



**Final remarks submitted by Ms. Asma Jahangir,  
Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief,  
after the discussion of the mandate assessment (14 and 17 September 2007)**

Due to the postponement of my mandate assessment, I was unfortunately not in a position to attend the remainder of the debate today in person. However, thanks to the live webcast of the meeting, I was able from outside of Geneva to follow the second part of the discussion. Consequently, I have the honour of submitting the following final remarks.

First of all, I would like to thank all those who contributed to the discussion. In response to the specific questions asked by several speakers during the mandate assessment, I would like to make the following points:

- In my opinion, the priorities of this mandate in the medium-term should be to pay specific attention to the situation of vulnerable groups as identified in my last report, i.e. the freedom of religion or belief of women, persons deprived of their liberty, refugees, children, minorities and migrant workers. Some of these issues have already been analysed in previous reports and it seems advisable to address the remaining topics in future reports. In the short term, the mandate might continue to detect and bring to the Council's attention emerging issues with regard to freedom of religion or belief.
- A continued role of this mandate could be envisaged in the area of prevention for example when conducting country visits, participating in international conferences and drafting guidelines. I intend to follow-up the International Consultative Conference on "School Education in relation with Freedom of Religion and Belief, Tolerance and Non-discrimination" by helping to develop guiding principles on teaching about religions and beliefs in public schools.
- In terms of challenges for the mandate, I would like to highlight the importance of a constructive dialogue with Governments and NGOs. Such a dialogue with all stakeholders is essential when exchanging communications and conducting country visits, especially in order to follow-up the mandate holders' recommendations. The Human Rights Council could significantly facilitate these efforts, for example in the framework of the forthcoming Universal Periodic Review.

Finally, I would like to thank the President of the Human Rights Council for making these remarks available to the delegates.

17 September 2007