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REPRESENTATIVE OF PAKISTAN

OIC Comments on the report by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, 11 June 2007

Mr. President

I have the honour to make these comments on behalf of the OIC, on the report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

We would like to thank the Special Rapporteur for another courageous report. He has, once again not shied away from addressing the worrying trends of racism and xenophobia.

Mr. Doudou Diene has been extremely forthright in highlighting contemporary manifestations of racism and reasons of this phenomenon. To quote some:

- The most serious manifestation in the campaign against racism is the shift from words to action as reflected in the resurgence of the racist violence and democratic legitimization of racism and xenophobia.
- Intellectual and political resistance to multiculturalism as one of the root causes of the resurgence of racist and xenophobic violence.
- Rejection of diversity has, inter alia, led to the negation of the very humanity of the immigrant, foreigners or asylum seekers because of their diversity.
- Intolerance and rejection of diversity, have led to the defamation of religions, particularly Islamophobia.
- Growing expression of the elitist racism and xenophobia.
- The ominous trends of a hierarchical interpretation of fundamental freedoms that ignores the balance and complementarity of such freedoms and the restrictions and limits established by the relevant international instrument, particularly by giving preference to freedom of expression over all other freedoms, such as freedom of religions.

The OIC also continues to remain concerned about the ominous return to racism and the rise of Islamophobia. We thank the Special Rapporteur for his analysis about the seriousness of Islamophobia which has been egged on by (a) the growing tendency to associate Islam with violence and terrorism; (b) policies and measures that stigmatize or criminalize national or foreign minorities of the Muslim faith; and (c) rejection of diversity and multiculturalism.

The Human Rights Council cannot ignore the alarming signs of regression in efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, particularly the upsurge in racist violence

We urge the Council to undertake measures for the implementation of the recommendations by the Special Rapporteur in order to arrest the phenomena of incitement to hatred, violence and all forms of racism. We urge the Special Rapporteur to continue reporting on this issue and making specific recommendations thereon.

Thank you, Mr. President.