



CHAIR OF
THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT



DURBAN REVIEW CONFERENCE
SECOND SUBSTANTIVE PREPCOM

STATEMENT BY H.E. THE AMBASSADOR OF CUBA,
JUAN ANTONIO FERNÁNDEZ PALACIOS,
ON BEHALF OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

(Check against delivery)

Geneva, 6TH October 2008

Mme. Chairperson,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

First of all let me express our congratulations to you personally and to the members of the Bureau, for all the preparations made for this meeting.

Let me also welcome the participation this morning with us of the High Commissioner, Mrs. Navanethem Pillay, and the vibrant speech she delivered, which articulated the support she gives to this important process, confirmed since her first statement to the Human Rights Council.

Mme. Chairperson,

We have come a long way in the preparatory process of the Durban Review Conference. After two PREPCOMS and various meetings of the Inter-sessional Working Group, we have come to the momentum in which all our efforts should be concentrated in commencing the negotiation and the drafting of the Final Document of the Review Conference.

In this regard, we congratulate the members of the GRULAC and the African Group, for their regional preparatory meetings, which resulted in substantive inputs and contributions to the process. We are aware that other regions and/or groups are in the process of finalizing their contributions and we look forward to receiving and analyzing them.

We also express our appreciation for the work done by the Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Inter-sessional Working Group, Ambassador Zohrab Mnatsakanian of Armenia, whose report we have in front of us.

The NAM believes that the document prepared in the context of this working group may be a basis for commencing negotiations, on the understanding that the issues contained therein have not been negotiated nor agreed upon, and that the opportunity remains for all stakeholders to continue to make proposals and contributions to the draft outcome.

Mme. Chairperson:

The Non-Aligned Movement has historically maintained a clear and unequivocal principled position against all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and any kind of related intolerance. This has been reaffirmed in the Havana Summit, in 2006, and in all other major Conferences of the Movement, including in the recently held Ministerial Conference, that took place last July in Teheran, Islamic Republic of Iran.

The 2001 Durban World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, became a milestone in the struggle for equal rights among all human beings. The effective implementation of the Durban's agreements is not only essential in the fight against racism; it is also a debt owed to millions of victims of these abominable practices through history.

But the world did not stop in 2001, and regrettably, since then we have witnessed a worrisome re-emergence and consolidation of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in various parts of the world.

The establishment of associations and political parties, with a racist platform, the social exclusion and marginalisation of the indigenous peoples, minorities and migrants, the proliferation of discriminatory migration laws and policies, the negative stereotyping of religions, and defamation of religious personalities, holy books, scriptures and symbols, as well as the passing of anti-terrorist legislation that provide broad spaces to arbitrariness and the exercise of public authority on discriminatory and xenophobic basis, continue to be a matter of our concern.

All these issues should be addressed by the Review Conference, in identifying further actions, initiatives and practical solutions for combating all the contemporary scourges of racism.

We know that this process has important challenges to overcome. But we also know that we have the collective wisdom and commitment to overcome them, in the interest of promoting a world of non-discrimination, tolerance, and respect for all.

Thank you