

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR GJ MTSHALI DURING THE 6<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF  
THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL ON THE REPORT OF THE FIRST  
ORGANISATIONAL PREPCOM OF THE DURBAN REVIEW CONFERENCE

Mr President,

The South African delegation wishes to express our sincere appreciation to the Chair, Amb Najat Al-Hajjaji of Libya, for her able stewardship during the deliberations of the Bureau and the First Organisational Preparatory Committee held in August 2007. We would also like to express our gratitude to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for the Report of the First Session of the Durban Review Conference. The Chair is hereby assured of the full support of the South African delegation in preparation for the 2009 Review Conference.

My delegation welcomes the nomination by the PrepCom of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Louise Arbour, as Secretary-General of the Durban Review Conference. We believe that her valuable contribution will serve to enrich the deliberations and outcome of the Review Conference.

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Mr President,

The fight against racism and racial discrimination has been at the forefront of the United Nations since its creation, as indicated in the Charter, which emphasises the importance of promoting and protecting ~~and~~ fundamental freedoms for all.

The solid commitment of South Africa to the elimination of racism is reflected in our Constitution of 1996 with its Bill of Rights which enshrines the values of "human dignity, equality and non-racism". We are also <sup>fully</sup> committed to the principles of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights.

The World Conference Against Racism in 2001 was a historic and landmark conference. Addressing the Conference, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa asserted that: (QUOTE) "The call we have made from this World Conference to the peoples of the world is that because racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance continue to blight human society, they must be fought with the greatest determination and perseverance. The clear message from the World

\* My delegation also extends its appreciation to the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action for the work it has done since under the able chairmanship of Ambassador A. G. Trakatel.

Conference against Racism is that the struggle against racism is a struggle for human rights, dignity and the eradication of poverty" (UNQUOTE).

My delegation wishes to affirm that the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) remains the basis for the effective elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The Durban Review Conference in 2009 will allow us the opportunity to assess the implementation of the DDPA, including the contemporary manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and <sup>to</sup> identify concrete measures and initiatives for their elimination.

Although we are encouraged by the <sup>positive</sup> concrete steps taken by States, the United Nations system and the international community at large to implement the DDPA, we are seriously concerned at the increase in contemporary manifestations of these scourges. We believe that the Review Conference should provide a platform to share achievements, learn from best practices and strategize on confronting these new challenges. It must be emphasized, however, that this can only succeed if Member States are ready to demonstrate the necessary resolve and political will.

The Decisions adopted by the PrepCom have highlighted the crucial need for adequate financial resources for the preparatory process, especially assistance for the cost of participation of representatives of least developed countries and the NGO community. Moreover, the financial implications for the establishment of an open ended intergovernmental working group, the convening of preparatory meetings and the full and active participation of NGOs, should be accorded the necessary consideration. We are convinced that the outcome of these important meetings would contribute to the substantive objectives of the Review Conference. We would also like to urge the High Commissioner to revive the voluntary fund, and to urge members <sup>to</sup> for their support of this fund.

It is <sup>important</sup> ~~significant~~ for the Human Right Council at this session to adopt a decision, in line with its Resolution 3/2 of 2006, to "invite the Preparatory Committee to submit its reports to the General Assembly". <sup>South Africa is pleased that</sup> The legal ambiguity <sup>regarding</sup> surrounding the competency of the PrepCom ~~should be~~ <sup>has been</sup> addressed.

I thank you.