



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. MR. PETER THOMSON, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 67: "ELIMINATION OF RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE", AT THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 4 November 2013)

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 67: Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.
2. We thank the Secretary-General for the reports submitted under this agenda item. We are also thankful for Mr. Mutuma RUTEERE, the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, for his comprehensive report and presentation this morning.
3. Our thanks also to Ms. Shepherd, Chair of the Working Group on People of African Descent for her report and to Mr. Anton Katz, Chair of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries.
4. The Group of 77 welcomes the convening of the 11th session of the Intergovernmental Working Group for the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (IGWG) that was held from 7 to 18 October, 2013 in Geneva.
5. We take note of the recommendations and also of the progress and the steps taken at national and regional levels to advance the implementation of the Durban Conference and Plan of Action, as well as the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference, which constitutes the most comprehensive international framework in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and for the strengthening of the follow-up mechanisms.
6. The Group welcomes the proclamation of the International Decade of People of African Descent at the 68th Session of the UNGA; and welcomes recent efforts on the elaboration of complementary standards to strengthen and update international instruments on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance in full support of the full and effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. We urge States to cooperate in the context of the Ad Hoc Committee on Complementary Standards towards the acceleration and fulfillment of its mandate.
7. The Group believes that with the mobilization of political will at the national, regional and international levels to effectively implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, as well as the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference, by our Governments, in concert with all stakeholders, we will be able to truly combat and curb the scourge of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in all spheres of life and in all parts of the world, including all those under foreign occupation.

Mr. Chairman,

8. We are seriously concerned about and reject racial profiling and negative stereotyping against persons based on their religions or belief and the increase in incidents related to religious hatred. We therefore reiterate the call, on Member States, the United Nations system and the international community to oppose religious intolerance and to enhance dialogue with the aim of mutual understanding, promoting tolerance and respect of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity as critical in combating the scourge of racism.

9. The situation of migrants that become victims of exploitation, xenophobia and discrimination is also of serious concern to the Group. On this note, we reaffirm the call for the elimination of laws and administrative means that discriminate against migrants due to their nationality and stimulate the trafficking of persons and unsafe and unregulated migrations.

Mr. Chairman,

10. It is widely known that the persistence of racism and racial discrimination is related to past atrocities from conquest, colonialism, the Holocaust, slavery and other forms of forced servitude. The legacy of slavery in particular, is at the heart of situations of profound social and economic inequality which continue to affect people of African descent. It is important that the fight against racism should recognise the social and economic dimensions of the injustices of the past and seek to redress them appropriately.

11. This continued struggle against racism and racial discrimination must be based on human solidarity and waged through cooperation, partnership and inclusion, needless to say, at all levels. At the national level, equal participation of all individuals and peoples in the formation of just, equitable, democratic and inclusive societies continues to be an absolute necessity.

Mr. Chairman,

12. The Group warmly welcomes the recent designation of South Africa as the facilitator for the consultative process for the proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent, as per Resolution 67/155. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China will galvanise all necessary efforts and work closely with partners with a view to approving the long overdue resolution on the International Decade of People of African Descent. The proclamation of the Decade by the United Nations is an important step towards a long and necessary path, which is the broad education of the public, in order to raise awareness against prejudice, intolerance and racism.

Mr. Chairman,

13. We need more than the promulgation of necessary and adequate legislation and establishment and strengthening of requisite institutions and structures in the legislative, judicial, administrative, and educational and information fields. The redoubling of efforts at all levels is without a doubt needed with a reinvigorated political will and action to eradicate this ghastly phenomenon.

14. We again reaffirm the critical role that education plays at all levels to promote understanding among all peoples in this abhorrent war against racism and racial discrimination. It should be considered as a significant means of creating awareness at all levels of society, particularly among young people and more so in our day and age, with regard to the new forms of racism and racial discrimination.

Mr. Chairman,

15. The Group calls on the resuscitation of the work of the Independent Eminent Experts and their central role in mobilizing the necessary political will required for the successful implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

16. We call on Member States to continue to share best practices and national experiences and in this regard we welcome the recently launched database containing information on practical means to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance developed by the UN Human Rights Office. We anticipate this as a way of also catalyzing partnerships at the global level as it requires strengthened concerted efforts from the international community and all stakeholders.

Mr. Chairman,

17. Following the practice of previous sessions, the Group of 77 will table a resolution on the 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 are looking forward to the valuable contribution and support of all Member States and we hope that this important resolution will be adopted by consensus.

18. In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China reaffirms its 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 that hinder the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms of millions of people around the world.

I thank you.