



STATEMENT

BY

DR GJ MTSHALI
PERAMENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SOUTH AFRICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON

CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE
INTER-GOVERNMENTAL WORKING GROUP ON
THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
DURBAN DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME OF
ACTION

GENEVA

26 JUNE 2006

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Mr President,

South Africa is honoured to present this statement on the "Consideration of the Report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration Programme of Action".

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action provides a comprehensive plan aimed at combating and eliminating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, which remain the blight of humanity and a major challenge of our times.

Unfortunately, five years following the third World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, South Africa is concerned that the follow-up to the Conference has proven to be a slow process and the political will to implement the commitments the international community undertook in Durban, is sorely lacking.

The elimination of racism, racial discrimination and related intolerance is a responsibility of all human society. We would therefore wish to see the Human Rights Council seized with the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, in an effort to combat past manifestations and contemporary forms of racial discrimination.

The establishment of the mechanisms to follow-up on the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action namely, the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent and the Independent Eminent Experts, including the Special Rapporteur on Racism, set the tone for the international community to advance the global anti-racism and anti-discrimination agenda. We therefore call upon Member States to continue to support and implement the work of all these mechanisms.

To this end, my delegation calls on the Human Rights Council to adopt the report of the Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. We also call on the Council to extend the mandate of the Inter-governmental working Group on the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action for a three- year period.

My delegation looks forward to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in close consultations with regional groups, select five highly qualified experts to undertake a study on the issue of gaps to the existing international instruments to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. It is our belief that the study should produce concrete recommendations for the drafting of a new protocol to the International Convention on the Elimination of the All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Mr President

South Africa welcomes the proposal by the Independent Eminent Experts to develop a Racial Equality Index to measure the strides that the International Community is making in its anti-discrimination agenda.

We likewise commend the same experts on their proposal to establish a Durban + 5 Review Mechanism. The adoption of a review process should provide the international community with an opportunity to take stock of the Durban commitments as well as to further strategize in the global fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

For its part, the South African Government held a National Conference against Racism on 15 December 2005, with the aim of taking stock on how far we have progressed towards the transformation of South Africa into a truly non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society.

My Government will continue to pursue policies that provide for a society based on justice and equality for all. To this end, we view the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action playing an instructive role in the re-ordering of our society.

I thank you.