

AGENDA ITEM 5 : OBJECTIVES

Madame President,

As this is the first time we are taking the floor, the South African delegation would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of this important body. We believe that your credentials and achievements in the area of human rights would no doubt enrich your leadership of the preparatory process leading to the Durban Review Conference in 2009. Please be assured of South Africa's full support in this regard. We would also like to express our appreciation to the High Commissioner, Madame Louise Arbour, for her inspiring statement this morning.

My delegation aligns itself with the earlier statement by Egypt, as coordinator for human rights for the African Group, as well as the Statement by Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In addressing agenda item 5, we emphasise that UN General Assembly, at its 61st Session in resolution 61/149, decided to convene in 2009 a Review Conference on the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) of the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance that was held in Durban, South Africa in 2001. The Human Rights Council in its resolution 3/2 decided to act as a Preparatory Committee for this process and concentrate on the implementation of the DDPA, including further actions, initiatives and practical solutions for combating all the contemporary scourges of racism. The HRC resolution also decided that the Durban Review Conference will be undertaken on the basis of and with full respect for the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and that there will be no re-negotiation of the existing agreements contained therein.

We believe that the basis for the objectives of this Review Conference should emanate from both these resolutions. In assessing or reviewing the implementation of Durban, it is important to contextualise the world since 2001 as there have been dynamic changes. We express serious concern at the resurgence of racism and discrimination, and thus the Review Conference cannot ignore the contemporary scourges of racism and the measures to address these.

Madam President,

Contributions by stakeholders are important in elaborating on the objectives for the Durban Review Conference and we support the broadest participation for non-governmental organisations. The Durban Conference in 2001 had established important follow-up mechanisms and we believe that their reports and recommendations, including the conclusions of the Committee on the Elimination of Racism (CERD) and the Human Rights Council's Special Mechanisms are of critical importance.

We emphasise that the Review Conference should:

- Contextualise the world since 2001 and take cognisance of the emerging trends, especially those following the events of 9/11 and the subsequent fight against terrorism;
- Identify contemporary scourges of racism, e.g. racial profiling in the fight against terrorism; incitement to religious hatred;
- Review or assess the implementation of the DDPA;
- Identify both challenges and constraints with regard to implementation;
- Highlight achievements by countries in an effort to share international best practices;
- Formulate actions to eliminate all the contemporary scourges of racism.

In elaborating on these objectives we urge all delegations to display the necessary political will and to bear in mind the ultimate objective, that of making a tangible change in the lives of the victims of racism and intolerance.

I thank you.

27 Aug 07