

Statement by Ambassador Adriana Pulido, Deputy Permanent Representative of Venezuela to the United Nations, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, on agenda item 107: Racism and Racial Discrimination

New York, 23 October 2002

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I have the honor to address the question of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related intolerance.

Mr. Chairman,

A year has passed since the historical gathering in which our Heads of State and Government committed themselves further to the struggle against all forms and manifestations of racism. Indeed, the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa, constitutes a watershed in the efforts of the international community in fighting this scourge.

During that year, considerable work has been put into the implementation phase of the outcome of the World Conference. The first significant step towards the full implementation of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action was the endorsement it received from the General Assembly early this year. In that occasion, it was also recognized that the Durban outcome constitutes a solid foundation for further action and initiatives in the global struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Such foundation has been the framework within which actions of the international community on these endeavors have followed.

Mr. Chairman,

Another, equally important step towards the full and effective implementation of the Durban Program of Action, was the adoption of resolution 2002/68 of 25 April 2002, by the Commission on Human Rights entitled "Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance". This resolution contains specific provisions that will contribute further to the implementation of the outcome of Durban.

One such specific provision relates to the establishment of an intergovernmental Working Group mandated with the task of formulating recommendations on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action and to prepare complementary international standards to strengthen and update international instruments against racism.

It was also decided to establish a Working Group of five independent eminent experts to work on the question of people of African descent. This Working Group is to meet for two sessions of five working days each prior to the fifty-ninth session of the Commission in order to study the problems of racial discrimination faced by people of African descent living in the Diaspora, and to propose measures to ensure full and effective access to the justice system by people of African descent. Similarly, it will submit recommendations on the design, implementation and enforcement of effective measures to eliminate racial profiling of people of African descent, and will elaborate short-, medium- and long-term proposals for elimination of racial discrimination against such people, including proposals for a mechanism to monitor and promote all their human rights.

This Working Group will consist of five experts nominated by all regional groups. We have, however, noted the delay in the appointment of the experts by two of the regional groups, thus putting at risk the commencement of the work of the Working Group. The Group of 77 and China would like to appeal to those regional groups that have not yet done so, to appoint their representatives in the Working Group so as to

enable it to fulfill its mandate in a timely manner.

Mr. Chairman,

There is no doubt that the success of the Durban Program of Action requires both, political will and adequate funding at the national, regional and international levels, as well as international cooperation. In this context, the Commission on Human Rights decided to establish a voluntary fund to provide, among other things, additional resources for the effective implementation of the Declaration and Program of Action, and at the same time it strongly appealed to all Governments and relevant organizations and individuals in a position to do so to contribute generously to the Trust Fund for the Program of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. The Group of 77 and China echoes this appeal.

Mr. Chairman,

As the Third Decade to combat Racism and Racial Discrimination comes to an end in the year 2003, it is unfortunate that the objectives of its Program of Action have largely not been achieved, thus allowing the scourge of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, to negatively affect the lives of millions of people around the world.

Still, we are confident that these objectives will continue to receive the attention of the international community in the context of the overall process of implementation of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action.

The Group of 77 and China deems it appropriate to undertake an evaluation of the achievements, as well as the obstacles encountered, in implementing the commitments of the Third Decade's Program of Action. In this vein, it would be useful to count on the analytical report requested from the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the extent of implementation of the Program of Action for the Third Decade prior to its ending in 2003. It would also be valuable to get a detailed review from the Commission on Human Rights on this issue, and to transmit its recommendations on further actions to the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

In our statement early this year, the G77 and China alluded to the importance of the collective understanding of the phenomenon of racism and racial discrimination that the Durban Conference amply provided us with. We would like to repeat here that this collective understanding and appreciation of the origins and contributing factors to the phenomenon of racism should enable us to adapt our institutional frameworks for the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, including their new and emerging forms. At the global level, it is essential for the international community to devote itself to the promotion of a culture of harmony and peace, based on equal dignity and worth of all human beings, justice and tolerance within and between communities and nations. This should be considered as a global campaign, cognizant of diversity, and geared to the promotion and enhancement of mutual understanding and sharing.

We fully concur with the assertion made by the former Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Mr. Maurice Glèlè-Ahanhanzo, in his report when he says that: "The Durban Declaration and Program of Action contains all the elements necessary for a mobilization of efforts and the taking of effective action against the evils concerned. It is our duty to ensure that the text does not remain a dead letter but instead becomes living testimony of the steadfastness of the international community's struggle against such archaisms in the twenty-first century as racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. It is imperative that everyone everywhere, without any distinction, through education and in all humility, should internalize human rights, especially the equal

dignity of the human person, and should practice them in his or her daily life in social relationships, at both the national and the international levels.”

The Group of 77 and China reaffirms its unequivocal commitment to the realization of the vision outlined in the final outcome of the World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. We stand willing and ready to cooperate, in good faith and in the most constructive manner, with the rest of the international community and all stakeholders, at all levels, towards achieving the full implementation of the Durban outcome.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.