

Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates
and Representatives of the Civil Society,

It is a great honour for me to address this meeting on the occasion of the adoption of the Outcome of Turkey's first Universal Periodic Review.

Turkey was reviewed at the eighth session of the UPR Working Group on the 10th of May 2010. The Turkish delegation was headed by Mr. Cemil Çiçek, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State, demonstrating the high level of commitment of our Government to the UPR process.

As expressed by our Deputy Prime Minister and other members of our delegation, Turkey considers the protection and promotion of human rights as a political priority.

An extensive reform process, which included constitutional amendments, several reform packages and new Civil and Penal Codes, was undertaken while an important anti-terror effort was ongoing.

Turkey has adopted universal standards by amending legislation, accelerated the ratification of international conventions and intensified the training of law enforcement personnel and other civil servants, which has resulted in a complete change in mindset.

The Constitution (Art.90) was amended in 2004 to stipulate that, in the event of conflict between the provisions of national legislation and international agreements, the latter will prevail.

Capital punishment, which had not been applied since 1984, was abolished in 2004. Turkey is now party to not only Protocol 6 to the European Convention on human Rights on the abolition of the death penalty, but also to Protocol 13 of the European Convention on

Human Rights which abolishes the death penalty even at times of war.

Since 1987, Turkish citizens are granted the right to individual application to the European Court of Human Rights. Its compulsory jurisdiction has been recognized in 1990.

Freedom of expression is an integral part of Turkey's democratic order, and the relevant legislation is being harmonized with the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and other international instruments.

Turkey is determined to fight against torture and ill treatment, with a zero-tolerance policy, and cooperates with all international monitoring bodies.

As part of its full cooperation with UN human rights bodies, Turkey has issued a standing invitation to special procedures in 2001 and closely collaborates with mandate holders.

Mr. President,

I would also like to take this opportunity to provide information on the recently adopted Constitutional Reform Package.

As a result of the provisions contained in the constitutional amendment package adopted by referendum on the 12th of September, human rights and fundamental freedoms have been expanded and the constitutional system is brought in line with Turkey's international obligations.

The amendments eliminated several shortcomings referred to in the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, and enabled the implementation of several recommendations of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, the Venice Commission, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, the

Monitoring Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and other international monitoring bodies.

Among the improvements brought by the recent Constitutional Reform are:

- the inclusion of positive discrimination as a constitutional right for persons who require social protection, such as children, the elderly and the disabled, as well as for women in order to achieve de facto equality between men and women;

- constitutional guarantees for the protection of personal data, entitling individuals to be informed of personal data, to access such data, to request their correction or deletion and to learn whether these are being used with the intended purpose;

- constitutional guarantees for children's right to access "adequate protection and care" and to "establish and maintain a personal and direct relationship with parents", safeguarding the principle of the best interest of the child;

- broadening of the scope and extent of freedom of organization and especially union rights;

- removal of the ban placed on leaving the country on account of civic duties and extension of freedom of movement;

- definition of the right of petition as a constitutional right;

- overcoming the unconstitutionality problem that had caused the attempts to form an association of ombudsmen to fail;

- elimination of one of the legal consequences of dissolution of political parties, guaranteeing in a stronger way the right to vote and to stand for election;

-judicial review for the Supreme Military Council concerning exemption from the Turkish Armed Forces;

-judicial review for all disciplinary decisions against civil servants and other public officials without exception;

-introduction of the right to individual application to the Constitutional Court with regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights;

-improvement of the organization of the Constitutional Court, election of its members and its functioning;

-improvement of the Supreme Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors enabling a wider participation for an effective functioning of the judiciary, strengthening its independence;

-constitutional guarantee to prevent civilians from being tried by military courts except in the time of war.

In addition to the constitutional referendum and as announced by our delegation during our review on the 10th of May, the Law against Terrorism has been amended in July 2010 in order to ensure that all children suspects, without distinction as to age, would be tried under the same regime in the relevant juvenile courts.

Mr. President,

At the adoption of its UPR Working Group report on the 12th of May, Turkey has accepted 95 of the 152 recommendations made during the review.

Today I am pleased to announce that 25 of the 39 recommendations that have been further considered by our authorities are accepted, partly accepted or already implemented.

We have provided a detailed written account of our assessment of these recommendations in our addendum document presented to this Session.

Thank you Mr. President.