



# IRELAND

Statement by

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Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade

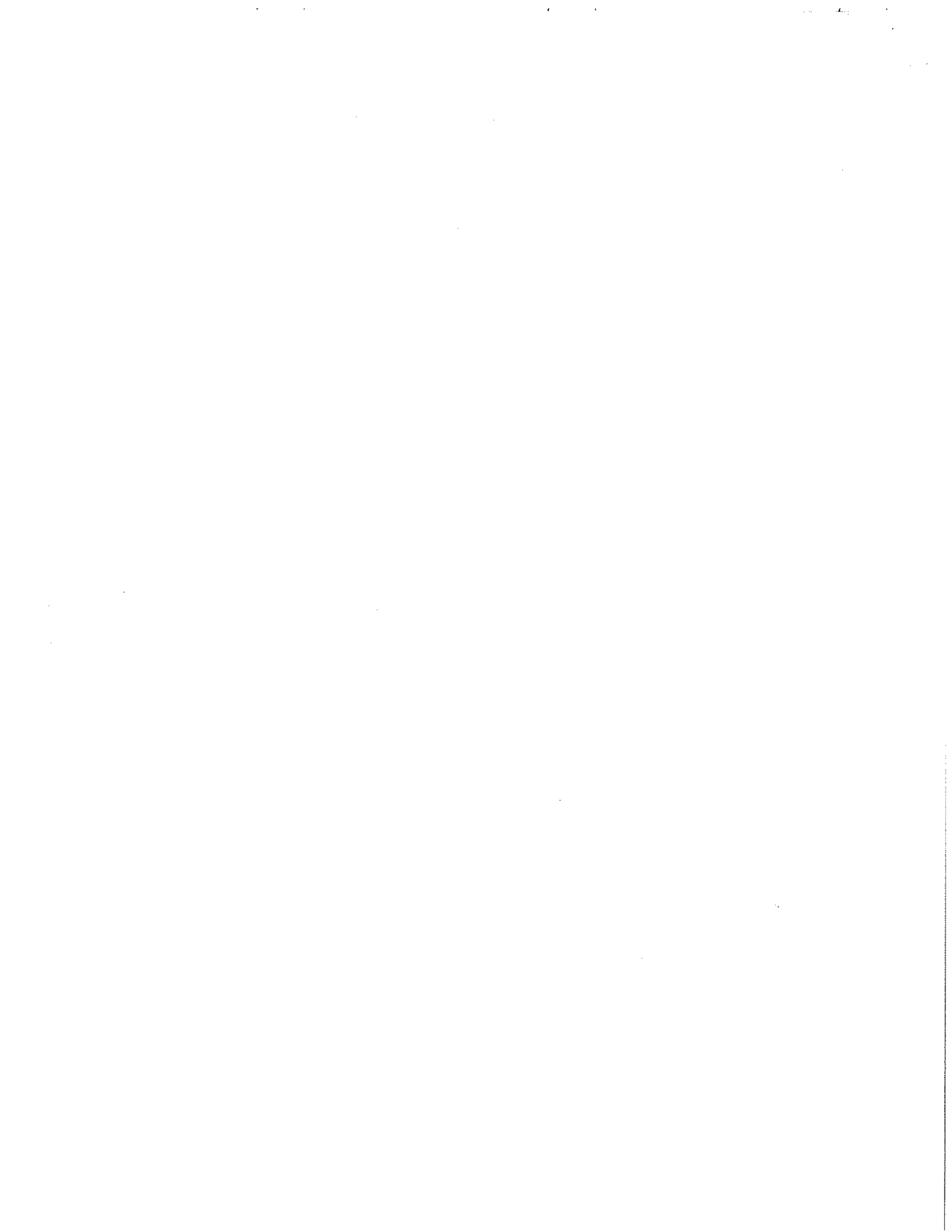
at the

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

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Co-Chairs,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action which was adopted ten years ago under the chairmanship of Mary Robinson, as Secretary General of the World Conference on Racism, together with the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination provide a comprehensive framework for combating racism, racial intolerance, xenophobia and related intolerance.

People in all parts of the world continue to suffer discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, descent, nationality or ethnic origin. It is the duty and challenge of the United Nations and its member States to lead the way in working towards societies free of inequalities and discrimination. I firmly believe that States must, in order to combat the roots of racism and discrimination, ensure that their legislative systems provide adequate and effective guarantees of freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief to all people without distinction. Ireland is deeply concerned about the growth of religious intolerance, including instances of Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and Christianophobia and will continue to work for the eradication of all forms of religious intolerance at both the international and national levels in order to protect all people from discrimination.

Ireland is firmly committed to the principle of non-discrimination, as set out in the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination. We look forward to the universal ratification of this important Convention. We also recognise the important work of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and I am proud that for the first time, this Committee has as a member an independent expert from Ireland - Anastasia Crickley. Ireland had a constructive review by the Committee earlier this year and the concluding observations included some very positive suggestions and recommendations which my Government is working towards implementing.

My Government condemns racism in all its forms. While Ireland can be rightly proud of its achievements in relation to combating racism and related intolerances we are not complacent. We will continue to promote a tolerant and inclusive Ireland free from racism, intolerance and discrimination. Ireland created a National Action Plan against Racism in fulfilment of the

commitment in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. This Action Plan covered the period 2005-2008 and demonstrated the Irish people's commitment to tackling racism, as a cornerstone of our integration, diversity management and societal cohesion policy more generally. Under the plan, intercultural strategies were developed in key sectors such as Policing, Health and Education and these strategies continue to be implemented. This round table meeting today can be an important opportunity to share information and good practice in protecting and assisting victims of racism.

Even through these difficult economic times, the objective of promoting and protecting human rights can and must be realised. Ireland recognises the importance of education and awareness campaigns as the key to building long lasting, sustainable and mutually respectful multicultural societies and we are cognisant of the need to support civil society nationally and internationally.

Ladies and gentlemen, Ireland's commitment to combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance is built on a solid foundation of partnership and cooperation with all social partners and civil society, buttressed by an effective State, and effective state institutions. While there is no doubt that significant challenges lie ahead, it is precisely at moments like these that we must be particularly vigilant, in standing up for our citizens' individual human rights and inalienable freedoms, such as the right to live free from racism and related intolerances.