

**HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**  
**Geneva, 26 June, 2006**

Consideration of the report of the intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

***Joint NGO Statement by International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations (ISMUN), Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Interfaith International, Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples MRAP)***

*Presented by Jan Lönn, ISMUN*

As non-governmental organisations who campaigned for the decision to be taken to hold the World Conference Against Racism and actively participated in its preparatory work and proceedings we are pleased to see the Human Rights Council deliberate on some aspects of the follow up to Durban at an early stage of its work.

The World Conference Against Racism adopted an important Declaration and Programme of Action which contain profound analyses of the causes and manifestations of racism and commitments by UN Member States for concrete measures to curb the scourge of racism in their societies and at the global scale.

While important follow up activities have been undertaken both in the United Nations and at the national level we believe that implementation of the Durban agreements have been weak and not received sufficient global attention. And unfortunately the Durban final document has become the least known among final documents from UN World Conferences.

It is with great alarm that today we are witnessing an upsurge of racism in many countries as a result of neglect to address root causes and institutionalised racism. Racism is taking an increasingly violent form in many countries, in particular attacks on people of African descent. It is regrettable that this negative development is taking place after that the World Conference Against Racism had given high priority to addressing racist practices that were rooted in historical wrongs and injustices.

The struggle against racism has been on the agenda of the UN since its early days. It is now 60 years since the matter of racism in South Africa was first included in the agenda of the UN General Assembly. The combined efforts of the people of South Africa, the United Nations and world public opinion finally led to the end of Apartheid. In observing 60 years of UN action against racism we should take the success of the joint efforts against Apartheid as an inspiration for a renewed and strengthened effort to combat racism.

We strongly believe that implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action of the Durban conference must be given high priority in the work of the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly during 2006. The tradition and practice of five year reviews of important UN conferences and programmes must apply also to the World Conference Against Racism.

We call on the Human Rights Council to decide on holding a special session or special segment on Durban review at its September session and for a recommendation to be made to the General Assembly to hold a special plenary meeting on implementation of the Durban agreements.