

**Intervention by Ambassador Elchin Amirbayov, Permanent Representative of  
Azerbaijan to the UNOG in Geneva**

**Sixth session of the Human Rights Council  
Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on Defamation of Religions and the  
report of the Preparatory Committee of the Durban Review Conference  
25.09.2007, Geneva**

Let me first of all align myself with the intervention made by Pakistan on behalf of the OIC.

My delegation also thanks the High Commissioner for her report on combating defamation of religions.

We express our deep concern over the growing and alarming tendency worldwide of incidents intolerance and discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. These alarming phenomena continue leading, in particular, to increasing instances of Islamophobia and stereotyping of Muslims. The report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to the current session of the Council is yet another proof to the above-mentioned. Last year's unfortunate frivolous publication and republication of notorious caricatures in several European mass media, while inciting religious hatred and undesirable tensions have in the meantime highlighted the urgent need of developing cooperative and effective methods of combating defamation of religions.

We share the recommendation in the report, and Azerbaijan has stated this on many occasions, that inter-religious and intra-religious dialogue is indeed crucial for the prevention of intolerance and discrimination and for promoting respect for religions and beliefs. Again, we have to keep fresh in mind controversy of the last year and its serious consequences in order not to repeat this kind of unfortunate incidents in the future. Such kinds of incidents have an adverse affect to our global efforts to create an atmosphere for dialogue among civilizations and various cultures.

The minimum prerequisite for harmonious coexistence is that different civilizations and traditions recognize and mutually respect each other's cultural differences. We need an approach that understands importance to preserve and respect differences as enriching elements instead of abandoning them to create fertile ground for enmity and hatred.

We believe strong and unequivocal message should be sent by the Council against religious and racial hatred and today's discussion should be conducive to devising a concrete set of measures to put to an end to religious and racial profiling.

Dialogue should not be merely for the sake of dialogue but must lead to a concrete outcome.

As for the report of the Preparatory Committee of the Durban Review Conference, my delegation reiterates that Azerbaijan considers the upcoming Durban Review Conference as a very important and timely event that would, in our opinion, provide good opportunity not only for in-depth review of the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, but also for addressing the contemporary forms and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, so widespread all over the world.

Therefore, we believe that Durban Review Conference while having its primary focus on the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action should also dwell upon further actions, initiatives and practical solutions for addressing all contemporary manifestations of the racism and racial discrimination as stated in the Human Rights Council's resolution 3/2.

I thank you.