

Statement by Ambassador Masood Khan, Pakistan's Permanent Representative, on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, on the Oral report of the Durban PrepCom, under agenda item 9, during 8th Session of the HRC, Geneva, 17 June 2008

Mr. President,

I am making this statement on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

We welcome the Oral report presented by the distinguished Ambassador of on the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee of the Durban Review Conference. We also thank members of the Bureau for their hard work and constructive spirit to find agreed solutions.

The first substantive session took important decisions and has built on the progress made so far in the preparations for the Review Conference. We particularly welcome the substantive decisions regarding structure of the Outcome Document and dates and venue of the Review Conference.

Atmospherics during the preparatory committee session have improved significantly. We welcome this positive trend and congratulate all member states for their positive contributions. Boycotts and threats of disengagement will not help achieve desired results. Dialogue and constructive engagement will. Our differences of opinion notwithstanding, we must be united in our common fight to address the menace of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerances. In this regard we welcome the adoption of an apt logo, which is reflective of this common desire.

The OIC has always upheld the principles of dialogue and constructive engagement. Opportunity provided by the Review Conference must be utilized in full to reviewing implementation of the decisions taken at the First World Conference Against Racism, as well as to take into account contemporary forms of xenophobia and related intolerance. Such instances relate to incitement to racial and religious hatred, including Islamophobia, Christianophobia and discrimination against followers of other faiths.

The High Commissioner in her statement at the start of this session has pointed towards the pervasiveness of the entrenched discriminatory views and practices. The OIC supports and echoes her call to condemn all deplorable and manipulative distortions, such as anti-Semitic and Islamophobic agendas, or that convey any other form of intolerance. Discrimination on the basis of race, religion, ethnic origin, colour or creed, whether historical or contemporary, should be combated with full vigor under relevant international laws.

The outcome of the Review Conference must include space to eliminate new and emerging manifestations of racism. It must provide a comprehensive protection mechanism to the victims including those who have suffered the wrath of war on terror in terms of racio-religious profiling and its consequential incitement to racio-religious hatred. Additional complementary instruments to the International Covenant on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination could fill the existing gaps and reinforce the protection regime in this regard.