



PAKISTAN

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STATEMENT

BY

AMBASSADOR MASOOD KHAN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PAKISTAN
ON BEHALF OF THE OIC

ON THE
REPORT OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON
CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF RACISM, RACIAL
DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED
INTOLERANCE

AT THE SEVENTH SESSION
OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Geneva
19 March 2008

**OIC Comments on the report of the Working Group of Experts
on People of African Descent on its seventh session
19 March 2008**

Mr. President

I am making these comments on behalf of the OIC.

The Durban Declaration expressed solidarity with the people of Africa in their continuing struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The present report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent is a valuable contribution to the preparatory Committee for the Durban Review Conference.

The OIC supports the recommendation of the Working Group regarding the submission of national plans of action to combat racism for review in the Durban Review Conference to be held next year. A number of fundamental issues such as access to education, employment and health services for people of African descent have also been raised in the report.

In particular, the Working Group's proposal to combat racial discrimination against people of African descent by elaborating internationally recognized media standards to eliminate the projection and perpetuation of negative images and stereotyping of Africa and the people of African descent require serious consideration.

The OIC hopes that the recommendations by the Working Group will be accorded due consideration during the Durban Review Conference.

I thank you.

**Statement by Ambassador Masood Khan, Permanent Representative of Pakistan,
on behalf of the OIC on the Report of Special Rapporteur on Contemporary forms of
racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance during the
Seventh Session of the Human Rights Council, Geneva, 19 March 2008**

Mr. President,

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the member states of the OIC.

The OIC thanks Mr. Doudou Diene for his consistent efforts in raising awareness about the contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance including Islamophobia.

We have noted with grave concern his assessment that the most serious manifestation of defamation of religions is the increase in Islamophobia and the worsening of the situation of Muslim minorities around the world. He has mentioned three main developments in this context:

- i) the stereotypical association of Islam with violence and terrorism
- ii) the determination to impose restrictions on manifestation of Islam including construction of mosques and its minarets
- iii) monitoring and surveillance of places of worship, culture and teaching of Islam.

The OIC believes that association of terrorism and violence with Islam or any other religion including through publication of offensive caricatures and making of hate documentaries would purposely complicate our common endeavours to address several contemporary issues including fight against terrorism and occupation of foreign territories and peoples. Besides strengthening discrimination against Muslims, this insidious association is preventing Muslim communities from practicing their religion freely in many countries. It is time that international community sought proscription of this practice through legal and administrative measures.

Mr. President,

The efforts of OIC states to eradicate the scourge of terrorism are well known. In recent years, thousands of brave soldiers and innocent civilians in many Islamic countries have died in the fight against terrorism. We, however, strongly feel that the International Community must also address the root causes of terrorism, such as the situations of grave injustices and repression affecting Muslims, and conditions of poverty and lack of opportunity, which breed extremism and terrorism.

The OIC also condemns all forms of anti-Semitism, Christianophobia; racism and racial discrimination.

Mr. President,

The Special Rapporteur has identified three worrying trends in the contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance:

- i) Erosion of political will to combat racism and xenophobia
- ii) The growing political trivialization of racism and xenophobia; and
- iii) Intellectual legitimization of racist and xenophobic discourse and rhetoric

We agree with the Special Rapporteur that these trends pose serious threats to democracy and the coexistence of all societies. Unfortunately, the extremist elements which promote these trends seek legitimacy by abusing right of freedom of expression and political association. All States must understand and institute legitimate limitations on the exercise of right of freedom of expression to counter racist and xenophobic agenda.

Mr. President,

The OIC has always been supportive of a closer interaction among followers of different religions. We believe that this interaction could promote greater understanding among cultures and religions. An interfaith harmony must also be reflected in various initiatives to formulate national policies.

There is a need to fill the juridical vacuum in addressing the issue of religious intolerance. The OIC would like to reiterate its suggestion that Council in conjunction with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights should take a lead and start consultations to examine the possibility of drafting a Convention to combat defamation of religions and to promote religious tolerance.

I thank you Mr. President.