



INTERVENTION BY THE DEPUTY PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF BRAZIL IN GENEVA,
AMBASSADOR SERGIO FLORÊNCIO

Human Rights Council
First Session

Report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the
Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and
Programme of Action – Fourth Session

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Mr. Chairman,

My delegation fully subscribes to GRULAC's intervention on the report of the intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. On behalf of Brazil, I want to stress some aspects which for us are of the utmost importance.

As a multiracial country, Brazil attaches great importance to the question of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The presence of Minister Matilde Ribeiro, Minister-Chief of the Special Secretariat on Policies to Promote Racial Equality of the Presidency of the Republic, in the Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Working Group, last March, in Geneva, attests the commitment of Brazil to the fight against racism.

We have been very active in the area of the fight against racism and the promotion of racial equality, both at national and international levels.

At national level, the Special Secretariat on Policies to Promote Racial Equality has developed a strong dialogue with Civil Society – especially with the communities of people of African descent, indigenous peoples, gypsies, Jews and people of Arab origin. The result of this partnership has led to the implementation of many programmes in the area of labor, education, health, culture, among others, aimed at the valorization and the respect for the citizenship of those vulnerable groups.

At the international level, the Brazilian Government is convening, in Brasilia, from 26 to 28 July 2006, the Regional Conference of the Americas on

the Progress and Challenges of the Plan of Action Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. This Conference, which has been conceived by Governments and Non-Governmental Organizations, is aimed at making an assessment of the situation of the Americas with regards to the implementation of the Declaration and the Programme of Action of Durban.

In the Organization of American States, Brazil is chairing the Working Group destined to draft the Inter-American Convention Against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination and Intolerance.

Mr. Chairman,

In its fourth session, the Intergovernmental Working Group on Durban, under the guidance of Ambassador Juan Martabit, has given significant steps in the fight against racism, xenophobia and related intolerance.

In the last session, the Working Group has agreed that there are procedural gaps in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination that jeopardize its full and effective implementation. As a consequence, the Working Group has requested the Committee (CERD) to develop a further study on the procedural gaps, to be considered in the fifth session of the Working Group. Among the important issues to be studied, I would like to stress the need for CERD to undertake country visits and to improve the follow-up process to its recommendations.

The Working Group has also acknowledged that there is a need to promote deep studies in order to identify possible substantive gaps in the

existing international instruments to combat racism and intolerance. For us, the issue of multiple and/or the aggravated forms of discrimination is very important, since it explains why particularly women of Afro descent remain, in many countries, including mine, at the bottom of the society, chained in the vicious circle of poverty, racism and gender discrimination.

It is important to stress that the phenomenon of racism, xenophobia and related intolerance varies largely from each region and country to another. For this reason, Brazil strongly supported the idea of requesting the Office of the High Commissioner to select, in close consultation with regional groups, five experts to study the content and scope of substantive gaps in the existing international instruments.

Mr Chairman,

As I said before, the Working Group has made a very important step in the fight against racism, xenophobia and related intolerance, when it has decided to carry out deep studies on complementary international standards.

Brazil considers notwithstanding that it is also very important that the Working Group focus on the issue of implementation. As our national experience shows, the elaboration of complementary standards derives entirely on the practice of the implementation of norms. Accordingly, well-designed standards and norms are doomed to fail without an effective plan of implementation.

Brazil supports the continuation of the intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and favors that, in its fifth session, the Group addresses the issue of complementary norms together with the question of implementation.

Thank you.