



HIGHLIGHTS OF PRESS CONFERENCE BY HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ON ADOPTION OF DURBAN REVIEW CONFERENCE OUTCOME DOCUMENT

(The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, was joined by Yuri Boychenko, Chairperson-Rapporteur of the intersessional open-ended working group mandated to continue and finalize the process of negotiations on and drafting of the outcome document, and Ibrahim Salama, Head of the Durban Review Conference Secretariat, OHCHR)

High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said she was very happy to announce the great news that the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference was adopted by consensus today. She drew attention to the statement by the Foreign Minister of Switzerland, who said that the adoption of the outcome document by consensus is the right answer to the disinformation and misinformation that had raged throughout the preparatory process. Ms. Pillay renewed her appeal to all to consult the document to ascertain exactly what it contains and what it does not contain.

The High Commissioner was pleased that some of the proposals she submitted in a report to the conference process in March were reflected in the final outcome document. She said that since the landmark anti-racism document, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) was adopted in 2001, several major challenges have impeded its full realization. Some of those challenges include increased and complex migration movements, poverty, terrorism and some of the measures used to counter terrorism.

Among the most valuable additional elements contained in this outcome document were: that it reinvigorated the political commitment to the implementation of the DDPA; it highlighted the increased suffering, since 2001, of many different sorts of victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and similar forms of intolerance; it identified, shared and disseminated some best practices in the fight against racism; it unequivocally reaffirmed the positive role of freedom of expression in the fight against racism, while also deploring derogatory stereotyping and stigmatization of people based on their religion or belief; and it launched a process that will examine how the prohibition of incitement to hatred, as reflected in Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, has been implemented in various parts of the world.

Ms. Pillay stressed the need to continue discussions on these often hotly disputed issues in a non-confrontational and non-politicized manner, whilst at the same time safeguarding the fundamental importance of freedom of expression. She expressed hope that this would help take some heat out of the current debate on these issues. Durban was a process and not an end in itself. Following the successful adoption of the outcome, the international community is called upon to continue the fight against racism, racial

discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Ms. Pillay expressed hope that those who decided to stay away from this Conference would join the international community again soon in the fight against these scourges.

Yuri Boychenko added that the adoption of the outcome document marked a new beginning. While the document was adopted, a lot remained to be accomplished. Mr. Boychenko was optimistic that the document would have a great future and would lead states to combat racism and racial discrimination all over the world.

In response to a journalist's question about whether the document was adopted in haste to avoid other states from withdrawing, Ms. Pillay said it was not because anybody harboured any fear of further withdrawal, but because the main committee that was constituted to consider the document was ready to adopt it. There was no further reason to hold up the process of adoption.

Asked whether it was still necessary that the Germans and Americans and other countries who withdrew from the Conference join the process in Geneva over the next few days or should at a later stage, Ms. Pillay said as European States had fully participated in the drafting of the document she was confident that these States 011 Twd eAMCt.7 0.

