

Madam Chairperson,

I am making this statement on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

We welcome the statements made by you and the High Commissioner for Human Rights that provide inspiration and guidance to the member states for the job ahead during this session of the PrepCom. The OIC, which has remained constructively engaged with the review process, hopes that this Session will build upon the work done so far.

The High Commissioner's remarks on the Durban Review Conference today and during her opening statement in the 9<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council are thoughtful and encouraging. We hope that member states will give due consideration to her call that active participation by all would benefit the process and maximize protections for the victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. .

We also thank members of the Bureau and the Anti-Discrimination Unit of the Office for their consistent hard work in preparing for this session in particular and the review conference in general. The Bureau's constructive engagement is helpful in preparing well for the conference. Being the last Prepcom, our efforts should be to get the best out of this session.

The OIC has submitted a substantive input which reflects the commitment of its membership to the objectives of the Conference.

We would also like to express our appreciation for the successful holding of two regional preparatory conferences by the Latin American and African regions. The outcomes of these meetings present a diversity of views. These will enrich the outcome of the Conference. While the Asian Group input is being finalized, we hope the remaining groups will also come up with their contributions expressing their solidarity and commitment to the objectives of the Conference.

Our appreciation also goes to the Armenian Ambassador for performing his mandated task by presenting both a report of the ISWG as well as a document which will be a basis of negotiations. We hope further useful contributions and a spirit of accommodation during the negotiations will lead to a successful outcome document.

Participation of civil society in the preparatory process is important. The OIC has always upheld the widest possible participation of civil society in the preparatory process. All victims must be able to share and contribute their experiences to the process. Their experiences will enable us to devise counter strategies.

The availability of sufficient funding for the Review Conference is critical. The absence of resources not only affect the participation of civil society but also question the commitment of the international community to this elimination of the scourge of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. We would like to echo the call made by the African Group to the Secretary General and High Commissioner to ensure provision of requisite funding for this Conference. We welcome those member states who have made contributions to the Conference and encourage others to do so, on priority.

Madam Chairperson,

As we start our work, we must not lose sight of our core objective. We have to conduct a review of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in 2001. This includes implementation of the DDPA.

It would be wrong to say that there has been no progress in the implementation of DDPA. However, the bigger wrong would be to hide behind marginal progress and avoid addressing issues which are still pending or have come up after the adoption of DDPA in 2001. Intellectual and political resistance to multiculturalism is one of the root causes of the resurgence of racist and xenophobic violence. Rejection of diversity has led to the negation of the very humanity of the immigrants, foreigners and minorities. The most serious manifestation of racism is the democratic legitimization of racism and xenophobia in the guise of defending 'national identity or preference'.

The outcome of the Review Conference must provide a comprehensive protection mechanism to all the victims including those who have suffered the wrath of war on terror in terms of racio-religious profiling and its consequential incitement to racio-religious hatred. Additional complementary instruments to the International Covenant on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination could fill the existing gaps and reinforce the protection regime in this regard.

Despite serious concerns raised by a number of countries and resolutions passed both by the Council and the General Assembly, national and international response to deal with the challenge of defamation of religions, particularly Islam have remained insufficient. This new and insidious form of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance should be addressed by the Durban Review Conference.

Under the agreed format and structure, the outcome document of the Review Conference, must include: a) enhanced focus on international and regional cooperation and dialogue to put the fight against racism on the global agenda; b) availability of effective international legal and judicial mechanisms for provision of justice to the victims; c) effective implementation of national plans envisaging tougher laws and legal assistance to the victims of racial discrimination; d) suggest concrete measures to address the continued plight and suffering of the Palestinian people and non-recognition of their inalienable right to self-determination; e) ways to fight new forms of racism and racial discrimination, including incitement to racial and religious intolerance; racial profiling and stereotyping in the fight against terrorism; and rejection of diversity and multiculturalism; f) More investment in educational and awareness raising measures; and g) effective and optimal use of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

Our differences of opinion notwithstanding, we must be united in our common fight. We must deliberate collectively to address all forms of intolerance in any part of the world and on whatever basis such practices are justified. All concerns should be squarely confronted and resolved to ensure successful outcome of the process we have initiated.

The OIC has always upheld the principles of dialogue and constructive engagement. Guided by the single concern of addressing the plight of victims of racism, we are confident that the collective wisdom of the membership and their constructive engagement will achieve the desired results.

I thank you.