



*Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zimbabwe
to the United Nations*

STATEMENT

BY

**H. E. BONIFACE G. CHIDYAUSSIKU
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

TO THE

**THIRD COMMITTEE ON AGENDA ITEM 70 (a)
ELIMINATION OF RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA
AND RELATED INTOLERANCE**

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Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zimbabwe to the United Nations – 128 East 56th street. New York, NY. 10022
Tel. (212) 980-9511 – Fax. (212) 308-6705
E-mail: zimbabwe@un.int.org

Mr. Chairman,

Zimbabwe is honoured once again to address the Committee on this important agenda item. My delegation wishes to extend its appreciation for the manner in which you are conducting the deliberations of this committee.

At the outset, let me align my statement with that made by the G77 and China and the one made by SADC on the Elimination of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. I however wish to make the following additional remarks.

Mr Chairman,

When we met in Durban in 2001, we were united in our resolve to ensure that every human being has a right to live in dignity. We were determined to ensure that nobody anywhere should be subjected to the insult and offence of being despised by another/others because of his/her race, colour, nationality, origin and religious beliefs. We were also committed to the realisation of the objective that everyone should enjoy human rights as equals with other human beings, with every right and possibility to determine both their future and destiny of their countries.

Mr Chairman,

Zimbabwe notes with deep concern that racism, xenophobia and related intolerance continue to rear their ugly heads despite what was agreed in Durban. My delegation is further disturbed by the contents of the recent reports of the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination and related intolerance which indicated that racism is still on the rise and endemic in some societies.

Mr Chairman,

We assert that no culture, language or tradition of any people is inferior, deserving of being despised, mocked and destroyed.

Zimbabwe is of the view that all peoples and all nations are entitled to their identity and their national pride. As a people we have known the bitter experience of slavery, colonialism and racism, and we continue to struggle with their effects to date and we will probably do so for a considerable time to come. We are however convinced that eradication of this racist culture is only possible if we unite against attitudes that fan racial hatred.

Mr Chairman,

We note with concern that there is a causal relationship between underdevelopment, marginalisation, social exclusion and economic disparities and poverty on the one hand and racism, oppression and related intolerance on the other. This is apparent in the context of the globalisation process and its adverse impact and effects particularly on developing countries. We however take solace that the international community has accepted that poverty is not a natural human condition but a product of human activity. The international community must therefore muster the political will to fight poverty and attain development for all in order to ensure peace and tranquillity.

Mr. Chairman,

On many occasions, we have spoken of the need to treat the issue of the promotion and protection of human rights for all in a fair and balanced manner. Yet today, we continue to observe the tendency to treat some people or groups of people as having more rights than others. In this regard, Zimbabwe is deeply concerned by the EU's, USA's and CANZ's daily rhetoric and posturing on human rights which they conveniently use to attack some of our countries, yet they are failing dismally to address the manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in their countries.

Mr Chairman,

In Europe and elsewhere, racism towards non- Europeans, and Africans in particular takes subtle as well as violent shapes; such as everyday police brutality, discriminatory legislation and physical lynching by neo - Nazi groups. In addition, there is metaphorical

lynching by the media of those who dare publicly denounce the racial discrimination and the indifference of the authorities towards all these violations.

Furthermore, the European Union members' treatment of migrant workers and members of their families leaves a lot to be desired. Migrants suffer discrimination in their daily exercise of rights, especially economic, social and cultural rights. They are also more vulnerable to physical and psychological abuses and social stigmatisation as well as other degrading acts.

Mr Chairman,

Is it not ironic and sad that here in the USA, the self-proclaimed citadel of the world, there remain two different standards of justice. We speak in particular of the case of the Jena 6 in Louisiana, where 6 young black boys face decades of imprisonment for a schoolyard brawl which arose from them having the audacity to sit under a tree reserved for whites. Just recently, we were shocked when a Ku Klux Klan noose was hanged at the door of a black professor's office at Columbus University, maybe as a reminder to her of what used to happen to people of the professor's race.

In addition, the negligence related to the African - American victims of hurricane Katrina disaster in Louisiana which the whole world saw highlights the dire realities facing tens of millions of African - Americans and other minority groups in the United States. Of the more than 300 000 people in New Orleans who could not be timeously evacuated, the vast majority were blacks. It is impossible to ignore the racism and class issues associated with this natural disaster; yet this is precisely what the Bush Administration did.

Mr Chairman,

More than half of the two million inmates incarcerated in American jails are blacks. This confirms the view that the anti-crime rhetoric of American authorities has a not-too-subtle racial dimension. The projection of crude stereotypes on the link between criminality and black people is apparent. It is hoped that all these racist

manifestations, will be reported on in the next Special Rapporteur's reports.

Mr Chairman,

Canada's history of discrimination has been kept so well hidden that most Canadians do not know that blacks had been refused entry to Canada on the basis of race and ethnicity and that voting rights were denied to aboriginal Canadians. The Canadian state for years chose its immigrants on the basis of racial categorisation, rather than the individual merits of the applicant, with preference given to immigrants of Northern European (especially British) origin over the so-called "black and Asiatic races. Racism is still systematic in Canadian society and racially motivated acts such as violence or segregation of ethno-racial groups are common.

Mr Chairman,

The Australians have unashamedly gone public with their non - preference of dark-skinned refugees in their country. Yet they display a holier than thou attitude on the issue of human rights. On October 3 2007, the Australian Minister for Immigration, Kevin Andrews, was quoted as having said that "Australia will not allow anymore black African refugees into White Australia citing their inability to integrate into a predominantly Anglo-Saxon culture as the reason. We wonder in what way these utterances from self-proclaimed human rights champions help in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Does this not confirm the prevalence of racism in the Australian political culture? In view of time constraints, I chose not to go further in chronicling the systematic racist policies in the treatment of aborigines in Australia and the Maoris in New Zealand as succinct forms of racism.

Mr Chairman

It is very clear that we live in a world where racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance is still in abundance and a lot still has to be done in Europe, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. We deplore the lack of political will within the above countries and others with respect to the implementation of

the follow up to Durban. We urge these countries to guarantee the principle of co- integration contained in the covenant of "living together in esteem of our diversity"; and to see to it that anti-discriminatory provisions in constitutions and legislations are respected.

Mr Chairman,

My delegation wishes to make reference to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination which was set up in Durban to look into the problems of people of African descent in the diaspora and report to the Human Rights Council. We are concerned that since its inception the Committee has not been able to fully carry out its mandate due to inadequate resources. We therefore request that funds be made available to the Special Rapporteur and the Committee to enable them to visit the citadels of racism.

Mr Chairman,

In conclusion, in order to make progress on these issues, the international community must commit itself to the promotion of a culture of harmony, peace, based on equal dignity and worth of all human beings, as well as justice and tolerance between peoples and nations.

I thank you.