

Philippine Statement

H.E. Erlinda F. Basilio, Permanent Representative of the Philippines

Report of Mr. Doudou Diene, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, on the manifestations of defamation of religions

6th session of the Human Rights Council,

¹⁴
~~13~~ September 2007, ¹²
~~3~~00 pm

Thank you, Mr. President,

We thank Mr. Doudou Diene, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and the ^{Office of the} High Commissioner for their reports on combating defamation of religions.

Mr. Diene's report contains many interesting and important points. Our delegation wishes to focus on the sections in Mr. Diene's report on the universality of the fight against discrimination and his recommendations.

1. We share the concern that the legitimization of racism and religious intolerance in political platforms can pose a serious threat to human rights. In this regard, we view with particular interest Mr. Diene's observation that solidarity between victims of defamation of religions and other forms of discrimination can be a force to overcome negative trends of division and intolerance, by promoting a sense of unity and equality among members of different religions and groups. Instead of the imposition of one identity or faith against another, it is the sharing of memories and collective narratives that would be emphasized through such an approach. As eloquently described in Mr. Diene's report, it would be "a process that transforms the singularity of one's experience into solidarity with the cultural, ethic and

religious experience of other communities." Our delegation believes religious groups, other civil society stakeholders and the media can play vital roles in this connection. We would encourage governments to partner with religious and civil society groups and the media to develop such mechanisms for promoting solidarity between different religious groups against racism and intolerance.

2. We note that like the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Mr. Diene stresses the importance of the promotion of dialogue between cultures, civilizations and religions. In our statement ~~earlier today~~ ^{yesterday}, our delegation mentioned some of the initiatives the Philippines is undertaking at the local, regional and international levels to promote interfaith dialogue, which we can provide to the Special Rapporteur in written form. However, we would like to ask him a question similar to the one we asked the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief. Since we are interested in seeing the Council develop an initiative on interfaith dialogue – what main human rights elements could be included in such an initiative, and how does he see such an initiative complementing, and not duplicating, existing initiatives listed in part VI of his report?

Thank you, Mr. President.

→ P Finally, we believe that there should be a reasonable balance between freedom of expression on one hand, and freedom ^{and respect} of religion on the other hand. The Philippines believes that no religion or race should ^{even} be ~~disrespected~~; we therefore agree with the rapporteur that incitement to religious and racial hatred and intolerance are unacceptable and must be countered ~~not only in society~~ but in the ^{other} hearts of minds of people through intellectual, ethical, and ^{practical} means.