



**Permanent Mission  
of the Arab Republic of Egypt  
Geneva**

Le 27/08/07  
Khan

**Organizational Session  
of the Preparatory Committee  
of the Durban Review Conference**

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**Statement by  
the Delegation of  
the Arab Republic of Egypt  
on behalf of the African Group**

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**Geneva, 27 August, 2007**

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Thank you Madam Chair,

I have the honor to make this statement on behalf of the African Group.

First I would like to congratulate you on your election as chairperson of the Preparatory Committee of the Durban Review Conference, and assure you of our support ~~for your mission~~ and ~~with~~ cooperation during this session as well as throughout the preparatory process. We also extend our congratulations to all members of the Bureau of the Prep-Com on their election to their respective posts:

The African Group welcomes the convening of the organizational session of the Preparatory of the Durban Review Conference, marking the start of a process which we trust will culminate in enhancing global efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance. Indeed, this process is most timely, <sup>and</sup> in many respects overdue, ~~and~~ comes in the midst of an unprecedented <sup>increase</sup> and upsurge in racist trends and phenomena in various parts of the world, touching upon all ~~the~~ spheres of life, suggesting, most worryingly and regrettably, that the implementation of the provisions of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action has not risen to the level and nature of the challenge before us.

The DDPA was a comprehensive framework for eradicating the scourge of racism, a historic achievement in every sense of the word, it led to the establishment of mechanisms which have made a significant contribution to the global struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, namely the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration of Program of action, the Working Group of Experts on people of African Descent, and the Five Independent Eminent Experts on the Follow-up to the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. In addition, the importance of the work undertaken by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism cannot be overemphasized.

Madam Chair,

The purpose of convening the World Conference Against Racism in Durban in 2001 was to give a voice to the voiceless and to address and redress the situation of all victims of racism and its attendant scourges.

Whether in the past through colonialism, plundering of wealth and enslavement, the recent past before the fall of Apartheid rule in South Africa, or in present times witnessing the continuing dire situation of people of African descent in the diaspora, and the suffering of African migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, the African continent has been at the heart of the scourge of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and at the same time, at the forefront of global efforts to eliminate racism and its various forms and manifestations. The African conscience empathizes with the suffering that peoples were subjected to throughout the world, and fully supports their struggle and quest for freedom from racism and racial discrimination.

The Durban Review Conference will concentrate on the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action, including further actions, initiatives and practical solutions for combating all the contemporary scourges of racism. This encompasses taking stock of what has been achieved and what hasn't, including the various negative developments that have occurred since the Durban Conference.

In this regard, the African Group would like to highlight a number of areas of particular concern regarding the deficiencies in the implementation of the DDPA. In addition, we wish to outline some of the trends which have fuelled racism worldwide and today constitute the context in which the Durban Review process is taking place.

Despite the call in the DDPA for States to develop and implement National Action Plans to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, only a small number has done so.

The solution called for in the DDPA for the conflict in the Middle East remains elusive. The continued occupation of Palestine and the violations arising therefrom, have been the subject of condemnation and close examination by the international community and the relevant human rights mechanisms. The recent concluding observations adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination regarding the Israeli occupation of Palestine are most indicative in this regard.

The steps taken, since the holding of the Durban Conference in 2001, to redress and reverse the situation of the descendants of the victims of the transatlantic slave-trade have been largely insufficient.

The terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, were of immense magnitude in sowing tensions and instability across the world. The aftermath of this tragic event saw a new and dangerous phenomenon in incitement to racial and religious hatred. An example in this regard were the highly defamatory cartoons published by ~~the~~ Danish newspaper, ~~the Jyllands Posten~~, in 2005, which deeply hurt over a billion Muslims around the world, and threatened ~~the~~ social harmony and peace, both nationally and internationally.

The African Group notes with great concern the resurgence of racist trends and phenomena in recent years. These include racist and xenophobic acts, crimes committed against migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, defamation of religions, religious intolerance, racial profiling, the intellectual legitimization of racism, the use of democratic political platforms to promote racial intolerance and xenophobia, the growing effect that an unfair globalization is having on racism and racial discrimination amidst increased poverty and marginalization.

Madam Chair,

Despite this bleak picture of the present situation, there have been positive developments worthy of mention in the fight against racism in recent times. Many States have adopted new legislation and policies that conform with the obligations and commitments undertaken in Durban. This also includes the setting-up of new institutions at the national and regional levels to combat racism, and monitor racist acts and phenomena. These achievements should be the subject of the sharing of best practices at the Durban Review Conference, and should figure among its objectives.

At the international level, the African Group remains hopeful that the task of elaborating complementary standards to strengthen and update existing international instruments to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance should, given political will, be achieved soonest.

The Review Conference should aim at enhancing the mechanisms mandated to follow-up on the DDPA, as well as recommend ways and means to make the best use of the relevant bodies, agencies and mechanisms of the United Nations as a whole, in promoting the global struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Madam Chair,

Before closing, the African Group wishes to make a brief comment on the issue of the financing of the Durban Review Conference. This Conference and its preparatory processes must enjoy the necessary resources to ensure a successful outcome. In this regard, financing must be available for the holding of national and regional preparatory initiatives, which will ensure the effective participation of Governments, all relevant UN mechanisms and mandates and civil society organizations.

The African Group would also like to emphasize the need to ensure that the Preparatory Committee of the Durban Review Conference enjoy the necessary competence and means for the effective conduct of the preparatory process, including the submission of its reports and recommendations directly to the General Assembly. The African Group stands ready to initiate all appropriate actions to remove any ambiguity or address any technicalities that may have arisen regarding the legal status of the Preparatory Committee.

I Thank you