



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY
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THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON AGENDA
ITEM 65: COMPREHENSIVE IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE
DURBAN DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION, IN THE THIRD
COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 6 November 2006)**

Chairperson,

It is my honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 65(a) on the Elimination of racism and racial discrimination and agenda item 65(b) on the Comprehensive Follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

The Group of 77 and China welcomes the reports of the Secretary General under this agenda item and the useful information and recommendations contained therein. We are pleased to note that Governments have taken various important steps at the national level to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Unfortunately, much more remains to be done. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance continue to bedevil the human race. The Third World Conference against Racism, in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, elaborated the steps that are necessary to bring to a close this sad chapter in the history of humankind.

Regrettably, the lack of political will to advance the global anti-racism, anti-discrimination agenda as expressed in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action continues to hamper the effective combating of racism and its attendant scourges.

The Group of 77 and China is concerned that such political inaction gives comfort to and fuels dangerous political platforms that pander to racist and xenophobic tendencies in national election manifestos. The implementation of the commitments that the international community undertook in Durban in 2001 has thus given way to political expedience, the result of which is the resurgence of racism in many parts of the world.

In view of the current global challenge that racism and racial discrimination pose, it is time for decisive action. The commitment of each State to combat racism and its attendant ills is now a matter of priority.

It is in this regard that during the current session of the General Assembly, the Group of 77 and China will be calling for the adoption of a Durban review process. Such a process would bring the World Conference against Racism in line with other major UN conferences and thus focus on the realities of present-day racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. We trust that this session of the General Assembly will adopt such a mechanism as proposed by the G77 in its draft resolution on the subject.

The Group of 77 and China expresses appreciation for the report of the Special Rapporteur, on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The Group expresses its full support for the work of the Special Rapporteur, Mr Doudou Diene, and we urge all Member States to continue to cooperate fully with him.

Chairperson

The upsurge in intolerance following the events of 11 September 2001 is a worrisome phenomenon. It is regrettable that the fight against terrorism has been equated with Islam, which has given rise to racial and religious intolerance. This has manifested itself in new forms of discrimination and xenophobia against Muslim and Arab peoples.

Within this political climate and under the guise of fighting terrorism, we have witnessed religious intolerance masquerading as freedom of expression and an assault on human rights. The Group of 77 and China therefore calls upon the international community to make all efforts to combat all forms of defamation of religions. The Group also believes that while freedom of expression remains a valuable component of a democratic society, its exercise should not infringe on the rights of others.

Chairperson,

Sport is an important means of promoting social integration and friendly relations amongst nations. The fact that racism in sport remains a blight on our societies is unfortunate.

We concur with the findings of the Special Rapporteur that International sporting bodies should be encouraged to implement and expand programmes to combat racism in sport, in particular racism in football. It is hoped that these programmes will be implemented in due course and will enjoy the full support of Governments. Further to this, it is hoped that FIFA, in line with GA Resolution A/RES/60/144 will continue its efforts to promote "a world of sport free from racism and racial discrimination", by incorporating a robust theme on non-racism in football.

Chairperson,

In the year 2007 we will commemorate the ending of the slave trade in the British Empire. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade marked the histories of the former colonies and its consequences are still present in both African nations and Western Hemisphere countries. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action declare that the legacies of the past such as slavery, the slave trade and other forms of servitude need to be addressed. Therefore, the Group of 77 and China supports the proposal by CARICOM for the General Assembly to declare a day to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China is fully committed to the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Furthermore, we support the work of the Inter-Governmental Working Group on the Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent and the Group of Independent Eminent Experts. We therefore encourage the full implementation of the outcomes and recommendations of these Working Groups.

The human race cannot afford to stand by whilst racism, racial discrimination, Xenophobia and related intolerance continue unabated. The Durban commitments provide an action plan to eliminate these scourges.

Chairperson,

The Group of 77 and China therefore calls upon the international community to summon the political will to making the Durban Programme of Action a living document through its full and effective implementation.

I thank you.