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Introductory statement

**63rd session of the General Assembly
Third Committee**

Item 62: Elimination of racism and racial discrimination

Item 63: Right of peoples to self-determination

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New York



Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I have the honour to present a number of reports submitted under agenda item 62 entitled 'Elimination of racism and racial discrimination' and agenda item 63 entitled 'Right of peoples to self-determination', respectively.

Under agenda item 62 (a) entitled 'Elimination of racism and racial discrimination', the **report of the Secretary-General on the status of the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination** (document A/63/473) has been submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/148. I am pleased to announce that over the past two years, three more States: Andorra, Saint-Kitts and Nevis and Montenegro, have become parties to the Convention, bringing the total number of States parties to 173. Although this is to be welcomed, we are still far from the goal of universal ratification, which was set in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. As for the acceptance of the Committee's competence to consider communications by individuals or groups of individuals, as provided for in article 14 of the Convention, I am pleased to report that six more States parties, namely Andorra, Argentina, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Morocco and San Marino, have made the required declaration during the past two years. The total number of States that have accepted the Committee's competence in this regard has therefore been brought to 53. The pace of acceptance of the individual communications procedure provided under article 14, remains, however, very slow.

Turning now to the **report of the Secretary-General on the financial situation of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination** (document A/63/306), which has also been submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/148, I would like to recall that an amendment to article 8 of the Convention was adopted by the States parties during their 14th meeting in January 1992 and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/111 of 16 December 1992. While the Convention (article 8, paragraph 6) envisaged that States parties would be responsible for the expenses of the Committee, the amendment to the Article was adopted in order to provide for the financing of the Committee from the regular budget of the United Nations. The amendment will take effect when it has been accepted by a majority of two-thirds of the States parties. However, so far only 43 States parties have taken the steps necessary to approve this modification.

I also draw your attention to the fact that a number of States parties are still in arrears from the non-payment of previous assessments for the period prior to 1994, and the list of such States and the amounts owed are listed in an annex to the report of the Secretary-General on the financial situation of the Committee.

Under item 62 (b) entitled 'Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action', the **report of the Secretary-General on global efforts for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action** (document A/63/366) is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/220. The present report, following the model of previous reports on the subject submitted to the General Assembly, focuses on information received from Member States on the measures they have undertaken towards the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA).

The report before you provides a summary of various developments during the past year with regard to implementation of the DDPA, including progress achieved in the preparations for the Durban Review Conference, to be held in April 2009, and the contributions of United Nations human rights mechanisms and treaty bodies to the work of the Preparatory Committee of the Durban Review Conference (PrepCom).

The report also presents an update of OHCHR's. It highlights, in particular, OHCHR's role in assisting with the organization of two regional preparatory conferences for the Durban Review Conference in line with the objectives of the Review Conference. The Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean Preparatory to the Durban Review Conference was held in Brasilia from 17 to 19 June 2008 and the Conference for Africa was held in Abuja Nigeria, from 24 to 26 August 2008. Each Conference adopted an Outcome Document which constitutes the region's contribution to the Durban Review Conference

Under agenda item 63, the **report of the Secretary-General on the right of peoples to self-determination** (document A/63/254), submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/144, contains a summary of the developments relating to the consideration of this subject by the Human Rights Council (HRC). It also outlines the relevant jurisprudence of the human rights treaty bodies relating to the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination. Particularly highlighted are the recent concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee, the treaty monitoring body of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, with respect to implementation of the right to self-determination as enshrined in article 1 of the Covenant.

That concludes, Mr. Chairperson, my introduction of the reports submitted under agenda items 62 and 63.

Thank you.
