizations' capacity for research and policy analysis on human right issues.
