



**STATEMENT BY
MR. ADE PETRANTO
COUNSELLOR**

**BEFORE THE THIRD COMMITTEE
SIXTY-FIRST SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**ON
AGENDA ITEM 65 (A), (B) AND 66:
ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION,
COMPREHENSIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF AND FOLLOW-UP
TO THE DURBAN DECLARATION AND PROGRAM ACTION
AND RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF DETERMINATION**

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Thank you Mr. Chairman.

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement of the distinguished delegate of South Africa on behalf of the G 77 and China. Indonesia attaches great importance to the discussion of the agenda item before us, "Elimination of Racism and Racial Discrimination" and its deliberation.

Before I continue, permit me to acknowledge the interim report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, transmitted by the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/144. The report once again reminds us of an alarming situation in our efforts to eliminate Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, and of our responsibility to take concrete action to deal with these practices.

In this connection Mr. Chairman, my delegation would highlight, among other, three elements at the international level that requires our attention.

The first of these concerns the rise of racist violence and the resurgent activities of associations established on racist and xenophobic platforms and charters in some part of the world.

This is achieved not only through the resurgence of racist and xenophobic violence, but also and especially, through the legal and democratic application of those platforms using political alliances within government including the leaders of these parties, now invested with democratic legitimacy and at the heart of power. As a result of these developments, racism indeed constitutes the greatest threat to democracy in many societies on all continents.

In the view of my delegation, there is a need for Member States to pay close attention to the linkage between combating racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and the construction of a democratic, interactive and multicultural society.

Second, the need for a strategy to combat racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia through education and the adoption of political, economic, social and cultural initiatives in order to encourage interaction and cross-fertilization between different national communities.

For the Government of Indonesia, promoting dialogue through education is the way to instill in everyone the principle of respect for the fundamental identities of other people—racial, ethnic or religious—and thereby promoting and protecting this right.

In recent times, we have witnessed the error of some people and critics in Western circles who attribute to Islam a propensity for violence. The only way to liberate the human mind from these errors is through intensive and extensive dialogue.

To this end, Indonesia has been actively promoting interfaith and intercultural dialogue in the Asia-Pacific region and within the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), a deliberate strategy for challenging or undermining the ideology of the terrorists while strengthening the voice of moderation. Last October, in Yogyakarta, for instance, we hosted the “APEC Intercultural and Faith Symposium to Strengthen Trust.”

Similarly, in September 2006, we collaborated with Norway to host the first Global Intermedia Dialogue to promote mass media sensitivity to other cultures and faiths without compromising freedom of expression. It was attended by leading mass media practitioners from five continents. We believe that only this kind of dialogue can open the eyes of the media and make its practitioners an ally. The Intermedia Dialogue has now become institutionalized and will be held annually.

The third element is the need to establish balance between freedom of expression and religious freedom. We must examine the existing norms relating to freedom of expression, religious freedom and non-discrimination, which we strongly believe that we need to ensure faithful observance of the spirit and letter of the provisions governing freedom of expression and its restriction, as contained in international instruments, especially ICCPR.

In relation to such freedom, it must be emphasized that the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression carries special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions: (a) respect of the rights or reputations of others; (b) for the protection of national security or of public order or public health or morals.

Mr. Chairman,

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which has now been ratified by 170 States, constitutes the normative basis upon which international efforts to eliminate racial discrimination should be built. The Committee, based on this Convention, should increase its efforts to prevent racially motivated offences and hate speech, and ensure that relevant criminal law provisions are effectively implemented by Member States.

Concrete action should also be taken to address poverty and underdevelopment as racism also thrives on the frustration and economic and social disparities they create. Indeed, given that development, peace and human dignity are inseparable, the stake in this partnership is the destiny of the human race as a whole.

Let me close by reiterate that a partnership for development is also a partnership for peace, and therefore a partnership for the dignity of the human being. That being so, it becomes the obligation of this Committee to advise Member States of the central importance of their political will in efforts to combat racism and xenophobia.

Now I would like to turn into the discussion on agenda item 66 on the issue of self-determination.

Mr. Chairman,

Indonesia, whose right of self-determination had more than 300 years been in the hand of foreign occupation, would like to bring particular attention to the issue of the Palestinian people. It is ashamed that although we are discussing and debating this rights every year, and yet the Palestinian People cannot fully exercise their right of self-determination. The long suffering situation of the Palestinian People, which is in no small way attributable to racism, should finally be brought to an end. In this regard, Indonesia stresses the right of Palestinian people to self-determination leading to the establishment of the independent Palestinian state.

I thank you.