

Statement by
H.E. Mr. Mohammad Mehdi Akhoondzadeh
Deputy Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran
for Legal and International Affaires
before the 50th Session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
on the consideration of Second Periodic Report of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Geneva, May 1, 2013

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. Chairman,
Honorable Members of the Committee,

I have the honor to address, on behalf of my government, this august body to which the Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance as part of its international obligation in keeping with its full respect for human rights and dignity.

Mr. Chairman,

Iran's commitment to the protection and promotion of all human rights and in particular economic, social and cultural rights remains steadfast. Such pledge is deeply rooted in its willingness to achieve the goal of a brighter, happier and more prosperous future for its citizens and its desire to work for the betterment of their lives. Inspired by its rich historical and cultural heritage, Iran will continue to promote human rights based on interaction and cooperation.

As a founding member of the United Nations and a party to the major international human rights instruments, Iran unwaveringly upholds its constitutional and international obligations and has taken a genuine and long term approach to safeguard all human rights. There are ample evidences which indicate my country's commitment as well as achievements with respect to economic, social and cultural rights. As a case in point, I would like to refer to the latest report of United Nations titled "the 2013 Human Development Report" which includes very important and positive references to the progress of the Islamic Republic of Iran in narrowing the developmental gap between 1990 and 2012, making Iran second among thirty of the most successful countries. The report clearly demonstrates that, between 1980 and 2012, Iran's HDI value has witnessed an increase of 67 percent or average annual increase of about 1.6 percent. Iran's significant developmental progress is attributed to its success in such different fields as health and education sectors as shown by the indicators. This clearly shows the importance of developmental work that can bear fruit through the cooperation between Iran and international community towards the betterment of the lives of our people.

This progress was made despite the fact that the country has been faced with politically-motivated pressures and illegal sanctions, notably with respect to the basic needs of our people, imposed by few who have tried, unsuccessfully, to impede the country to pursue its developmental plans. In spite of these circumstances, the people of Iran have active and energetic participation in shaping their political, social and cultural life and in choosing their destiny through a democratic, transparent and dynamic process.

Mr. Chairman

As a State Party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been active to help, on its part, the realization of the principles and purposes of the Covenant. In this regard, the provisions of the Covenant have been enshrined in different articles of the Constitution. Furthermore, the Government has tremendously worked and will continue to work to help improve the living standards of its people. This was particularly the case with respect to the disadvantaged sections of the society to whom the provision of sufficient and appropriate housing, literacy facilities, support for family unit and job opportunities have been a priority for us in order to contribute to rural development.

Existing human rights mechanisms have enjoyed Iran's extensive cooperation in the past. Among others, the Islamic Republic of Iran has constructively interacted with the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as a body of independent experts which was established to carry out the monitoring functions assigned to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) by the Covenant. In this regard, we have submitted our second periodic reports on how these rights are being implemented accompanied by a set of replies to the list of issues and questions put forward by the distinguished members of the Committee. These are reflection of our sincere desire to remain cooperative and committed in fulfilling our international obligations.

It is against this background that the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, comprising high-ranking officials of different ministries, institutions and relevant national bodies, will actively participate in the discussion of today's session of the Committee as an opportunity for a beneficial and constructive dialogue with the distinguished members of the Committee.

Finally, Mr. Chairman

It has been our vision that human rights should be seen as common heritage of humanity, initiated and developed by valuable contributions of all civilizations and cultures. Promotion of these rights, along with individual state's efforts, requires collective commitments and willingness of all states to cooperate and to listen and learn from each other, and to respect diverse cultural heritages and traditions.

Convinced that the best approach to promote and protect human rights across the globe is to engage in a meaningful and sincere interaction and cooperation, we look forward to continuing our close cooperation with the Committee to realize our objectives of attaining greater global prosperity, justice and equity through the enhancement of all human rights for all.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman
