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Meeting Summary

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Durban Review Conference
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DURBAN REVIEW CONFERENCE HEARS FROM NATIONAL DELEGATIONS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS UNDER GENERAL DEBATE

Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium Addresses the Meeting

The Durban Review Conference this morning concluded its general debate after hearing from a long series national delegations and other stakeholders who raised a variety of issues relating to the importance of fully implementing the provisions of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and dealing with new forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

During the meeting, the Review Conference resumed briefly its high-level segment to hear the statement of Karel De Gucht, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, who said that the Review Conference was supposed to evaluate the progress made in the fight against racism and discrimination, and it was necessary to admit that racism persisted, including in Belgium. In certain regions of the world, people continued to suffer from discrimination in employment and housing, people were killed because they dared change their religion, and women were the victims of discrimination. Belgium had solid legislation to fight against racism and all forms of discrimination. However, this should be accompanied by increased vigilance and constant commitment to ensure a free and tolerant society.

Mr. De Gucht said it was necessary to condemn without reserve the intolerant and hate-filled declarations of the Iranian President at this rostrum. These declarations were contrary to the principles and values of the United Nations, and were shocking, contradicting both the letter and the spirit of the outcome document. Those who defended intolerant and radical positions should not be allowed to take the Conference hostage. Similar sentiments were expressed by a number of speakers in the general segment.

Speakers in the general segment expressed a variety of sentiments and raised a number of issues. Some said it was not plausible or acceptable to witness the prevalence in many countries of the manifestations of racism and racial discrimination. The Review Conference was an opportunity of assessing failures in order to gain new victories in eliminating racism. Prejudice based on religion, culture, lack of knowledge, intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief were detrimental to the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as the promotion of peaceful culture. Commensurate remedies for the evils of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance required that all United Nations Member States showed real political will to apply them fully. There was no contradiction in simultaneously protecting people against racial discourse and incitement to racial and religious hatred, and ensuring that freedom of expression remained one of the key pillars of society.

The increasing frequency of attacks on religious personalities and symbols, especially in some countries, were fomenting and spreading hatred and aggravating intolerance, speakers said. While respecting and esteeming the principle of freedom of expression, it was unacceptable that freedom of expression should be protected and defended at the expense of other violations of human rights. One speaker said developed countries, which were mainly responsible for the financial crisis, should cancel the debt of African countries as a way of making up for the exploitation of the continent for hundreds of years. Poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization, social exclusion and economic disparities were closely linked to racism and other intolerances. Racism perpetuated poverty and

underdevelopment since it marginalized and excluded populations from having equal opportunities to development.

Speaking in the general segment were representatives of Togo, Malaysia, Viet Nam, Saudi Arabia, Eritrea, Republic of Korea, Portugal, Rwanda, Slovenia, Guatemala, Guyana, Benin, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Luxembourg, Turkey, Afghanistan, Angola, Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Denmark.

Representatives of the Pan-African Parliament, League of Arab States, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, International Labour Organization, the African Union, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, UNAIDS, Inter-American Development Bank, and the Non-Aligned Movement Centre for Human Rights and Cultural Diversity also took the floor.

Also speaking were Prince Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan (via video conference) and Edna Maria Santos Roland, two of the five Independent Eminent Experts appointed by the Secretary-General to follow-up the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action; Naela Gabr, Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women; Zonke Zanele Majodina, Vice-Chair of the Human Rights Committee; Asma Jahangir, Chair of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures; Mohammed Al-Tarawneh, Chair of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Fatimata-Binta Dah, Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; Joe Frans, Chair of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent; and a representative of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

Japan spoke in right of reply.

The Review Conference today is meeting non-stop from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.. When it continued its work at 2:30 p.m., it started its discussion on issues arising from the objectives of the Conference.

General Segment

ABDELAHAD GAMALELDIN, of the Pan-African Parliament, said Africa sent a message of love and respect to Governments, non-governmental organizations and all organizations participating in the work of the Review Conference. The Pan-African Parliament worked to respond to the needs and dreams of the African peoples for progress, regional integration and unity, and was hopeful for the establishment of an international system free of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and free of double standards and violations of international legitimacy. The Pan-African Parliament fully endorsed the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the outcome document. All should commit themselves to previous pacts and instruments which aimed at protecting the human rights of individuals and preserving their humanity. It was not plausible or acceptable to witness the prevalence in many countries of the manifestations of racism and racial discrimination. Developed countries, which were mainly responsible for the financial crisis, should cancel the debt of African countries as a way of making up for the exploitation of the continent for hundreds of years.

NAKPA POLO (Togo) said the Government of Togo was determined to support all initiatives to protect and promote respect for human dignity and ensure a solid culture of peace in the world. Togo supported the international system to protect and promote human rights, and had shown this by ratifying all international human rights instruments, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The Durban Conference was an important stage in mankind, and was a clear expression of mankind's rejection of racism and its various forms of contemporary manifestations. Equality and the enjoyment of human rights remained a great challenge for humankind. Human rights and dignity were the same for all, and they could not be denied on the basis of sex, ethnicity, culture, religion, or caste. The United Nations was constantly making efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination, nevertheless, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance were breaking out anew in all parts of the world. Arguments on the supposed inequality of cultures continued to wreak havoc. This Conference was an opportunity of assessing failures in order to gain new victories in eliminating racism.

OTHMAN HASHIM (Malaysia) reaffirmed Malaysia's full support for the mechanisms established by the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Malaysia firmly believed that the establishment

of those mechanisms provided the international community with the needed space to ensure constant monitoring and action-oriented discussion on racism and related issues, including new and emerging forms of racial discrimination and xenophobia. The Government pursued policies towards fostering national unity, improving nation integration, promoting a culture of respect and tolerance and reducing tendencies toward racial polarisation among the population. An important area of primary focus for the Government's efforts in fighting against racism was education, and it was investing heavily in education. On average, 6 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product had been allocated to education over the years. Malaysia was ready to continue working with all parties to contribute further to the ongoing efforts of the international community to fight all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance.

VU DUNG (Viet Nam) expressed its deep concern about existing gaps, challenges and obstacles which remained in the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, in particular the worrying incidents of racial and religious discrimination taking place in many parts of the world. Prejudice based on religion, culture, lack of knowledge, intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief were detrimental to the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as the promotion of peaceful culture. Viet Nam believed that the most important foundation for preserving peace and reconciliation was to strengthen tolerance and understanding based on respect of different religions and cultural diversity. The rights to freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of the press and information should be respected and guaranteed by law and in practice. However, the exercise of those rights should go in hand with the need of respect of dignity, values of virtue, tradition and culture and should not incite hatred among nations and religions. Using the freedom of opinion and expression to defame other national and regional groups should be considered as an act of violation of legitimate human rights of others.

ANDREI SAVINYKH (Belarus) said eight years after the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the problems of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance continued to be urgent problems. In the context of growing globalisation, societies were becoming ever more variegated and multicultural, and States were faced with the need to ensure mutual respect between peoples of different origins in order to establish social harmony and integration. The creation in societies of an atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect depended a great deal on State policies and political will. There could be no successful resolution of this situation when the artificial hierarchy of human rights remained, and combating discrimination remained a "secondary concern". Countries needed to combat racism and discrimination also in the international arena - mutual understanding and respect for the many different ways of development was an inalienable part of human civilisation. In spite of the fact that in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action significant attention was given to the need to combat human trafficking, this problem had not yet been alleviated.

ABDULWAHAB ATTAR (Saudi Arabia) said in spite of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action adopted in 2001, the causes that fostered racism were increasing in the contemporary world. Saudi Arabia was concerned about the various phenomena that were among the causes and sources of racism. One negative phenomenon was the increasing frequency of attacks on religious personalities and symbols, especially in some countries, which were fomenting and spreading hatred and aggravating intolerance. While respecting and esteeming the principle of freedom of expression, it was unacceptable that freedom of expression should be protected and defended at the expense of other violations of human rights. Saudi Arabia condemned defamation of religions and beliefs and disparagement of the personalities and symbols, not only of the Islamic religion, but also of other religions and beliefs. It was also important to reference that some groups and peoples throughout the world were being subjected to various racist practices. The racist separation wall had adverse effects and serious consequences on the economic, social and cultural situation of the Palestinian people. Moreover, both Christian and Muslim Palestinians were being prevented from exercising their right to freedom of worship and access to their holy places in Jerusalem.

High-Level Segment

KAREL DE GUCHT, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, said the fight against racism and discrimination required an unambiguous response from the international community - this was the least that could be done for the victims of racism and discrimination. It was necessary to condemn without reserve the intolerant and hate-filled declarations of the Iranian President at this rostrum. These declarations were contrary to the principles and values of the

United Nations, and were shocking, contradicting both the letter and the spirit of the outcome document. Those who defended intolerant and radical positions should not be allowed to take the Conference hostage. The Conference was supposed to evaluate the progress made in the fight against racism and discrimination, and it was necessary to admit that racism persisted, including in Belgium. In certain regions of the world, people continued to suffer from discrimination in employment and housing, people were killed because they dared change their religion, and women were the victims of discrimination.

Belgium had solid legislation to fight against racism and all forms of discrimination, however, this should be accompanied by increased vigilance and constant commitment to ensure a free and tolerant society. The final result of the Conference represented, of course, a compromise, the fruit of difficult and tense negotiations, and thus could not respond to the needs of all. Neither did the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. However, it did have the merit of constituting a solid basis to fight against racism and discrimination, despite the excesses caused by extremist and unacceptable statements. The international community should continue to work for cooperation and multilateral action when a civil population was the victim of grave human rights violations, and should continue to be committed to international law, which was, for these victims, the ultimate recourse allowing them at least some form of justice. Democracy was a universal value, and equality between individuals was a universal principle.

Racism and intolerance could push human beings to commit the worst atrocities. The Holocaust had been commemorated on Monday, and this April brought the fifteenth anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda, and thus the international community should spare a thought for all victims of racism and discrimination everywhere in the world. The outcome document could only make a difference for the victims if the international community lived up to its responsibilities and truly implemented the commitments that it accepted therein. This was the duty before the international community as a whole. Belgium, in this context, would continue to work for a greater multilateral cooperation, and effective multilateralism.

General Segment

FESSAHAZION PIETROS (Eritrea) said that the Durban Review Document was another milestone in humanity's struggle and search for solutions that would foster harmonious coexistence of peoples, based on mutual respect and tolerance. All human beings were born free and equal in dignity and rights. Any doctrine of racial superiority should not only be rejected, but the fight against it must be unrelenting by all stakeholders. The Review Conference gave the international community once more another important opportunity to further crystallize their commitments and intensify the struggle in confronting their common concern in order to collectively search for ways and means to eliminate racism. Racism, with its deep-rooted tentacles in all phases of peoples' lives, was known to continue to affect the political, social, economic and cultural situations of millions of people in many regions of the world. Remedies for and the struggle against those phenomena must therefore be sought for and promoted at all levels of human interactions. Poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization, social exclusion, and economic disparities were closely linked to racism and other intolerances. Racism perpetuated poverty and underdevelopment since it marginalized and excluded populations from having equal opportunities to development.

LEE SUNG-JOO (Republic of Korea) said that the outcome document held universal validity, offering an effective guideline for the fight against racial discrimination regardless of region or ethnicity. A delicate balance had been struck between exercising the freedom of expression and taking responsibility for its consequences. There would be an opportunity to discuss ways and means to enhance the effectiveness and transparency of the follow-up mechanisms to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action in the Human Rights Council. For this reason, the Republic of Korea welcomed the fact that the outcome document was adopted by consensus. One should not tolerate intolerance, but rather unite against any attempt to politicize this Conference and to use this forum to incite hatred and division. Korean society was becoming increasingly diverse, and appropriate administrative and legislative measures to ensure the smooth integration of foreigners had been taken. For example, among other things, the Government had enacted the law on Support for Multicultural Families to protect the human rights of foreigners, including migrant workers and their children living in the Republic of Korea.

FRANCISCO XAVIER ESTEVES (Portugal) said racial discrimination was a denial of one of the most fundamental rights - the right to equality, which led to a denial of countless other human rights

and fundamental freedoms. History had shown terrible examples of racism occurring throughout the world, in the most serious cases leading to ethnic cleansing and genocide. The international community needed to remain vigilant and to prevent the recurrence of such tragedies. The main goal of the Conference was to assess progress and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. In taking stock today, the international community needed to recommit itself to promote the universal ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and enhance efforts towards its full implementation at local, national, regional and international levels. It was crucial that all victims of racism were treated equally and awarded the same level of protection - there should be no hierarchisation between victims of racism or between different forms of racism as all forms of racial discrimination were unacceptable. Issues from the past should primarily be remembered as an incitement to fight racism today. The international community should not waste yet another opportunity and should work together to advance the common cause to prevent, combat and eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

VENETIA SEBUDANDI (Rwanda) said that her country, following the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and due to the lessons learned from the sad history of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis, had put in place the necessary legislation and institutional mechanisms to treat the roots of the problem. She recalled that since its independence in 1962, Rwanda had known a succession of political regimes that had been characterized by divisionism and discrimination based on ethnicity. Following the Genocide, the Government of national unity had had as a priority to promote national unity and reconciliation while ending the culture of impunity by setting up the rule of law. Rwanda was ready to share its experience. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action had clearly shown that genocide constituted an extreme manifestation of racism and racial discrimination. However, there were important gaps in the international instruments and national legislations with regards to genocide, its negation, revisionism and even its justification. Rwanda wished to establish cooperation with other States on the question of impunity with regards to the genocide, while certain suspects had found refuge in Europe, in Northern America, in Africa and elsewhere. This cooperation should also help combat negationism and every attempt targeted at minimizing the genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda. The lack of political will and the indifference shown from certain members of the international community had made this genocide possible, while it could have been avoided. The Rwandan representative also regretted that during the Conference's preparatory process, States had not been able to show the necessary flexibility to allow the States that were absent today to participate in the Conference. Some of them had made commendable progress in the fight against racism and Rwanda hoped that they would come back aboard.

ANDREJ LOGAR (Slovenia) said Slovenia was firmly committed to the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance at the national, regional and international levels. Slovenia deplored and firmly rejected the statement delivered by the President of Iran. It had to be stressed that, in combating racism and discrimination, all fundamental rights, including freedom of belief and freedom of expression, had to be fully respected. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination gave a sufficient basis for the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, including against their contemporary forms. The wide inclusion of civil society in the Durban process was supported. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action had to be better implemented not only in countries, but also in regional organizations. Slovenia planned to host a regional conference on the education of Roma. In addition, there was the Roma campaign "Dosta", an awareness raising campaign. Slovenia firmly believed that education in general and human rights education in particular were essential elements in combating different forms of racism and discrimination.

CARLOS RAMIRO MARTINEZ ALVARADO (Guatemala) said the international community was meeting here almost eight years after the World Conference in Durban and the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. These instruments were a political framework, complementing other international human rights instruments and undertakings. Considerable progress had been made in Guatemala in combating racism and racial discrimination, although much still remained to be done. Public policy had been designed to encourage peaceful coexistence, and there was a public agenda for indigenous peoples. Sectoral policies had been implemented tackling racism and racial discrimination in various areas including housing, health, the development of micro- small- and medium-sized enterprises, HIV/AIDS, the situation of women, and sustainable agricultural development. The Presidential Statement against

Discrimination and Racism against Indigenous Peoples was a follow-up mechanism for combating racism and racial discrimination and contained proposals to eradicate these practices. There was still a lot to do, and Guatemala was prepared to meet these challenges, in parallel with the commitments it had taken on.

PATRICK GOMES (Guyana) said that the international community must recognize slavery and the transatlantic trade of Africans as crimes committed against humanity, and also that descendents of victims of such criminal practices, as well as the victims of colonialism and the genocide applied to indigenous peoples, should receive the reparation and compensation they deserved. While these were historical events of sad memory for all humanity, the continuing injustice and horrendous crimes being committed against the Palestinian people urgently deserved to be addressed in a comprehensive, consistent and principled manner. Guyana had maintained a longstanding support and commitment for the Palestinian people to achieve the full realization of their inalienable right to self-determination and a homeland of their own. In view of the recent bombing assault of Gaza resulting in the loss of lives, destruction of property and countless injury to innocent people, including women and children, Guyana once again called for vigorous and urgent pursuit and bringing to justice, in keeping with international law, those responsible for actions against the Palestinians.

THIERRY ALIA (Benin) said that in Durban in 2001, the international community resolved to protect individuals and States against the scourge of racism because incitement to hatred often provoked tragedies. It took political will to eradicate this racism. Since 2001 important developments had been achieved, in particular the adoption of legislation and the establishment of institutions around the world. Benin was committed to take the necessary measures to give effect to the various human rights instruments, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. It was imperative to strengthen the protection of victims of racism, both at the national and international levels. Education was important in the fight for a world without racism, because racism was insidious and must be combated at infancy. In this context, organizations of civil society, activists and people of good will who worked to promote human rights at the community level should be recognized and encouraged by States, making aware that each individual had dignity. The Durban Review Conference came at the right time to reaffirm that racism existed in all parts of the world and that it was incumbent on all Governments and societies to work towards its eradication.

SEBASTIEN MUTOMB MUJING (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said this was a historic meeting, and all negotiators should feel honoured for their distinguished contribution. After the Conference held in Durban in 2001, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action to combat racism and all forms of intolerance had been adopted. These texts remained reference tools for all nations seeking to work effectively against the scourge of racism. This Conference should evaluate judiciously the progress made and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, and should identify new measures to combat and eliminate all recent forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance which had emerged since the Durban Conference. Commensurate remedies for these evils required that all United Nations Member States showed real political will to apply them fully. Particularly vulnerable population groups, such as indigenous peoples, migrants and women deserved particular attention from all United Nations agencies and national Governments. There was a positive approach by all delegations, which had made it possible to adopt the outcome document. In the future, dividing and extremist positions should be avoided in order to avoid undermining the joint struggle against racism, and show that the international community was indeed concerned for the victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

JEAN FEYDER (Luxembourg) said that Luxembourg welcomed the consensus adoption of the final document. The document was a new landmark in mankind's struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. It denounced anti-Semitism, it abstained from stigmatizing one region of the world, it underlined the essential principle of freedom of expression while reaffirming the imperative of fighting against incitement to hatred, and it reminded us of the Holocaust. The establishment of the United Nations and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination did not prevent the genocide in Rwanda nor the massacre of Srebrenica or others on almost all continents. The marginalization of the most vulnerable populations continued, be it the marginalization of women, indigenous peoples, ethnic, religious, or linguistic minorities. States should strengthen their efforts to alleviate poverty, since it was one of the most frequent factors causing racial discrimination. Luxembourg's national policy in the fight

against racism, Luxembourg being a member of the European Union, was in conformity with the European Union's policy. Since the first Durban Conference, Luxembourg had implemented an annual information and awareness raising campaign on the fight against discrimination. Racism was a scourge that concerned us all and no State was above criticism.

AHMET UZUMCU (Turkey) said that the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action constituted the basis of policies to fight racism. The Review Conference provided an opportunity to evaluate the implementation of these policies at the national and international levels as well as to address shortcomings in a self-critical manner. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance constituted an attack on human dignity. Polarization along religious and cultural lines had grown over the past decade. There was no contradiction in simultaneously protecting people against racial discourse and incitement to racial and religious hatred, and ensuring that freedom of expression remained one of the key pillars of society. The discrimination and violence increasingly affecting migrants remained a serious challenge. Having more than four million citizens living in foreign countries as migrant workers with their families, Turkey has gained first hand experience about discrimination and xenophobia against them. Turkey welcomed the adoption of the outcome document. The consensual and carefully balanced document would help to further sensitize stakeholders and raise greater public awareness.

NANGUYALAI TARZI (Afghanistan) said this Review Conference which brought the international community together was based on the cause of universal sacred human rights, the right to live in peace and together. Humanity had taken on laws and rules based on best practices and customs of tolerance, mutual respect, and receptiveness. Afghanistan ensured space for each of these in its Constitution to harmonise life in a multi-faceted country which had, until the recent past, lived in peace, with a perfect balance between all its components. Many provisions of international instruments were transposed into domestic legislation in Afghanistan. One of the most important points was protection for women and their role, whether in terms of equality, or education, and new measures had been applied in this regard, and on the political level they were rejoining the space they had never left. Tolerance for the specific needs of minorities and the disabled and protection of children were all priorities and indeed commitments for Afghanistan.

ARCANJO DO NASCIMENTO (Angola) regretted that the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action had not had the expected impact on the lives of victims of racism, not because of the instrument but due to the lack of political will to implement preventive measures, education and protection aiming at eradicating racism at all levels, as well as strategies to achieve full equality between all human beings. In this context, Angola also regretted that the paragraph concerning the creation of a racial equality index was not part of the final document of the Durban Review Conference. It could be an additional and important tool to address many issues which the victims of racial discrimination were facing. As a country which had been a victim of colonial regime and slavery which cost millions of lives and completely destroyed the social structure of Angola, having an impact on its development, Angola did not see a need for further debate concerning the appropriate ways in which those responsible for this tragedy could contribute to address those problems and heal once and for all the scars of historical injustices.

CHOE MYONG NAM (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said the World Conference held in Durban had been an important occasion to ensure dignity, equality, justice, and development of all races and nations throughout the world. The efforts of the international community constantly made at the national, regional and international levels since the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action had brought about considerable achievements. A number of legal and institutional mechanisms were created to implement the Plan of Action, awareness on the origin and harmfulness of racism was further enhanced, and a series of measures were taken to address them. However, there was still a long and arduous way to go in order to realise the spirit of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action for complete eradication of racism. In spite of repeated efforts by the international community, racism still persisted in new manifestations of religious hatred, discrimination and prejudice. The Durban Review Conference was faced with the historic task of reviewing progress and assessing the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and taking up effective measures aimed at overcoming obstacles and new challenges. It was imperative to properly address the past history of racism and racial discrimination in order to eradicate them once and for all - unsettled past abuse was a source of current and future abuses.

ARNOLD DE FINE SKIBSTED (Denmark) said that the focus of the Review Conference should be racism, discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and how to combat these scourges. It was thus a deeply worrying paradox that this rostrum was abused to advocate racism and intolerance by the President of Iran on Monday. The remarks relating in particular to Israel had been so abominable that Denmark had had to react. The intervention had to be understood as incitement to hatred and ran counter to the whole purpose of the Review Conference.

Denmark had from the outset been committed to making the Review Conference a success. Numerous efforts to divert the focus of the Conference had been made, noted the delegate. This included attempts to restrict the fundamental right of freedom of opinion and expression. Denmark would never accept such limitations. Freedom of expression was one of the cornerstones of human dignity and the basis of any democratic society. Denmark was thus satisfied that the fundamental role of freedom of expression had been recognized in the outcome document as one of the essential foundations of a democratic, pluralistic society.

SAAD ALFARARGI, of the League of Arab States, said regarding hostility to religion, particularly Islamophobia, that practices went beyond ethnical and moral grounds. The League of Arab States condemned Israel's practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as Israel clearly was violating human rights and international humanitarian law. The Palestinians who lived in Israel were oppressed on a daily basis. The League of Arab States called on the international community to condemn these practices. The Durban Review Conference should give a new impetus to the international community to mobilize itself in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. In order to meet its objectives, the Conference should strengthen its follow-up mechanisms. This could only be reached through dialogue and not absence.

KONSTANTINOS TARARAS, of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), said the fight against racism, discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance was at the heart of UNESCO's mandate. Its commitment was affirmed by UNESCO's role in deconstructing pseudoscientific theories of racial superiority; by its firm and unconditional stand against apartheid; and by the adoption of important normative instruments, such as the Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice and the Convention against Discrimination in Education. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action gave a strong impetus for renewing UNESCO's commitment in this regard. A long process of broad consultations had led to the adoption of an Integrated Strategy to Combat Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2003.

SHAUNA OLNEY, of the International Labour Organization, said that racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance were contrary to human rights and dignity. They were serious obstacles to social cohesion, peace and stability. These unacceptable practices had to be understood and addressed as both causes and consequences of exclusion and poverty. The International Labour Organization's Decent Work Agenda was based on the conviction that social justice could only become a reality when men and women, irrespective of their race, colour or creed, enjoyed equal opportunities and treatment in the world of work. Saying no to racism at the workplace was key for promoting respect, tolerance and inclusiveness. Governments had a duty to honour their international commitments. However, day-to-day action to eliminate racial discrimination was a collective responsibility. Since 2001 a great number of positive steps had been taken to bring an end to racism at work and there had been an increasing recognition that diversity meant strength rather than weakness.

KHADIJA R. MASRI, of the African Union, said that the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance was the responsibility of all Member States of the United Nations, regional organizations, inter-governmental organizations, communities and non-governmental organizations, civil society and individuals throughout the world. All were duty bound to shoulder their collective and individual responsibility in combating these grave abuses and degrading treatment of human beings. As they met here today, they must not forget that the world just recently commemorated the abolishment of slavery and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Durban Declaration had particularly highlighted the values thus enshrined and it was therefore a landmark in the fight against racism. The group of universal instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, was designed to ensure a better future for the victims of racism. The entire world was closely following this Conference and hoped for concrete action. The African Union was pleased about the consensus that had been reached and

that the voice of reason that had finally lightened the path so as not to deceive the victims of racism.

LIBERE BARARUNYERETSE, of Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, said the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie supported human rights, in particular efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination, and related intolerance. The Durban Review Conference, whose task was to review progress made following the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and progress on ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, should allow the international community to reaffirm the need to fight all forms and manifestations of discrimination within an international framework and a universal dialogue. The equality gaps and contempt for human dignity meant that all were duty-bound to maintain enhanced vigilance against political demagoguery and the isolation of whole communities. The Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie supported focused efforts in the field of human rights with marked commitment to fight this persistent scourge that affected the most vulnerable groups.

SUSAN TIMBERLAKE speaking on behalf of UNAIDS Executive Director MICHEL SIDIBE, said that UNAIDS wanted to highlight forms of discrimination that so far had not received the attention they deserved: discrimination based on health status and on social status. HIV-related discrimination continued to affect millions. This meant that families were destroyed, homes and jobs were lost and education was denied. It also meant that millions feared to get tested for HIV, disclose their status if they were positive, or seek treatment when needed. Discrimination stood directly in the way of attaining universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. UNAIDS called on governments and others to make non-discrimination a pillar of the response to AIDS.

CLAIRE A. NELSON, of the Inter-American Development Bank, said that the credibility and effectiveness of the Inter-American Development Bank and its mandate to promote equitable growth and social equity dictated that the Bank should be sensitive to ethnicity and diversity issues. Sustainable growth could not proceed if there was social and economic exclusion. The costs of exclusion due to race and ethnicity were high. Cycles of poverty and degradation led to diminished productivity and costly violence and conflict. Human, natural and cultural resources were wasted, and potential consumer markets were lost. Since Durban, the Inter-American Development Bank had been increasingly supporting investment to address exclusion. Creating success stories would take time, but the Bank recognized that time was not on its side and so it was moving with great deliberation to engage at all levels.

ALI BAHREINI, of Non-Aligned Movement Centre for Human Rights and Cultural Diversity, said the Durban World Conference had been the start of a process to recognise the aspirations of the peoples of the world to justice and to equality of opportunity for all. The Conference had recognised the necessity of respecting and maximising the benefits of diversity within and among all nations in working together to build a harmonious and productive future by putting into practice and promoting values and principles such as justice and equality. Cultural diversity in a globalising world needed to be used as a vehicle for creativity, dynamism and promoting social justice, tolerance and understanding as well as international peace and security, and not as a rationale for a new ideological and political confrontation. A worldwide strategy against racism could only succeed with full commitment, a sense of responsibility and cooperation - the Durban Review Conference should give a further impetus and enhance the dynamism of this process which started in 2001. All on the international scene should build an international order based on inclusion, justice, equality and equity, human dignity, mutual understanding and promotion of and respect for cultural diversity and universal human rights.

PRINCE EL HASSAN BIN TALAL of Jordan, one of five Independent Eminent Experts appointed by the Secretary-General to follow-up the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, in a video message to the Durban Review Conference, said that it was important to promote the education of excluded youth through scholarships. The roots of conflicts often lay in history. States had to work together in the General Assembly to place a new template for a better future. Human warming had to take over global warming.

EDNA MARIA SANTOS ROLAND, one of five Independent Eminent Experts appointed by the Secretary-General to follow-up the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, said one of the landmarks established by the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was the recognition that racism manifested itself in different forms for men and women and the

existence of multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination that combined their effect with the consequences of racism. In spite of long discussions during the Durban process, it was not possible to reach consensus regarding factors such as gender identities and sexual orientation. A number of positive developments had taken place in the Latin American region since 2001. Governmental bodies were created in 17 countries at diverse levels of authority and autonomy; policies were developed in the areas of education, health, labour, access to land and housing; laws and regulations were approved; and networks were established in civil society, governments and international cooperation. A Rapporteur for Afro-descendants was created at the regional level and a convention on racism and discrimination was under discussion. In order to better assess the advances and challenges in the implementation of policies to promote equality, it was advisable to develop tools that were instrumental to assess the level of inequalities and to design the necessary policies.

NAELA GABR, Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, said that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women systematically addressed discrimination against women in general. The patterns for this discrimination might sometimes be very similar to other forms of discrimination mentioned in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and also addressed specific forms of multiple discrimination such as in the case of women belonging to ethnic minorities, migrant women, and victims of trafficking. Trafficking in women and violence against women, including domestic violence, continued to affect a large number of women, including female domestic workers. These scourges had a particularly negative effect on the victims in the context of double or multiple discrimination, especially with regard to colour and national origin. Governments should intensify efforts and cooperation to combat poverty as one of the main root causes of discrimination, segregation, and as an impediment to the advancement of women, and should keep under review and carefully monitor the impact of laws and policies on migrant women. The Conference should consider supporting the United Nations Global Initiative on Fighting Trafficking in Persons, and consider the particular severe forms of violence and discrimination faced by women and the girl child in all types of armed conflicts in the context of the follow-up to the Durban Review Conference.

ZONKE ZANELE MAJODINA, Vice-Chair of the Human Rights Committee, said that nearly eight years after the Durban Conference, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance continued to jeopardize the equal enjoyment of human rights by all. Yet, all States were party to, and therefore legally bound by, one or, for most, at least five of the nine core international human rights instruments providing, inter alia, for the right to equality and non-discrimination. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provided for the protection of rights of members of ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities. When considering the reports of States parties and individual communications, the Committee had expressed concerns and had made recommendations regarding numerous issues relating to racial discrimination and to the violation of rights of persons belonging to various groups. Also, States should take firm measures to eradicate all forms of excessive use of force by law enforcement officials, in particular against members of ethnic minorities, migrants and asylum seekers. Further States should strengthen efforts to ensure the right of minorities to enjoy and develop their culture and language and to support cultural and ethnic diversity.

ASMA JAHANGIR, Chair of the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures, in a joint statement on behalf of Special Procedures mandate holders, urged the Review Conference to give due consideration in its work to the many concerns raised by Special Procedures mandate holders. National action plans must now come to the fore to combat racism and must place the emphasis clearly on real and concrete "action" at the national and especially at the grass roots level. The implementation gap continued to allow the words of the international community to fall short and laws to fail. The rule of law and the judicial mechanisms that made it a reality must be ensured as a priority. In doing so, States could send a clear message that racism and discrimination against any person was unacceptable in any form. Where impunity existed, it sanctioned further acts of racism and perpetuated a cycle of discrimination and abuse that should have no place in twenty-first century nations. To eliminate the roots and branches of racism and discrimination, education was all important. The international community must address the causes of racism as much as it must treat its consequences if one was to avoid new generations growing up tainted by prejudice.

MOHAMMED AL-TARAWNEH, Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, said the Committee was the most recent human rights treaty body established. Throughout the ages, the treatment of people with disabilities had brought out some of the worst

aspects of human nature. For the 650 million persons around the world living with disabilities, the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities began a new era, an era in which persons with disabilities would no longer have to suffer from the discriminatory practices and attitudes that had been allowed to prevail for so long. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action recognised the linkage among racism, racial discrimination and other forms of intolerance, and discrimination based on other grounds such as disability, referring to the phenomenon of multiple or aggravated discrimination which States needed to address. The Committee urged States to review progress made in countering the phenomenon of aggravated discrimination, and to adopt specific recommendations in that regard, and called upon the Durban Review Conference to highlight the importance of the universal ratification of the Convention and its Optional Protocol as a means to eliminate discrimination against those with disabilities, including those affected by aggravated discrimination.

FATIMATA-BINTA DAH, Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, said that the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination shared many similar positions with the Review Conference. Three months ago they had celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Four decades was at the same time a very long period and a short time. Much remained to be done in the fight against racism. Universal ratification of the Convention, which had been set for 2005, had still not been attained. The late submission by many States of their original report was also a major obstacle of the monitoring function of the Committee. Since the first Durban conference in 2001, the Committee had endeavoured to improve its work and various thematic discussions had been organized. The current context of the financial crisis could affect different ethnic groups and minorities, such as Roma, indigenous people, refugees, migrants and persons discriminated against due to their descent. States should declare as punishable under the law all forms of discrimination. She also noted that the Committee would continue to collaborate with the Durban Follow-up mechanisms, as had been the case since 2001.

JOE FRANS, Chair of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, said that racism directed at people of African descent manifested itself in many spheres of life, including the administration of justice, the media, access to education, employment, health, housing, racial profiling, and the participation in political, economic, social and cultural aspects of society and in the advancement and economic development of their countries. Institutional racism and discrimination, including distortions in the media, affected the plight of people of African descent at the work place and the broader society. It was gratifying to note that the outcome document adopted had taken note with appreciation of the efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance undertaken by all mechanisms. During its last session, the Working Group reviewed methodologies employed by the Working Group so as to maximize the fulfilment of the mandate entrusted to it by the Human Rights Council. This resulted in a comprehensive and ambitious work plan. This was in line with the outcome document. The Working Group laid the foundation for a more structured and productive phase; however, it could not succeed in fulfilling its mandate without the full support of Member States and civil society.

TSELISO THIPANYANE, of International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, said combating discrimination on the grounds of race, religion and belief, ethnic and national origins and colour was an integral part of the mandate of national human rights institutions. These institutions promoted intercultural dialogue and diversity, and provided a human rights framework for addressing contentious issues. They achieved this through dispute resolution services, advocacy, the development of networks, and development of training and education. The national human rights institutions of the world were committed to working in a spirit of openness and dialogue with all for the success of the Durban Review Conference, and were committed to making constructive and practical contributions to the review process. The Durban Review Conference should not reopen the debates of 2001 - it presented an opportunity for all actors to identify practical steps to implement the anti-racism agenda, and was an important opportunity to reinvigorate the global commitment to combating racism and to close existing implementation gaps.

Right of Reply

AKIO ISOMATA (Japan), speaking in a right of reply, said in response to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's statement, Japan wanted to underline that the Government had been facing the

events of the past with sincerity and had shown strong determination to solve the issues with peaceful means. He noted that through their bilateral relations, both Governments had agreed on basic principles to discuss these questions. Further, Japan had offered resident status to the Koreans living on its territory and Japan's Constitution guaranteed equality to everyone. As for the Japanese school's curriculum guidelines, the delegate underscored that it required that students should correctly understand what had led to the war and the great suffering that had resulted from it.
