



BRAZIL

**STATEMENT BY H. E. LUIZA BAIROS,
MINISTER OF THE SECRETARIAT OF POLICIES FOR THE PROMOTION OF RACIAL
EQUALITY,
AT THE HIGH LEVEL MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO COMMEMORATE THE
TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION OF THE DURBAN DECLARATION AND
PROGRAMME OF ACTION**

New York, 22 September 2011

(Please check against delivery)

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

First of all, I am honored to be given the opportunity to highlight the importance Brazil has always attached to the Durban process. I dare to say that Brazil goes beyond the political declaration to be adopted today to reaffirm the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the Outcome Document of the 2009 Review Conference and our commitment to their full and effective implementation.

Ten years later, the reaffirmation of the Durban principles means that our main concern has to do with the future; with our political capacity to transform initiatives of the last decade in actual achievements towards racial equality. The near future challenges us all to evaluate the resilience and complexities of racism because, in spite of our best efforts, it has recreated itself as a set of dehumanizing ideas and practices that continuously affect the lives of millions of people worldwide.

Mr. Chairman,

Brazil is a multi-racial and multi-ethnic country. Such diversity is part of who we are, as a people, as a Nation. Its realization was never easy. However, from the struggles of the social movements to the government engagement in the fight against discrimination, Brazil has made significant strides. The creation of the Secretariat of Policies for the Promotion of Racial Equality in 2003 and the enactment of the Statute of Racial Equality in 2010 constitute milestones of recognition that race issues are real and need institutional address. And now I would like to reaffirm the priority attached to this issue by President Dilma Rousseff.

Brazil attaches great value to the International Year for People of African Descent, in 2011. Given its importance, Brazil, together with the Ibero-American General Secretariat, will host a Summit in Salvador, Bahia, in November. The meeting will celebrate the contributions of African descendants to Latin America and the Caribbean and recommend national, regional, and international strategies to promote their social inclusion and overcome racism and racial discrimination.

The International Year for People of African Descent represents a new momentum. But it will not exhaust our commitments. They will linger on, as long as we have groups treated differently within our countries. In light of this, I wish to stress that an effective system of protection against racism and racial discrimination requires improving coordination among human rights mechanisms. Herein I acknowledge the relevance of the Durban Follow-up mechanisms, the need to enhance their performance and provide necessary means for the discharge of their mandates.

Mr. Chairman,

The fight against racism is a joint endeavor of humanity. It is a fight not to be forsaken. One cannot expect others to understand his/her plights when one ignores the painful reality of others. Whatever has been said in this meeting or about this meeting consensual outcome will not belittle the extraordinary achievement of the Durban Conference that made the combat of racism a primary responsibility of the state.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.