



Please check against delivery

Statement

By

Senator Razina Alam

Of Pakistan Delegation

on agenda item

**Elimination of Racism, Racial Discrimination,
Xenophobia and Related Intolerance**

**at the Third Committee of the 62nd session
of the United Nations General Assembly**

7 November 2007

**Statement by Pakistan on behalf of the G77 and China on
Elimination of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related
Intolerance**

Chairperson

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We thank the Secretary General for his reports on this agenda item. We also thank Mr. Doudou Diene, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance for his presentation in the Committee today.

We are pleased to note that Governments have taken various important steps at the national level to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The increased number of communications from Member States, UN bodies and international and regional organizations on efforts to eliminate racism would allow for a more comprehensive assessment of progress in this regard.

Chairperson

Despite the convening of the three United Nations World Conferences against Racism in all its forms and manifestations and progress achieved on many fronts, much more remains to be done to eliminate the scourge of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism has made some important observations in his report (A/62/306) which require our urgent attention:

One: The growing trend of physical violence targeting members of ethnic, cultural and religious communities and the democratic legitimization of racism by some political parties represent a threat to democracy and human rights.

Two: The decline in political and ethical determination to combat racism and discrimination is an alarming feature. Notably, the lack of political will to advance the global anti-racism, anti-discrimination agenda as expressed in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action continues to hamper the effective combating of racism.

Third: The new battlegrounds in the struggle against discrimination- identity constructs, value systems, images and perceptions- require that legal strategies to combat racism be accompanied by an ethical and cultural strategy to identify and combat the root causes of old and new manifestations of racism and xenophobia.

Fourth: Specific and urgent policies are required to combat racism in sports and resurgence of racism and xenophobia in protecting the human rights of immigrants and asylum seekers as guaranteed by the relevant international instruments.

The Group of 77 and China has noted with concern all the contemporary manifestations of racism as encapsulated in the recent reports of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. We endorse these reports and call upon States to implement the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur which encourage States to adopt measures (legislative, administrative and judicial) to promote peaceful and harmonious co-existence, human dignity and equality.

Chairperson

The upsurge in intolerance following the events of 11 September 2001 is also a worrisome phenomenon. It is regrettable that the fight against terrorism has been equated with Islam, which has given rise to racial and religious intolerance. This has manifested itself in new forms of discrimination and xenophobia against Muslims and Arab peoples.

Within this political climate and under the guise of fighting terrorism, we have witnessed religious intolerance masquerading as freedom of expression and an assault on human rights. The Group of 77 and China therefore calls upon the international community to make all efforts to combat all forms of defamation of religions. The Group also believes that while freedom of expression remains a valuable component of a democratic society, its exercise should not infringe on the rights of others.

Chairperson

In view of the current global challenge that racism and racial discrimination pose, it is time for a decisive action. The commitment of each State to combat racism and its attendant ills is now a matter of priority.

The G77 and China welcomes the recent decision of the Human Rights Council to commence the process of the elaboration of the complementary standards to the ICERD by February 2008. We encourage that this process be finalised at the earliest possible opportunity. In this regard, we look forward to the General Assembly adopting the requisite legal instruments strengthening and updating the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It is important for the United Nations to ensure that its protection regime for the victims of all the scourges of racism is appropriately enhanced and that remedies for victims are maximised.

The G77 and China welcomes the General Assembly's decision through its resolution 61/149 of December 2006 to convene the Durban Review Conference in 2009. We are pleased with the on-going preparations for this important global event. We wish to see the widest possible participation by all the relevant stakeholders in this important Conference.

The G77 and China invites all the Regional Groups to convene their own Regional Preparatory Conferences whose outcomes should help to enrich the Outcome Document of the Review Conference.

Chairperson

We hope that all the regions will join in our common vision that the time to declare our war on racism is now. The human race cannot afford to stand by whilst racism, racial discrimination, Xenophobia and related intolerance continue unabated. The Durban commitments provide an action plan to eliminate these scourges. We must all take resolute action, individually and collectively, to intensify our concrete efforts against racism, racial; discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

I thank you.