



# United Nations - Information Service

## Meeting Summary

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Durban Review Conference  
MORNING

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### **DURBAN REVIEW CONFERENCE HEARS FROM NINE DIGNITARIES AS IT CONTINUES HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT**

#### **Begins General Segment, Hearing Statements from National Delegations**

The Durban Review Conference this morning continued its high-level segment and began its general segment. Speaking in the high-level segment, dignitaries said, among other things, that people could not be coerced into tolerance, mutual understanding and mutual respect. Any lasting victory in the fight against racism and racial discrimination required a change of hearts and minds. No durable peace was built from exclusion and rejection, as manifold striking examples around the world unfortunately attested daily. Despite the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action by consensus, nations had not been able to sufficiently quell the insidious acts of racism, not only in the main, but in organized sport and in the private sector. Racism was beyond justification, a prejudice and an evil that presupposed the innate superiority of one race, creed and culture over another.

In the general segment, speakers said the great challenge of today was to pull all efforts together and make them effective. The Review Conference presented an opportunity to review implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action by all stakeholders. It was fundamental for the United Nations to be at the forefront of the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance. The fight against discrimination should be seen as part of the global struggle for human rights. No country in the world had completely succeeded in fighting the phenomenon of racial discrimination; it should therefore be with a sense of determination as well as humility that the international community should intensify all efforts to eradicate racism from society. The Durban Review Conference should be guided by the spirit demonstrated by the two great heroes of the struggle against racism - ex-President Nelson Mandela, and Dr. Martin Luther King.

Speaking in the high-level segment, Terry Davis, Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, said in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, there were no easy fixes and no quick wins. It would be naïve to expect that efforts would succeed in putting a quick and irreversible end to prejudice and hate - but through what the Conference could do, it should make a difference, and this should be the yardstick to measure the success of the progress launched at the World Conference in Durban.

Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mauritania, said in various parts of the world, ordinary people intoxicated by alienating discourses and dangerous propaganda were convinced that they were protecting and preserving themselves in opting for behaviour which could be termed racist and discriminatory. One should never forget as well that no durable peace was built from exclusion and rejection, as manifold striking examples around the world unfortunately attested daily.

Ndumiso C. Mamba, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs of Swaziland, said this Review Conference was a test of their resolve as Governments to confront discrimination, which unfortunately still existed even in today's modern world. They further had to take stock of the ravaging effects it had had in the past. This was an opportunity to turn the corner and send the right message of hope to those that were still treated as sub-human. The success of this instructive conference would stand or fall on the active participation and communal support for the document on the table today.

Jean Martin Mbemba, Minister of State at the Ministry of Public Functions in charge of State Reform of the Republic of Congo, said the results of this Review Conference offered new perspectives to common actions to end racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance. The fight against racism required the world's commitment, and therefore the consensus built upon in 2001 should continue to realize the objectives set forth in the outcome document.

Antonio Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said the Durban Declaration explicitly acknowledged racism and related forms of intolerance as among the root causes of persecution leading to displacement and statelessness. In the seven and a half years since the conference, it had likely become more rather than less difficult for those seeking protection from persecution to access territories where it may be available. Today's economic climate was argument against many initiatives. Fortunately, efforts to diminish racism and xenophobia needed not be among them.

Also speaking in the high-level segment were Gersan Joseph Garzon, Executive Secretary of the National Council for People of African Descent at the Ministry of the Presidency of Panama; Severo S. Catura, Undersecretary and Executive Director of the Presidential Human Rights Committee of the Philippines; Jaques Nixon Myrthil, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs and Religions of Haiti; and Joel Dixon, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua.

Speaking in the general segment were representatives of Ukraine, Argentina, Peru, Sweden on behalf of the European Union, United Kingdom, France, Iceland, China, Ireland, Spain, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates.

The Conference adjourned the high-level segment until Thursday 23 April at 10 a.m.. This afternoon at 3 p.m. it will continue the general segment, hearing further statements from national representatives.

### **High-Level Segment**

TERRY DAVIS, Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, said in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, there were no easy fixes and no quick wins. It would be naïve to expect that efforts would succeed in putting a quick and irreversible end to prejudice and hate - but through what the Conference could do, it should make a difference, and this should be the yardstick to measure the success of the progress launched at the World Conference in Durban. In the current economic circumstances, this work was even more important. History told that economic turbulence could increase social tensions along ethnic, religious and other lines. It followed that the current global economic crisis increased the risk of racist intolerance and discrimination everywhere in the world. But legal instruments were only part of the solution. People could not be coerced into tolerance, mutual understanding and mutual respect. Any lasting victory in the fight against racism and racial discrimination required a change of hearts and minds.

The mission of the Durban Conference, and this Review Conference, was to fight against racism everywhere in the world. Racism was more than intolerance and discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin. Discrimination was equally unjust when it targeted people because of their religious belief, their nationality, their gender or their sexual orientation. The terrible crimes of the Holocaust were reason enough for Europeans to avoid any holier-than-thou attitudes, but Europe would not keep quiet if anyone anywhere preached intolerance and hate, or rejected the lessons that had been learned from this painful past. Europe would speak out whenever it heard anyone deny the fact that millions of Jews, Roma, homosexuals and people with disabilities were murdered in the death camps, as Europe had learned the hard way that the only effective way to make sure that such horrors never happened again was to insist on unconditional respect for the human dignity and the human rights of everyone, by everyone, everywhere and at all times.

MOHAMED MAHMOUD OULD MOHAMEDOU, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mauritania, said that in various parts of the world, ordinary people intoxicated by alienating discourses and dangerous propaganda were convinced that they were protecting and preserving themselves in opting for behaviour which could be termed racist and discriminatory. All they were doing was cultivating in themselves the causes which ruined the peace they needed and invited the insecurity that they should avoid. It should be kept in mind that, for the most, the great wounds that marked the history of humanity – the history of each one of us – had their roots in these negative attitudes and

pathological states of mind. One should never forget as well that no durable peace was built from exclusion and rejection, as manifold striking examples around the world unfortunately attested daily.

Mauritania was an Arab and African country proud of its enriching diversity, aware of this wealth and accustomed to living in an age-old symbiosis between all of its ethnic components. Mauritania has adhered to the main international and regional instruments of human rights, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Efforts towards the repatriation of citizens formerly refugees in Senegal were redoubled and some 10,000 Mauritians previously separated from their homeland and prevented from their right to live in their country had over the past months returned home.

NDUMISO C. MAMBA, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs of Swaziland, said that this Review Conference was a test of their resolve as Governments to confront discrimination, which unfortunately still existed even in today's modern world. They further had to take stock of the ravaging effects it had had in the past. This was an opportunity to turn the corner and send the right message of hope to those that were still treated as sub-human. Despite the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action by consensus, nations had not been able to sufficiently quell the insidious acts of racism, not only in the main, but in organized sport and in the private sector. Racism was beyond justification, a prejudice and an evil that presupposed the innate superiority of one race, creed and culture over another.

Swaziland noted with much dismay that certain delegations who were initially engaged in drafting this compromise document, subsequently chose and at the eleventh hour, not to see through this most important exercise. Others had set the unfortunate precedent of summarily marching out of deliberations because they did not agree with elements of a speaker's address. The success of this instructive conference would stand or fall on the active participation and communal support for the document on the table today. This was as true today as it was in the day of the Irish political philosopher Edmund Burke said that "evil strives when good men do nothing". The compromise document was multilateral diplomacy at work. Mr. Mamba reiterated Swaziland's full commitment to the outcome of this Review Conference.

GERSAN JOSEPH GARZON, Executive Secretary of the National Council for People of African Descent at the Ministry of the Presidency of Panama, said at this historical moment, the adoption of the outcome document was something to be celebrated. Panama continued to work towards perfecting its democracy, and after its fight for sovereignty and control over its canal, it became a crossroads of cultures. Panamanians were a diverse, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural people, where indigenous people, Asians, whites, and people of African descent lived together in harmony. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance undermined human dignity, and the fight against this scourge was established in the United Nations Charter as well as in other international texts including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Panama was committed to the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and was thus participating in this historical Review Conference.

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action with its recommendations had guided the Government of Panama as well as other Governments in Latin America in adopting measures to respond to the specificities of different populations that were affected by racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including indigenous peoples, migrants, displaced persons, women, children, the disabled and those of African descent. In the search for mechanisms, actions and programmes to effectively take on this fight, the Government had created a National Council for the Black Ethnic Group and an Advisory Group, and established the Executive Secretariat, which existed to implement public policies that were inclusive and fair.

SEVERO S. CATURA, Undersecretary and Executive Director of the Presidential Human Rights Committee of the Philippines, said that the Philippines attached great importance to the eradication of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, and therefore strongly supported the convening of this Review Conference. In 2001, the international community adopted the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action – a comprehensive and unequivocal statement against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance. Eight years on, it was an appropriate time to reflect and take stock of the progress made in the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, as well as to reaffirm its message and relevance in light of continuing challenges of the present day.

The Philippines was particularly concerned about the situation of migrants, migrant domestic workers, and members of their families. In the context of the current global financial and economic crises, migrants were among the first to lose jobs and their means of livelihood. They could be exposed to social exclusion, exploitation and xenophobia. In some parts of the world, extreme political platforms espoused anti-migrant sentiments, and restrictive immigration policies preventing the freer movement of persons which could potentially spur economic growth. Cases of abuse of migrants in the workplace, in immigration facilities, and in society at large were numerous and well documented. The Philippines called on all States which had not yet done so to consider signing and ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Migrants had become even more vulnerable in this global era, and thus needed greater protection of their human rights as well as protection from racism and xenophobia.

JAUQUES NIXON MYRTHIL, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs and Religions of Haiti, said that Haiti could not possibly be absent from this Review Conference because its nation was born from the first revolt against slavery in history. The 2001 Durban Conference ambiguously recognized slavery as a crime against humanity but it could not resolve the question of reparation. Participants even opposed offering their excuses for the crimes linked to slavery committed in the past. The fight against racism and thus denial of racism had in great measure not yet reached its goal. Racist attitudes and hate speech were common currency in many countries; especially migrant workers were often stigmatized. Racism, far from being reduced, was taking worse forms. The world financial crisis and the economic recession often increased the hate against foreigners and especially migrant workers who were a vulnerable group.

As Member States of the United Nations, they must fight against social injustice, hate and racism and poverty and the lack of care and consideration of paragraph three in article one of the United Nations Charter so that realizing international cooperation through solving international economic, social, intellectual or humanitarian problems, development and encouraging the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of race, gender, language or religion, did not remain illusory. Haiti wished that the Durban Review Conference allowed for the different representatives of States to cultivate tolerance in order to find compromises necessary to the success of their work.

JOEL DIXON, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, said the international community had come a long way since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in particular since the Durban Conference. Sadly, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance were still part of the evils afflicting the world today, and this was why the time had come today to call a halt, assess the obstacles impeding progress, and revise the mechanisms guaranteeing the effectiveness of existing rules to effectively combat these scourges - this was an ambitious, but not impossible goal. Good intentions had been reflected in the documents, but the main challenge now was to provide people with a life of justice and dignity, with a future. World powers could and should make a valuable contribution to these efforts, if they could properly understand the spirit that brought the international community together today.

Extreme poverty, inequality and exclusion and some of the contemporary forms of discrimination and socio-economic difficulties continued to be the main causes of poverty, wars and attacks on the environment world-wide. The gap between rich and poor was growing ever greater - and if this was not closed, then all that future generations would remember was that there was once a time when the world was divided into developed and under-developed. Structural adjustment of paradigms was possible, but only if the international community worked together. The world was a common neighbourhood, where action should be united. No country, however self-sufficient, was alien to what affected another country. The present economic and financial crisis that was affecting all was a serious threat to human security, slowed down development, and impeded the enjoyment and realisation of human rights.

JEAN MARTIN MBEMBA, Minister of State at the Ministry of Public Functions in charge of State Reform of the Republic of the Congo, said that the Republic of the Congo saw with pleasure the spirit of consensus which prevailed throughout the entire process of the Review Conference and flourished with the final consensus document. This was achieved through the shared efforts of many people, and the personal commitment to the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Republic of the Congo reaffirmed its commitment to implement the results of this Conference. The Republic of the Congo had acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Government ensured that all citizens in the Republic of the Congo enjoyed their human rights. With regard to the indigenous population, a bill was being debated in parliament which

aimed to guarantee their civil, political and cultural rights in an equal and non-discriminatory way. August 9 of each year was the day to celebrate solidarity with the indigenous people.

The Republic of the Congo's commitment to fight against racism and racial discrimination was present long before the World Conference against Racism. This was shown through the country's struggles with colonialism and the experiences of South Africa's apartheid. The results of this Review Conference offered new perspectives to common actions to end racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance. The fight against racism required the world's commitment, and therefore the consensus built upon in 2001 should continue to realize the objectives set forth in the outcome document, stressed Mr. Mbemba.

ANTONIO GUTERRES, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said that the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance ended three days before the paradigm-changing events of September 11 2001. The Durban Declaration explicitly acknowledged racism and related forms of intolerance as among the root causes of persecution leading to displacement and statelessness. In the seven and a half years since the conference, it had likely become more rather than less difficult for those seeking protection from persecution to access territories where it may be available. More border security, more restrictive policies on visa issuance, more recourse to detention and summary returns; all these measures had reduced the ability of asylum-seekers to find the protection they needed.

Today's economic climate was argument against many initiatives. Fortunately, efforts to diminish racism and xenophobia needed not be among them. Many of the things we needed to do – for example, lobbying politicians and media, revising discriminatory laws, changing our own perceptions about foreigners - did not cost money. They did, however, require resolve. For its part, UNHCR had since Durban more systematically incorporated anti-xenophobia efforts into its operations worldwide. In the context of the reintegration of refugees in their countries of origin, UNHCR was engaged in a variety of activities to promote reconciliation and peaceful co-existence. UNHCR intended to increase its anti-xenophobia efforts in developed countries as well, forging closer partnerships with academia and other elements of civil society, as well as international organizations with the relevant mandates.

### **General Segment**

MYKOLA MAIMESKUL (Ukraine) said though mankind had entered the third Millennium, problems such as racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance still existed. The Durban World Conference was a milestone in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was a universal and comprehensive tool to effectively implement mechanisms against discrimination. The awareness and understanding of the necessity to further develop international cooperation were constantly rising. The great challenge of today was to pull all efforts together and make them effective. The Review Conference presented an opportunity to review implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action by all stakeholders.

Strengthening national efforts was decisive for progress. States should fully comply with their obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, including their reporting obligations. The first two days of the Conference clearly indicated that further progress in this sphere was only possible on the basis of understanding that this was a shared responsibility. Its fulfilment required active interaction, mutual respect, and, most importantly, mutual tolerance.

ALBERTO DUMONT (Argentina) said that Argentina hoped that the Review Conference would allow for the goals identified in Durban in 2001 with the culmination of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action to be realized. It was fundamental for the United Nations to be at the forefront of the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance. Multilateral forums were the best platforms for such discussions. Argentina believed that this would allow the international community to effectively fight against racism, and bring about a consensus solution. The international community needed to re-examine its recognition of poverty and exclusion, especially in this time where the world was experiencing the worst economic and financial crises. Migrants and refugees were also important issues that required more attention by the international community with regard to combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance. The international community was also called on to strengthen international dialogue on migration and migrants.

Argentina had created a National Action Plan to fight discrimination which was one of the most exhaustive and conclusive plans of its kind. It was important to conduct investigations into the Holocaust as it provided an opportunity for one to learn from past atrocities and most importantly to avoid repeating mistakes. Argentina signed the Stockholm Declaration which aimed to underline the truth about the Holocaust, benefiting generations to come. The international community was reminded that a lot remained to be done with respect to the goals identified through the Conference in order to fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance.

J. EDUARDO PONCE VIVANCO (Peru) said that the international fight against racism was not new within the United Nations system. The Latin American countries had pushed for the integration of the subject in various fora long before 2001. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action had become a significant reference point in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. For Peru, the enormous ethnic and linguistic diversity was at the same time a wealth but also an enormous challenge. According to the Constitution, all Peruvians, men and women were equal and all types of discrimination were prohibited. Despite many measures undertaken, Peru had not been able to eradicate racism in all arenas, mainly discrimination against indigenous peoples, mestizos and Afro-Peruvians. Peru had also not defeated poverty, although it had decreased during the last decade. Peru was convinced that the fight against poverty should be integrated in the efforts of the fight against all types of racial discrimination. So many humans had to look for greener horizons in other countries because of poverty, and then they faced social exclusion there. Peru emphasized that understanding and harmony would help us to serve the higher goal of tolerance.

HANS DAHLGREN (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said the European Union firmly rejected and deplored the offensive and utterly unacceptable statement delivered during the high-level segment by the President of Iran. His hate-filled allegations were rejected in the strongest possible terms by the entire European Union. Throughout the world there were constant reminders on a daily basis of the need to combat racism and intolerance. Today, many individuals and groups of individuals continued to be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, descent, nationality or ethnic origin. This not only prevented the full enjoyment of human rights, but also represented a threat to democratic societies and their fundamental values. Racism and related phenomena could and should be fought while respecting other human rights and fundamental freedoms, notably the freedom of expression.

The European Union was convinced of the importance of reinforcing cooperation at the regional and international level in the fight against racism and discrimination. Racism and xenophobia should not go unchecked, regardless of where they occurred, who their victims were, or who was responsible for them. The fight against discrimination should be seen as part of the global struggle for human rights. International cooperation, in close cooperation with civil society was essential in this fight. Not only because it confirmed the belief that all were working together for a just cause, but because the international community could learn from each other's experience and strengthen individual and national efforts.

PETER GOODERHAM (United Kingdom) said that Britain was a multi-racial, multi-faith society with the toughest and most progressive equality and anti-discrimination laws in the world. The United Kingdom was firmly committed to the elimination of all forms of racism and intolerance. The Government was engaged in this Conference because it shared its principal objective of furthering the global fight against racism, and reviewing progress in this effort since 2001. Preparations for this Conference had been, at times, difficult, but all delegations had worked hard to seek common ground. This was the least that victims of racism around the world should expect. Delegations were thanked for their willingness to compromise.

The United Kingdom condemned in the strongest possible terms President Ahmedinejad's statement, which was viewed as unacceptable for the United Nations anti-racism forum. The United Kingdom delegation left the hall not only in protest, but in solidarity with those targeted by his hateful, anti-Semitic words. In the same spirit of solidarity, the Government was determined to face the forces of intolerance. That was why they remained at this Conference and were determined to work with partners from around the world to find solutions to the problems faced by victims of all forms of racism and discrimination today.

JEAN-BAPTISTE MATTEI (France) said that France wanted to appeal to dignity and unity. The scourge of racism concerned all the international community, which had to respond to the suffering of the

victims by uniting its strengths and will. The combat against racism was also a moral combat. The fight against racism could in no means be an instrument or a pretext serving another cause. France did not accept that this Conference would be hijacked from its purpose, nor taken hostage. France did not accept that this forum became a forum of hatred. Those that made speeches, as the Iranian President did on Monday, had discredited themselves. France's Government's highest authorities had recalled that yesterday.

While the Durban Conference in 2001 was overshadowed by unacceptable behaviour, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action deserved all their attention to mobilize all energies. During several months, the final outcome document had been negotiated here in Geneva and France had, as its European partners, made strong requirements, based on the conviction that stigmatization of one State was not acceptable in an issue that was so global as racism; the unwavering attachment to freedom of speech which was the basis of all our freedoms; and the necessity to fight against all forms of racism and xenophobia, including anti-Semitism. The memory of the Holocaust, which had been commemorated yesterday, was there to remind us. It was unacceptable to deny it. The struggle against racism was a priority for France, its policy in the fight against racism was part of a strong European policy.

KRISTINN F. ARNASON ([Iceland](#)) said no country in the world had completely succeeded in fighting the phenomenon of racial discrimination. It should therefore be with a sense of determination as well as humility that the international community should intensify all efforts to eradicate racism from society. The international community should work towards universal adherence to and full implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. The prime responsibility lay with States. Governments should take the lead in combating impunity for acts of racism and related intolerance, and in ensuring expeditious access to justice and fair and adequate redress for victims. Combating racial discrimination in all its aspects should be a priority for the international community, along with the promotion of tolerance, mutual respect and understanding.

Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance affected women and men in different ways - it was therefore extremely important that all policies to combat racism and racial discrimination took gender perspectives into account. Tolerance, understanding and human dignity stood in strong contrast to the ignorance that underlay racism. All States should enhance mutual understanding among various cultures and civilisations, and implement adequate cultural and educational programmes aimed at countering racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The Durban Review Conference should be guided by the spirit demonstrated by the two great heroes of the struggle against racism - ex-President Nelson Mandela, and Dr. Martin Luther King.

LI BAODONG ([China](#)) said eight years ago delegates from all countries gathered in Durban for the World Conference against Racism in 2001, and carried out in-depth analysis on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance. Now, everyone was gathered once again to deliberate on this important issue. Today, some countries still could not face up to their history, and past mistakes had not been admitted. Of particular concern for China was that life in Africa had not improved in a significant way since its colonization.

China proposed that the international community work closely together to form a strong united front, to pursue actively the policy of zero tolerance at the international and national level and to resolve political differences and refrain from creating breeding ground for hate. The efficiency of follow-up mechanisms needed to be addressed, many had a poor record attendance, and coordination and efficiency in order to broaden coordination between one another was also important. In addition, with the emergence of new forms of racism and racial discrimination along with the current global food and financial crises, those new challenges were exacerbated and required new mechanisms to address them. China was a multi-ethnic country with 56 ethnic groups. The Government was actively engaged and participated in anti-racist activities. China hoped that a world free of prejudice and fear could be created.

DAITHI O'CEALLAIGH ([Ireland](#)) said that the objective of this Durban Review Conference was to review the commitments made in Durban in 2001 to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and to give renewed impetus to those efforts. People in all parts of the world continued to suffer discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, descent, nationality or ethnic origin in addition to multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination. It was the duty and the challenge of the

United Nations and its Member States to lead the way in working towards societies free of inequalities and discrimination. Ireland was committed to supporting the efforts of all those who were here to work for a successful, constructive and results-oriented Conference. Ireland believed that the Durban process was worthwhile when all focused on its true vocation of tackling the very real problems of racism and discrimination.

It was both regrettable and entirely unacceptable that a conference on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance was used as a platform to promote intolerance and even hatred or to call into question established historical facts. This was a disservice to all those who worked so hard both within and without the United Nations on the important issues which were the subject of this Conference. In Ireland, much had been done at a national level to fight racism, but it was far from perfect and there was room for further improvement. The Durban process had provided Ireland with a tool kit.

JAVIER GARRIGUES ([Spain](#)) said Spain considered the Conference to be an opportunity which should not be missed for the international community to re-commit to the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and all scourges that endangered peaceful co-existence. The final document was evidence of the ability of the international community to reach compromise, and recognised the right to freedom of expression and opinion as a fundamental part of the fight against racism and intolerance. The international community should not look towards the past, nor compromise its vision, as this could impede efforts to eliminate discrimination. No single State should be singled out for messages on intolerance. Spain held that international relations based on tolerance and mutual respect were the way forward to promote the effective elimination of all forms of discrimination against people.

This Conference was a unique opportunity to review and learn from the progress made over the last eight years. Mechanisms and plans had been agreed on eight years ago, and these had been used as a basis by Spain for progress in the fight against racism. However, despite progress, there was still confrontation based on lack of comprehension due to lack of knowledge. There was a long way to go, but Spain was fully committed to the Durban process, and hoped that this progress would be crystallised in the future.

NAJEEB AL BADER ([Kuwait](#)) said that it was a pleasure to take part in the Review Conference to examine what had been done since the World Conference in Durban in 2001. This showed the importance that the international community placed on combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance. Kuwait wished every success to the outcome of the Conference. The Government had acceded to numerous international instruments regarding racism and in particular the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Kuwait was in favour of applying this instrument to guarantee fundamental human rights in the country. Kuwait had donated \$ 100,000 to the organization of this Conference. Kuwait was in solidarity with all countries and in particular the African peoples in their struggle.

Peace in the Middle East would not be achieved until the occupying power acceded to all its international obligations and its obligations under United Nations instruments. The Government of Kuwait was deeply concerned about the growth of Islamophobia around the world. Muslims should not be blamed for this Islamophobia or criminalized for offences for which they were innocent. The international community needed to step up its actions with regard to combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance so that all people could live in peace.

OBAID SALEM SAEED AL ZAABI ([United Arab Emirates](#)) said that the United Arab Emirates' Constitution was based on the respect of human rights and the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the combating of all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. This was a scourge that threatened all societies. The United Arab Emirates had acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1974 and was determined to combat racism. It had also acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women because it was determined to fight discrimination against women. The United Arab Emirates' Constitution stipulated that economic, social and cultural justice were pillars of its society.

The United Arab Emirates was determined to combat all those who incited to hatred or tried to defame religions. The Palestinian people continued to live under excessive force, usurpation of land, and deprivation of economic and social rights. The United Arab Emirates supported a lasting solution for Palestine with an independent State. The United Arab Emirates reiterated that it combated defamation of religion under the guise of freedom of expression. They had to continue to join efforts in order to combat all forms of racism.

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