



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA DELIVERED BY H.E. MR. VIRACHAI PLASAI, AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 66: ELIMINATION OF RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE, AT THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 1 November 2016)

Madame Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda Item 66: Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

2. At the outset, the Group of 77 and China wish to thank the Secretary-General for his reports submitted under this agenda item and all the distinguished speakers for their comprehensive reports and presentations.

Madame Chair,

3. The Group of 77 and China are deeply concerned about the alarming resurgence of all scourges of racism in our societies. In the past half century, efforts have been made to eliminate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, but regrettably, historical and new forms of injustices persist in all walks of life. Prejudice and hatred against people of a different race, religion, or social status continue to afflict our communities and societies.

4. In light of this, the Group of 77 and China reaffirm that the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, the outcomes of the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the 2009 Durban Review Conference, remain the fundamental frameworks for the effective elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

5. Although we have seen some progress in this area since the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) 15 years ago, we must admit that it is not enough. Given the persistent challenges, we must translate words into serious and concrete actions. In the same vein, it is also imperative that the UN Human Rights system remain seized of this matter.

Madame Chair,

6. The Group of 77 and China also wish to emphasise, as we have done time and time again, that resolute and reinvigorated political will at the national, regional and international levels is indispensable in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in all its forms and manifestations. We recognise the need for the Group of Independent Eminent Experts to carry out their role in mobilising such political will, and in this regard the Group of 77 and China see the urgency in filling the existing vacancies by the end of March 2017, in order to ensure its full functionality.

7. The Group of 77 and China also express their grave concern over the growing incitement of hatred and intolerance as well as racial profiling and negative stereotyping based on a person's religion, belief, language or culture. Everyone is born free and equal in dignity and rights, and has

the potential to contribute constructively to the development and well-being of his or her society, wherever he or she chooses to be. The situation of migrants who often become victims of exploitation, xenophobia and discrimination is also of serious concern to the Group.

8. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China reaffirm the critical role of education and the sharing of experiences. We need to focus more on correcting misperceptions and fostering interfaith and intercultural dialogue and tolerance of and appreciation for cultural, ethnic and religious diversities, as well as raising global awareness about different cultures and religions. This is especially important among young people, given the new ways of disseminating messages of racism and racial discrimination.

Madame Chair,

9. The Group of 77 and China would like to express their deep appreciation for the continuing work of the existing mechanisms mandated to follow up on the implementation of the outcomes of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. We express our appreciation also, to the recently concluded 14th Session of the Intergovernmental Working Group for the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (IGWG), which was held from 5 to 14 October 2016.

10. At the same time, the Group note the lack of progress in the elaboration of complementary standards to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination which are intended to fill existing gaps. In this regard, we wish to emphasise the need to provide these mechanisms with adequate and sustained resources, including by reactivating the Trust Fund for the Programme for the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

Madame Chair,

11. The persistence of racism and racial discrimination is related to past atrocities of conquest, colonialism, the Holocaust, slavery and other forms of forced servitude which have led to deepening social and economic inequality, which continue to affect people of African descent today. It is important that racism eradication efforts provide for appropriate reparation or redress.

12. The Group of 77 and China welcome the unveiling of "The Arc of Remembrance" on 25 March 2015, in honour of the victims of slavery, slave trade and the transatlantic slave trade. The Permanent Memorial will serve to remind us and future generations that such inhumane treatment in that tragic chapter of history should never be allowed to occur ever again.

Madame Chair,

13. Following the practice of previous sessions, this year the Group of 77 and China will again table a resolution on "Global efforts for the total elimination of racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of the follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action". We look forward to valuable contribution and support of all Member States and hope that this important resolution will be adopted by consensus.

14. In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China reaffirm their commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action and the outcome of 2009 Durban Review Conference in order to eliminate all forms of discrimination as it hinders the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms of millions of people around the world. Let us tackle these challenges and fulfill our aspirations to achieve a truly inclusive society where no one is left behind and where everyone lives in peaceful coexistence.

I thank you.

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