

7TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
ITEM 9
GENERAL DEBATE

**Statement by Mr. Zohrab Mnatsakanian,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia
Geneva, ~~17~~ March 2008**
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Mr. President,

Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance are amongst the most serious present challenges before the international community. Racism is still widespread in its different forms and manifestations. The World Conference against Racism in 2001 played a significant role in consolidating approaches towards the phenomenon in a comprehensive Declaration and Programme of Action. However, our collective commitment to address this challenge remains subject to serious tests. We should expect, that the upcoming Durban Review Conference next year could become an appropriate opportunity for a genuine and sincere, consensus based dialogue towards this end. Armenia is directly engaged in the preparatory process to demonstrate the truly global nature of the phenomenon. Furthermore, we have engaged ourselves with a commitment to spare no effort in broadening consensus in this process.

Mr. President,

The present debate is an appropriate opportunity to reflect on the commendable progress made within the IGWG on the effective implementation of the DDPA, and the elaboration of complementary standards.

Mr. President,

The issue of racism directly touches upon the fundamental challenge of protecting persons, belonging to such vulnerable groups, the massive and serious violations of human rights of which may lead to gravest crimes. We are convinced that the work of all relevant and related human rights

mechanisms, bodies and structures dealing with such groups deserves enhanced interaction amongst them in order to detect and prevent deteriorating situations at early stages. For our delegation this is indeed a priority issue to focus upon.

Thank you