Islamic Republic of
IRAN
Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Statement by
Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran
on the Report of the Special Rapporteur on
the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran
Document (A/68/503)
before the Third Committee of the 68 Session of the GA
New York, 23 October 2013

In the name of God, the most Compassionate, the most Merciful

Mr. Chairman,
The recent presidential elections in the Islamic Republic of Iran represents a clear, vivid example of the realization of democracy consistent with religion. This important event has its root in the firm belief of the Iranian people and Government in the need to rely on the ballot box as the basis of power, societal acceptance, legitimacy and enduring human rights.

The Islamic Republic of Iran emphasizes the need to use the momentum engendered by this election to adopt a new and constructive approach by all relevant parties towards cooperation and dialogue for the promotion and protection of all human rights.

My Government does not claim that the situation of human rights within the country is perfect. Obviously, no country in the world, including those who initiated this counter-productive mandate, can put forward such a claim. We, however, stress that Iran, especially after the election of President Rouhani, has put a new emphasis on its unwavering dedication towards the promotion and protection of all human rights inside and outside the country.

In this context, we insist that an impartial, balanced and non-political approach that acknowledges the positive human rights development in the Iranian
society, which is an anchor of democracy, human rights and moderation in a region faced with extremism, terrorism and conflict and dictatorship, is imperative.

Iran considers the special procedures of Human Rights Council as an important mechanism in promoting all human rights, provided that it is purely professional and free from political bias. The Islamic Republic of Iran is firmly committed towards the promotion and protection of human rights and seeks constructive engagement with the United Nations human rights mechanisms, including the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights and thematic special procedures of the HRC as well as the UPR.

With regard to the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, contained in document (A/68/503), just introduced by the SR, my delegation would like to draw the attention of the Committee to the following points:

- We would like to reiterate our firm position that the Report before this august body today is a product of a non-objective and counter-productive exercise initiated by a group of countries with specific political claim against Iran. Therefore, we have never expected to receive a balanced and impartial report because the overt and covert influences that those countries exercise. This is why that we have in front of us a compilation of unfair allegations and accusations. In fact and clearly, a move of this nature only could undermine the promotional potentials within the system and lead towards further polarization and politicization of human rights in the United Nations.

- Against such fundamental assumption, Iran undoubtedly rejected creation of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, and would maintain this principled position in the future. However, this should not be construed as Iran’s non-cooperation with the UN human rights mechanisms. On the contrary, we have repeated time and again our genuine intention to conduct constructive cooperation with these United Nations mechanisms, including cooperation with the HRC thematic mandate holders.

- Furthermore, Iran believes in serious cooperation with international bodies and has continuously reported to relevant committees on international conventions and found itself legally bound to implement its international obligations. In this regard, Iran defended its new periodic report on the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights last year, and in May 2013 appeared before the Committee on Social, Cultural and Economic Rights and defended its new report on the Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights.

**Mr. Chairman,**

- Despite our strong opposition to the Resolution of the Human Rights Council, which created the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, we have submitted our comments and observations on the present report to the Special Rapporteur through the Office of the High Commissioner, in an accurate and comprehensive manner and in due time, expecting him to take those comments into consideration.
Furthermore, the SR met with the Permanent Representative of Iran to the UN in Geneva on 26 September 2013. However, it is unfortunate that the SR paid little attention to the Iranian comments and observations contrary to the requirements stipulated in the Code of Conduct for Special Procedures. Therefore, the report before us falls short of the minimum standards of fairness and impartiality.

We came to realize that the report is not an authentic reflection of actual situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran; rather it resembles a catalogue of poorly resourced and outdated allegations projected with exaggeration and skepticism. There is much more to regret that human rights promotional policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its cooperation with the international human rights mechanisms are not referred to in the report.

The Rapporteur has fully brushed off Iran's enormous advancements; especially its distinctive democratic nature. The analysis and comments about the country's electoral process is very shallow. After the 11th presidential election, held in an open, free, fair, transparent and democratic way, the Islamic Republic of Iran has entered into a new stage of democracy and the rule of law. This is a conclusion that would be naturally drawn by any impartial observer. The Rapporteur, however, passed over the last presidential election in Iran held on 14 June 2013 during which 73 percent of 50 million eligible voters cast their ballots. Whereas the Secretary General in his Report, welcomed the overwhelming turnout, and has indicated it as "marking a positive sign of dynamism in Iran's civil and political life". Apparently, instead of evaluating the elections process, the Rapporteur has been more interested in taking political positions. Equally, he seems less interested in the provision of the rights of individuals and more interested in passing judgments to portray the election as questionable.

The Report also ignores the fact that in Iran women are highly educated and present in all walks of the society's life. It also has not paid sufficient notice to Iran's legal system and Islamic culture and considers whatever he sees in the West as an international standard for the entire world. We believe that when discussing issues that relate to the family, children, marriage and similar topics that directly affect the family, our culture and national laws must be referred to as the basis. The Rapporteur apparently is neither aware of the cultural and religious backgrounds of Iran nor is he cognizant of even the internationally agreed terms and languages. For instance, he condemns Iran for not having recognized lesbians and gays. None of our human rights obligations require us to do so.

Recent history of our country has never been the domain of one ethnic group prevailing over the others. Bolding the issues relating to ethnic and religious minorities and highlighting differences between people in the Report are indicative of encouraging separatist tendencies and tantamount to sowing discord among different ethnic groups, thus injurious to territorial integrity of my country.
- The protection and enhancement of the rights of minorities has been part of national policies of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. National Development Plan in the social, political, cultural and economic fields have been even handedly implemented throughout the country, with the goal of achieving balanced development. All Iranian ethnic groups are fairly represented and active in all political, electoral and local – national decision making activities, including through their own local language media. This clearly indicates that the allegations raised in the report are unfounded.

- Iran has been a major victim of terrorism for the past several decades. Terrorist groups have killed, threatened and abducted thousands of Iranian citizens. Four eminent Iranian young scientists were brutally assassinated by terrorists in the past years. Most deplorably, the Special Rapporteur, in preparing his report, has used the disinformation provided by certain tarnished terrorist groups, which have the blood of thousands of Iranian innocent civilians on their hands. It seems that the report trusts terrorist groups and introduces their members as human rights defenders. Records and documents detailing such atrocities have already been given to the Rapporteur; but disappointedly, a blind eye was turned to them.

- Unfortunately, the Special Rapporteur in his report, while referring to the issue of sanctions, provides an unjust and inaccurate picture. Instead of condemning unjust sanction-imposing countries, he criticizes victims of sanctions and the target country. The worst is that the Special Rapporteur does not pay attention to the unilateral and extra-territorial sanctions imposed by the US and the EU against the Iranian people; Those who impose these economic sanctions are undoubtedly violators of human rights. These sanctions violate inalienable human rights, including the right to peace, right to development, right to access to health and education, and above all, the right to life. Sanctions, beyond all rhetoric, are belligerent, cause human suffering and are inconsistent with the provisions of international human rights law and the objectives and principles of the UN Charter. We should emphasize that the position of the Special Rapporteur vis-à-vis these sanctions and their adverse effects on the lives of the Iranians is not clear and transparent.

Mr. Chairman,

Providing baseless allegations on human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran by using and relying on biased sources strengthens our position that the appointment of a Country Rapporteur itself results from a flawed process that suffers from political bias and efforts to misuse human rights mechanisms.

Finally, notwithstanding our strong criticism of the report, we will continue our efforts to promote human rights in our country, including through enhancing our cooperation with the UN human rights machinery, particularly OHCHR, the UPR, thematic mandate holders and bilateral dialogue on human rights.

Thank you