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Meeting Summary

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Durban Review Conference
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DURBAN REVIEW CONFERENCE STARTS HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT AND HEARS STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT OF IRAN

Also Hears from Dignitaries from Norway, South Africa, Cameroon, Tanzania, Botswana, Brazil, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Mozambique, Senegal, Tunisia, Morocco, OIC and Mexico

The Durban Review Conference started its high-level segment this afternoon, hearing a statement by the President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, which provoked loud protests and resulted in some delegations leaving the room. The Review Conference also heard statements from dignitaries from Norway, South Africa, Cameroon, Tanzania, Botswana, Brazil, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Mozambique, Senegal, Tunisia, Morocco, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Mexico.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of Iran, said it was regrettable that a number of Western Governments and the United States had committed themselves to defend the racist perpetrators of genocide, while the awakened conscience and free-minded people of the world condemned the Zionist crimes of aggression, carnage and other brutalities of bombardments of civilians in Gaza. So long as Zionist domination continued, many countries, Governments and nations would never be able to enjoy freedom, independence and security. World Zionism personified racism that falsely resorted to religion and abused religious sentiments to hide hatred and ugly faces.

Jonas Gahr Store, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, speaking right after the President of Iran, said that the outcome document of the Review Conference was against incitement of hatred. Mr. Store said he had heard incitement of hatred and spreading policies of fear in the statement of President Ahmadinejad. Norway regretted that some States had decided, some on very short notice, to boycott the Conference. But non-attendance was not an option. Norway would not surrender this place at the United Nations to extremism.

Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa, speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that Africans had first hand experience of the pernicious and the egregious impact of slavery, slave trade, colonialism, apartheid and genocide. Significantly, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was adopted in a country which for decades struggled against the direct impacts of discrimination and oppression on the basis of race and colour. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was viewed as an inspiration that would define the twenty-first century as the century that restored to all their human dignity.

Henri Eyebe Ayissi, Minister for External Relations of Cameroon, said the Conference should serve as a common platform for all the stakeholders to reiterate their permanent commitment to strengthen the quest for strategies, ways and means for an efficient fight against these disgusting scourges called racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The Conference should be the venue for a common positive thought-provoking gathering. Racism was their collective common concern.

Bernard Kamillius Membe, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Tanzania, said it was timely to convene the Review Conference to review progress and assess the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, which contained far-reaching measures to combat the scourge of racism in all its manifestations, through education, fighting poverty, securing development, and bolstering respect for the rule of law and for human rights. He reiterated the need

to acknowledge and extend an explicit apology, reparation and full compensation to all victims of past injustices.

Dikgakgamatso N. Seretse, Minister of Defence, Justice and Security of Botswana, said that for those from Southern Africa who witnessed and lived the experience of institutionalised racism and State sponsored terrorism based on racial discrimination, this Conference was a moment for celebration. It would not serve any purpose if the Conference were used as a platform for demonising some States or dividing the world into descendants of the oppressed and the oppressors.

Edson Santos, Chief Minister, Special Secretariat for Policies for the Promotion of Racial Equality of Brazil, said that the outcome document of the Conference was not a mere translation of national positions. Rather, it revealed a historical perspective and commitment to the very essence of the multilateral system. Nothing in the document denied the achievements of 2001; nothing in it hampered anyone from moving forward.

Fayza Aboulnaga, Minister of International Cooperation of Egypt, said it was undeniable that racial and religious discrimination, particularly against Arabs and Muslims, had reached unprecedented levels in the past few years. It was also undeniable that acts of incitement of religious hatred had resulted in numerous human rights violations of individuals and communities. Hence, it was incomprehensible why some would continue to turn a blind eye to this reality and deny their connection to racism despite the clear relation between the derogatory statements and the violations of the rights and freedoms of the followers of these religions.

Douglas Devananda, Minister of Social Services and Social Welfare of Sri Lanka, said Sri Lanka contained the greatest cultural diversity as well as biodiversity contained in the smallest space on the planet. This diversity within a compact space had made for coexistence as well as conflict. The sources of conflict lay in factors and forces that the 2001 Durban Conference, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and today's Review Conference were concerned with: racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. These evils were related, as in so many places, to imperialism and colonialism.

Maria Benvinda Levi, Minister of Justice of Mozambique, said that in Durban they managed to set up a global agenda to guide actions and endeavours towards the suppression of any kind of manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance. The global framework, however, had yet to be fully implemented across the world. Indeed, in one's daily life events led one to realize the relevance of the continuation of the fight against racism. The task ahead was mammoth and this was why the Conference was so important.

Madicke Niang, Minister of State for Justice of Senegal, said that in 2001, countries had accepted to step up the work in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the participants had identified tangible measures geared towards guaranteeing the equality of all, ensuring the dignities of all and eliminating prejudices and stereotypes. Eight years down the road, they noted an increase of intolerance throughout the world. Thousands of migrants felt their dignity compromised on a daily basis.

Bechir Tekari, Minister of Justice and Human Rights of Tunisia, said that Tunisia was committed to the implementation of the decisions taken at the Durban Conference in 2001, and had taken many initiatives and implemented measures to combat racism and racial discrimination, including substantive amendments to the educational system and incorporating a culture of respect, brotherhood and tolerance. In order to prevent the spread of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, a law had been adopted.

Abdelwahed Radi, Minister for Justice of Morocco, said that the World Conference against Racism held in Durban South Africa in 2001 was where the international community had taken action against the scourge of racism that had afflicted the world for centuries. The document before members of the Review Conference made it possible to determine the extent of the challenges facing countries worldwide and the steps necessary to address those challenges.

Ekmeleddine Ihsanoglu, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, said defamation of Islam represented one of the most conspicuous demonstrations of contemporary racism, discrimination and intolerance, and constituted a threat to harmonious and cooperative relationships between and among nations. The rising trend of Islamophobia had adversely impacted

the image, the honour, the identity and the self-esteem of Muslims the world over, eroding their fundamental human rights.

Perla Bustamante, President of the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination of Mexico, said Mexico was aware of the enormous human costs produced by discrimination, as it was the first obstacle for the effective enjoyment of human rights. Mexico was renewing its commitment to the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Mexico had addressed the problem of racial discrimination from a multidimensional perspective, encompassing all forms of discrimination regardless of its causes, as well as its inter-related nature, in accordance with the principle of universality of all human rights.

The Conference will continue its high-level segment at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 21 April.

High-Level Segment

MAHMOUD AHMADINEJAD, President of Iran, said over the last centuries, humanity had gone through tremendous sufferings and pains. Had lessons been learned from these oppressions, horrors and the crimes of the two World Wars, there would have been a ray of hope for the future. The victorious powers called themselves the conquerors of the world, while ignoring or down-treading the rights of other nations by the imposition of oppressive laws and arrangements. Following World War Two, many proponents of racism resorted to military aggression to make an entire nation homeless, on the pretext of Jewish sufferings and the abuse of the question of the holocaust. They sent migrants from Europe, the United States and other parts of the world in order to establish a totally racist government in the occupied Palestine. They helped to bring to power the most cruel and repressive racists in Palestine. It was all the more regrettable that a number of Western Governments and the United States had committed themselves to defend these racist perpetrators of genocide, while the awakened conscience and free-minded people of the world condemned the Zionist crimes of aggression, carnage and other brutalities of bombardments of civilians in Gaza. So long as Zionist domination continued, many countries, Governments and nations would never be able to enjoy freedom, independence and security.

What were the root causes of United States attacks against Iraq or the invasion of Afghanistan, Mr. Ahmadinejad asked. For a long time, inequitable economic regulations had been imposed by political powers on the international economy, with a financial and a monetary system imposed without proper international oversight mechanisms. Racism was rooted in lack of knowledge concerning the truth of human existence as the selected creature of God. Racism was the symbol of ignorance which had deep roots in history, and was indeed a sign of frustration in developments of human society. It was therefore crucially important to trace the manifestations of racism in situations or in societies where ignorance or lack of knowledge prevailed. The international community should initiate collective moves to raise awareness in the afflicted societies, where ignorance of racism still prevailed, so as to bring a halt to the spread of these malicious manifestations.

Today the human community was facing a kind of racism which had tarnished the image of humanity. World Zionism personified racism that falsely resorted to religion and abused religious sentiments to hide hatred and ugly faces. Boycotting such a session as this was a true indication of supporting the blatant example of racism. The world was going through fundamental changes. Power relations had become weak and fragile, and the sound of cracks in the pillars of world oppression could now be heard. The inequitable and unjust management of the world was now at the end of the road. This deadlock was inevitable since the logic of this imposed management was oppressive. Western liberalism, like communism, had reached its end, since it had failed to perceive the truth of the world. It was absolutely possible to improve the existing situation in the world, but this could be only achieved through the cooperation of all countries in order to get the best out of the existing capacities of the world.

JONAS GAHR STORE, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, said the President of Iran had just exercised the right to expression. Today, they met on the basis of a declaration that had been carefully negotiated. Iran had now steered itself outside the margins of the declaration. The document was against incitement of hatred. Mr. Store said he had heard incitement of hatred and spreading policies of fear in the statement of President Ahmadinejad. The declaration was principled and was not pinpointing certain situations. The aim was to protect people from racism. The

statement of Iran's President's statement ran counter to the purpose of the Conference. Iran had become the odd-man-out.

Norway did not want a text that interdicted defamation of religion at the expense of freedom of expression. It could not accept a text that would infringe on the freedom of expression. Without this freedom, they could not fight racism. Norway wanted the text to be of universal reach and wanted it to avoid focusing on one particular conflict. Mr. Store emphasized that the Holocaust had originated in the minds of men, it was not a natural disaster, it was a man-made disaster. This was now correctly reflected in the text. He congratulated the delegations that had contributed to the text and thanked the High Commissioner and Mr. Boychenko on the preparation of the Conference.

Mr. Store said that fighting racism was one of the struggles that mankind was facing today. To address those struggles, they must come together and seek common ground. Norway called on all countries to further invest in the multi-lateral path. They owed it to their constituencies to actively participate in such a process. Norway regretted that some States had decided, some on very short notice, to boycott the Conference. But non-attendance was not an option. Norway would not surrender this place at the United Nations to extremism.

NKOSAZANA DLAMINI ZUMA, Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa, speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that Africans had first hand experience of the pernicious and the egregious impact of slavery, slave trade, colonialism, apartheid and genocide. Significantly, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was adopted in a country which for decades struggled against the direct impacts of discrimination and oppression on the basis of race and colour. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was viewed as an inspiration that would define the twenty-first century as the century that restored to all their human dignity. It provided a solid and concrete basis for every country to develop its own measures to combat all forms of racism, and to strengthen the protection regime for victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance.

Whilst recognizing the progress made since 2001, it was clear that there remained major challenges facing all in pursuit of the noble ideas that were agreed on in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Racism continued to rear its ugly head in many parts of the world, and this therefore called for continued vigilance from all. It was observed that in South Africa, with the recent xenophobic incidents, that even with the best intentions, racism and related intolerances continued to be a challenge. What was crucial was the political will and the steps taken to address those challenges.

Many commitments remained unfulfilled. Poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization, social exclusion and economic disparities continued to affect millions of people in many parts of the world. In Africa, people still lacked access to basic services such as water, energy, housing, health care facilities, sanitation and means of assuring food security. Those challenges, now aggravated by the current global financial crisis, were real and immediate. The commitments made in Durban, in particular those that called upon developed States, the United Nations as well as the international financial institutions, to support amongst others, the New Partnership for Africa's Development programmes, debt relief and the internationally agreed development goals, should be fulfilled with greater urgency, stressed Ms. Zuma.

HENRI EYEBE AYISSI, Minister for External Relations of Cameroon, said that the preparation of the Durban Review Conference was far from being a "long calm river", as various delegations had noted during the negotiations that had preceded the Conference in which Cameroon had taken part. The participation of Cameroon in this Conference proved in this context the importance that Cameroon attached to the United Nations' noble fight against racism. This Conference should serve as a common platform for all the stakeholders, namely the United Nations family, all States and Governments, as well as the international and regional organizations and civil societies, to embrace the exceptional opportunity offered by the present *rendezvous* of giving and taking. This reiterated their permanent commitment to strengthen the quest for strategies, ways and means for an efficient fight against these disgusting scourges called racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The Conference should be the venue for a common positive thought-provoking gathering. Racism was their collective common concern. No country in the world was free of racism. All of them had "dirty hands" as the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre used to say. Together they were urged to work in such a way that the very significant slogan "united against racism" was matched with a real will for collective action. Cameroon called on the Conference's participants to focus their efforts in

order to ensure that the negative perceptions and other similar deflections observed here and there were prohibited and reprimanded with the same vigor while avoiding of course, the repeat of the mistakes which undermined the 2001 Durban Conference and the implementation of its conclusions. It was false and dangerous to enter into the easy trap of considering that "us" should necessarily be in conflict with "them". They were quite able to assume their identities; that was to say "what we were", without necessarily hating "what the others are" that was to say "what we are not".

BERNARD KAMILIUS MEMBE, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Tanzania, said it was timely to convene the Review Conference to review progress and assess the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, which contained far-reaching measures to combat the scourge of racism in all its manifestations, through education, fighting poverty, securing development, and bolstering respect for the rule of law and for human rights. The elimination of racism was a gradual process, and it was urgent that the international community collectively and resolutely found ways to eliminate this scourge through national, regional and international measures. While acknowledging the usefulness and efficiency of the current follow-up mechanisms in the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, there was a need to enhance further their effectiveness, with a view to achieving better synergy, coordination, coherence and complementarity in their work.

Considering the gist of the Outcome Document and the contentious manner surrounding its very creation, it was clear that its implementation faced immense challenges. Despite the differences among delegates during the preparatory process, it was desirable and indeed worthy that all nations and peoples of the world spoke with one voice against all forms of discrimination, including racial discrimination, xenophobia, religious hatred, political hatred, and the like. Contemporary challenges such as climate change, the global financial crisis, incurable diseases, poverty, protracted conflicts, the threat of proliferation and possible deployment of weapons of mass destruction were some indications that the new world order called for an inclusive and constructive diplomacy. The international community needed to work together to overcome the challenges confronting mankind today, needing to live together in peace and harmony, while respecting the other.

The need to acknowledge and extend an explicit apology, reparation and full compensation to all victims of past injustices was reiterated, if the international community were to truly build a new future free of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance - shaping a new future was nearly impossible if old wounds were left unattended. The world would not prosper if some section of global society continued to embrace racial superiority, gender dominance and xenophobia. The global society would remain a dream if racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the like continued to dominate the way in which humankind looked at each other. Those of us who had lived to see how much damage such acts could produce on humanity believed it was time to change for a better world, and to act resolutely.

DIKGAKGAMATSO N. SERETSE, Minister of Defence, Justice and Security of Botswana, said that for those from Southern Africa who witnessed and lived the experience of institutionalised racism and State sponsored terrorism based on racial discrimination, this Conference was a moment for celebration. The Conference also served as a reminder, a painful reminder that silence and lack of action in the face of injustice could correctly be interpreted as taking a position. One must ask why it was possible for apartheid to be institutionalized shortly after the defeat of the Nazis and their genocidal ideology of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. It was against this background that in Botswana a society that abhorred racism in all its forms and manifestations was established.

The Durban 2001 World Conference Against Racism represented something that was good and positive about humanity, Mr. Seretse noted. It marked a common desire to remember and learn from past mistakes. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action aptly embodied this determination. He urged all to continue to build on this achievement so that the objectives of global humanitarianism could be reached.

The Review Conference was not about vilifying any nation nor civilisation. It would not serve any purpose if the Conference were used as a platform for demonising some States or dividing the world into descendants of the oppressed and the oppressors. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action made recommendations and practical measures, comprehensive national action plans, policies and programmes. The Programme of Action particularly called on States to strengthen national

human rights institutions and to undertake preventative and concerted action, especially in the fields of education and awareness raising.

EDSON SANTOS, Chief Minister, Special Secretariat for Policies for the Promotion of Racial Equality of Brazil, said that Brazil was present to participate in the Review Conference because it believed in the commitment to fight racism. Brazil affirmed its commitment to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action in 2001 and reiterated it in 2006, together with civil society and fellow Governments in the Regional Conference of the Americas on Progresses and Challenges in the Programme of Action, and again in 2008, on the occasion of the Regional Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean. Over the last few months, the Government was intensely involved in the preparatory process of the Review Conference.

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action recognized the political and social concept of race and the inexistence of hierarchy between human beings. Humanity constituted only one race: the human race. There were no biological differences among people; there was only the political manipulation of the concept of race as a source of segregation. The text before members of the Conference brought about a compromise between positions that were feared to be irreconcilable. No single country was treated under a negative light; no specific regional crisis was the object of a selective reference, Mr. Santos underscored. In the course of this document, past tragedies were addressed in a balanced way, and contemporary forms of racism and other forms of discrimination were condemned. The text also deplored the rise in persecution of practitioners of various religions of the world.

The document achieved was not a mere translation of national positions. Rather, it revealed a historical perspective and commitment to the very essence of the multilateral system. Nothing in the document denied the achievements of 2001; nothing in it hampered anyone from moving forward. To walk out from the negotiating process was to surrender to the temptation of non-dialogue, stressed Mr. Santos. The multilateral process could not be held hostage to this kind of attitude. Throughout the negotiations thus far, Brazil showed its readiness to accept diversity of opinions, tolerate differences and respect diversity. To abandon Durban was to stray away from the long path built since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

FAYZA ABOULNAGA, Minister of International Cooperation of Egypt, said that Egypt welcomed the steps and measures undertaken by several countries to establish an effective legislative and executive infrastructure to combat racism, inter alia, through enacting relevant legislation, setting up national observatories, ending impunity for racist crimes as well as issuing formal apologies for historical tragedies. Egypt also supported all initiatives for dialogue between civilizations, cultures and religions to promote tolerance and to confront hatred. Yet despite progress achieved in some areas, there was still reason for concern over the continuation of racist conduct in various forms, actions and means and emanating from several sources, as well as the emergence of new forms of discrimination which existing policies and legislation were in no way designed to address.

It was undeniable that racial and religious discrimination, particularly against Arabs and Muslims, had reached unprecedented levels in the past few years. It was also undeniable that acts of incitement of religious hatred had resulted in numerous human rights violations of individuals and communities. This was compounded by the political exploitations of issues pertaining to migrants, minorities and refugees to advance interests alien to democracy and to the respect of human rights, particularly the rights of these groups. Hence, with the evolving documentation of these practices and of their ethnic and religious motivations, it was incomprehensible why some would continue to turn a blind eye to this reality and deny their connection to racism despite the clear relation between the derogatory statements and the violations of the rights and freedoms of the followers of these religions.

The Durban outcome document highlighted the plight of the Palestinian people under foreign occupation and called for the realization of its inalienable right to self-determination. Regretfully, they were no closer today to putting an end to their suffering or to the realization of this right than they were the day the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was endorsed. The Separation Wall, the spread of Israeli settlements, the blockade and the forced displacement of an ethnic or religious group from occupied territories represented a severe blow to their efforts to put an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people as a blatant violation of all international laws and conventions.

DOUGLAS DEVANANDA, Minister of Social Services and Social Welfare of Sri Lanka, said Sri Lanka contained the greatest cultural diversity as well as biodiversity contained in the smallest space on the

planet. This diversity within a compact space had made for coexistence as well as conflict. The sources of conflict lay in factors and forces that the 2001 Durban Conference, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and today's Review Conference were concerned with: racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. These evils were related, as in so many places, to imperialism and colonialism. A lot remained to be done - including a political process to meet the aspirations of the ethnic minorities, a reconciliation process to bring the communities divided on ethnic lines together, and resettlement of those displaced due to decades of war and reconstruction of the war-torn areas.

Sri Lanka believed that racism, xenophobia and the like forms of intolerance were destructive of human dignity and consequently eroded all human rights. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action reasserted the principles of equality and non-discrimination as core human rights, transforming victims of discrimination into rights-holders and States into duty bearers. The Programme of Action spelt out a number of strategies to achieve full and effective equality that included regional and international cooperation. All United Nations Member States should cooperate with each other in achieving the objectives of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and in implementing the Programme of Action. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance were the enemies of mankind, and not one another.

MARIA BENVINDA LEVI, Minister of Justice of Mozambique, said that racism and racial discrimination continued to be a global phenomenon, which denied its victims from the enjoyment of the most fundamental of all human rights – the right to equality. In Durban they managed to set up a global agenda to guide actions and endeavours towards the suppression of any kind of manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action established an unprecedented and comprehensive global framework, which compelled States to implement effective actions against discrimination, including the enactment of anti-discrimination laws and policies.

The global framework, however, had yet to be fully implemented across the world. Indeed, in one's daily life events led one to realize the relevance of the continuation of the fight against racism. The task ahead was mammoth and this was why the Conference was so important. Ms. Levi said that it was necessary to develop renewed international engagement against racism. The participation of Mozambique in the Conference reiterated its firm commitment to fight against those evils.

The Government of Mozambique was signatory to several regional and international conventions and other initiatives, which aimed at promoting the equality of rights and non-discrimination, Ms. Levi noted. Those initiatives translated into the revision of discriminatory laws; into the periodic reporting to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; and into the elaboration of policies and programmes and the reinforcement of institutional mechanism against discrimination. The way forward in the anti-racism agenda depended on the outcome of the Conference. With unity of purpose all would succeed in their objectives to alleviate the plight of countless victims of racism at home and abroad.

MADICKE NIANG, Minister of State for Justice of Senegal, congratulated the President of the Conference on his appointment and pledged the full support of the Senegalese delegation for his work. In 2001, countries had accepted to step up the work in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the participants had identified tangible measures geared towards guaranteeing the equality of all, ensuring the dignities of all and eliminating prejudices and stereotypes. Eight years down the road, they noted an increase of intolerance throughout the world. Thousands of migrants felt their dignity compromised on a daily basis. In almost all countries, women were suffering from discrimination of all kinds and challenges continued to face the world in the area of the exercise of certain rights. However, this should not make all forget the measures that had been implemented by States in order to respect the obligations taken on in 2001. Senegal had implemented the obligations of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

Mr. Niang reaffirmed strongly the relevance of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, whose adoption by consensus confirmed the demand for a world in which civilizations could live together in harmony. Senegal was committed to do its share to achieve this goal. Senegal paid a warm tribute to all the men and women who fought racism on a daily basis. Senegal encouraged the good practices that were firmly rooted in their traditions. Neither exclusion nor abandonment of these victims would be appropriate in this forum. The dialogue must be open and the document must

contain measures that would have true impact on the ground. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had a vital role to play and required the States' support. Mr. Niang hoped that their work would produce tangible results and would give new impetus to the fight against racism. Guided by the importance Senegal attached to the promotion and protection of human rights, Senegal would not spare any effort in this regard, in order to install peace, dignity and tolerance in this continually changing world.

BECHIR TEKARI, Minister of Justice and Human Rights of Tunisia, said he wished to pay tribute to the great efforts deployed by all parties participating in the preparation of the Durban Review Conference. This showed the importance of what was adopted at the Durban Conference of 2001. Tunisia was committed to the implementation of the decisions taken there, and had taken many initiatives and implemented measures to combat racism and racial discrimination, including substantive amendments to the educational system, and incorporating a culture of respect, brotherhood and tolerance. In order to prevent the spread of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, a law had been adopted. As a result of Tunisia's keenness to enhance the inter-religious and inter-civilisation dialogue, bridges of cooperation were being built with persons of different races and religions.

A Tunisian Peace Forum had been founded to take into consideration and monitor efforts made to enhance the consolidation of peace and the values of peace. 2010 would be the International Year of Youth, and an international Conference would be held under the auspices of the United Nations, leading to the adoption of a Charter which would be a solid link between the youth of the world and solid universal values. As much as globalisation had provided chances to strengthen the world solidarity and improve the world economy, and in spite of the current weakness felt due to the economic and financial crisis, at the same time globalisation had caused negative repercussions, in particular with regards to the growing divide between countries of the North and the South.

An adequate solution should be found to address situations such as exclusion, as this would help to remedy the problem of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia. World solidarity was one of the solutions that could lead to the building of a better future. Peace and security remained the aspiration, but they were hostage to many factors, including the survival of pockets of contention. The objective should always be the removal of injustice and the feelings of injustice amongst people, and the hope to free peoples who continued to suffer under the yoke of colonisation and injustice. Tunisia participated in the Conference and was committed to actively participating as it gave great importance to the issue of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related discrimination, and aimed to uphold the values of moderation, freedom, equality and justice.

ABDELWAHED RADI, Minister of Justice of Morocco, said that the World Conference against Racism held in Durban South Africa in 2001 was where the international community had taken action against the scourge of racism that had afflicted the world for centuries. The international community worked collectively against racism in all its forms and combated its impact on the full enjoyment of human rights worldwide. The Durban Conference also mobilized the conscience of the world to take action and eradicate racism. The document before members of the Review Conference made it possible to determine the extent of the challenges facing countries worldwide and the steps necessary to address those challenges. The Review Conference allowed the international community to take stock of the objectives set in 2001, and to infuse a new energy in the international community's mobilization efforts to combat racism and its modern manifestations.

The chances for peace in the Middle East had receded. Mr. Radi said there should be an independent and viable Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, living in harmony and peace with all its neighbours. Mr. Radi urged the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to organize regional seminars on racial and religious hatred to provide an opportunity for indirect thought directed to this question. Moreover, Morocco was prepared to host a seminar on this subject for the African region. The Review Conference was an important stage to enhance the international human arsenal in this context.

The Government of Morocco consistently strove to send a message, a message of a conciliatory Islam, based in moderation of virtues to strengthen gaps between countries through peaceful means and to ensure stability in the region. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance called for a universal worldwide responsible reaction based on solidarity and must live up to the challenges that existed, Mr. Radi observed. Morocco's participation in the Review Conference strongly reaffirmed its willingness to be a partner and its commitment to eliminating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance around the world.

EKMELEDDINE IHSANOGLU, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, said that the discussion on some key issues during the negotiations of the outcome document was characterized by divergence of views. It must, however, be emphasized that the Organization of the Islamic Conference Group never lacked the resolve to engage and work with its partners in good faith to reach a consensual outcome. In a bid to that, the Organization of the Islamic Conference Group demonstrated flexibility even in matters of major concern including defamation of religion with the intent to incitement to hatred and discrimination, as well as ascertaining the linkage of responsibility to the freedom of expression as stipulated in scores of its covenants, agreements and legal instruments. The Organization of the Islamic Conference was disappointed to note that some countries were not present here.

Defamation of Islam represented one of the most conspicuous demonstrations of contemporary racism, discrimination and intolerance, and constituted a threat to harmonious and cooperative relationship between and among nations. The rising trend of Islamophobia had adversely impacted the image, the honour, the identity and the self-esteem of Muslims the world over, eroding their fundamental human rights. In that respect, the desecration of the tombs of Muslims who had given their lives in defense of their adopted homeland could be cited as an example. This phenomenon called for a frank and open discussion to consider the ultimate aim of those who were determined to pit one culture against another and disseminate discord and conflicts among peoples.

It would be counterproductive to speak of a contradiction between freedom of religion and freedom of expression. Indeed both were complementary and mutually reinforcing. The Organization of the Islamic Conference stood for defending, upholding and protecting freedom of expression in accordance with the international law. The legal limitations on these freedoms were provided for in international covenants and instruments. Mr. Ihsanoglu was encouraged to note that this aspect had been reflected in the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference. Equality, non-discrimination, freedom of expression and respect to others regardless of their beliefs constituted core values of Islam.

PERLA BUSTAMANTE, President of the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination of Mexico, said Mexico had participated in the Durban Conference of 2001 convinced of the importance of combating in a comprehensive manner all forms of discrimination, with the aim of achieving more just, democratic and developed societies. Mexico was aware of the enormous human costs produced by discrimination, as it was the first obstacle for the effective enjoyment of human rights. Mexico was renewing its commitment to the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Mexico had addressed the problem of racial discrimination from a multidimensional perspective, encompassing all forms of discrimination regardless of its causes, as well as its inter-related nature, in accordance with the principle of universality of all human rights.

Mexico was aware of the remaining challenges for the elimination of different forms of discrimination, such as discrimination against women, children, persons with disabilities, people of African descent, indigenous, migrants, persons living with HIV/AIDS, and persons with a different sexual orientation. Mexico granted special importance to the rights of migrants, and invited the international community to redouble its commitment to this area. Security considerations should not prevail over the universal respect of human rights. Today, members of the international community had the opportunity to reaffirm the spirit that organised the holding of the Durban World Conference in 2001, and to set the basis for decided action against discrimination in all its forms.

By identifying common challenges and areas for future cooperation, the international community would be able to build more fair, inclusive and equal societies. By renewing the commitment to the full exercise of all human rights for all, without any exceptions, then the international community would contribute in a solid and sustained manner to the elimination of discrimination in all regions of the world and to consolidate equality. Legal and institutional changes were required, but also cultural changes. Cultural reform would positively impact in the elimination of models and processes whereby prejudices and attitudes of rejection and exclusion were created.