U.S. Explanation of Vote on a Third Committee Resolution on the Follow-Up to the Durban Declaration and Program of Action

Timothy Johnson  
U.S. Adviser for the Third Committee  
New York, New York  
November 16, 2023

<https://usun.usmission.gov/explanation-of-vote-on-a-third-committee-resolution-on-the-follow-up-to-the-durban-declaration-and-program-of-action/>

AS DELIVERED

Thank you Chair.

We thank our colleagues from the Republic of South Africa for their efforts on this and similar texts. The United States is profoundly committed to eliminating racial discrimination and combatting racism, xenophobia, and all other forms of intolerance at home and abroad.

Part of that commitment has been an effort to openly and honestly confront the legacies of slavery and associated injustices that continue to reverberate to the present day in forms of entrenched and institutionalized racism in the United States and around the world.

Last year, the United States presented its most recent periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which detailed our actions to address racial and ethnic discrimination domestically. Within the past two years, we have invited three separate independent UN mechanisms to the United States to review conditions and make recommendations to further our efforts to address racial inequities: the Special Rapporteur on Minorities, the Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement, and, just this month, the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism.

We deeply regret, however, that we could not support this resolution. As in past years, we remain concerned by its unreserved endorsement of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action, which endorses overly broad restrictions on freedom of expression that are incompatible with our Constitution and contains elements that we consider to be antisemitic in applying double standards that single out the State of Israel. Particularly in view of the dangerous tensions precipitated by the conflict in Gaza, we believe it is more important than ever to be assiduously careful to avoid stoking any appearance of antisemitism or Islamophobia.

For these reasons, we voted against this year’s resolution. Despite our longstanding concerns about the DDPA, however, we are fully supportive of other elements of this resolution,

including its endorsement of the important work of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent. We also fully support its call for a second Decade for People of African Descent, and we are eager to work with our colleagues from all regions on this and other important efforts to address racism and racial injustice throughout the world.

Thank you.