



STATEMENT

BY

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ON BEHALF OF  
THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

ON

AGENDA ITEM 67(B): COMBATING RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION,  
XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE  
AND THE COMPREHENSIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
FOLLOW-UP TO THE DURBAN DECLARATION  
AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION

IN THE

THIRD COMMITTEE

DURING THE 67<sup>TH</sup> SESSION  
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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*Please check against delivery*

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to address the Committee on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on Agenda Item 67(b): Combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of the follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

On behalf of the CARICOM Member States, I also wish to thank the representatives of the Secretariat and the Special Rapporteur for the presentation of the reports on this agenda item, which serve to guide our discussion.

Mr. Chairman,

By virtue of the nature of our historical development, CARICOM Member States are comprised of multiethnic, multiracial and multicultural societies. We believe in tolerance, harmony and peaceful co-existence and these are ideals we practice and uphold in our respective territories. Against this background, and given our own experience, we have consistently supported efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. In this regard, we note with appreciation the report by the Secretary General that as of August 2012, 175 States Parties had ratified or acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. We look forward to increased ratification and/or accession to the Convention by other Member States as an important step toward eliminating the scourge of racism at the international level.

### **International Action**

CARICOM Member States have also noted the updates provided on activities undertaken by UN Member States, the UN system, and other stakeholders, since the last debate on this agenda item in the previous session. This includes the convening of the high level meeting of the General Assembly last year to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA). We are particularly pleased that one of our members had the privilege of delivering the message from our hemisphere at this very important high level forum.

We commend the various *ad hoc* bodies established within the UN system to address various aspects of the problem of racism, for the progress made in pursuing their respective mandates, including the Forum on Minority Issues; the Intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action; and the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent. We have noted, in particular, the Programme of Action for the Decade developed by the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent in the wake of the International Year for People of African Descent, which will focus on the theme "Recognition, justice and development".

Our view is that renewed emphasis and adequate funding for the follow-up mechanisms, as well as sustained international cooperation are indispensable to addressing all forms and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM also welcomes the contribution of Mr. Mutuma Ruteere who was appointed Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in November 2011.

In an interim report published as document A/67/326, the Special Rapporteur has, *inter alia*, pointed to an interesting phenomenon of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Namely, the use of the Internet to proliferate, promote and disseminate racist ideas and propagate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, which is now the popular medium of choice for extremist individuals and groups.

This is a fairly new and complex challenge. We concur with the Special Rapporteur that the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, provide a comprehensive and fairly robust framework for possible actions in combating this phenomenon. With this in mind, we look forward to discussing ways to combat racial, ethnic and xenophobic hatred via the internet



without violating any individual right to freedom of opinion and expression.

CARICOM strongly supports the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Special Rapporteur, including his suggestion that a more comprehensive study of the different dimensions to the problem of racism and the Internet is needed.

Mr. Chairman,

We are conscious that some governments have at the national level, sought to protect the diverse and multicultural nature of their societies. Some States have created national institutions to promote racial equality, while in others, legislation has been adopted which will ensure that minorities and other disadvantaged groups can be fully integrated into the society. This, we believe, is a direct result of the Declaration and Programme of Action, which has served as a useful tool to secure structural changes and institutional remedies to eliminate racism.

However, despite the progress made in combating racism, the effective implementation of the DDPA has not been satisfactory. We acknowledge that the Durban process is a work in progress, which will require the combined effort of every member of the international community if we are to eliminate discrimination from our midst.

### **People of African Descent**

Mr. Chairman,

There are those who say that racism and discrimination are relics of the past. They claim that because legal discrimination is a thing of the past that somehow discrimination has also gone away. CARICOM does not share this conclusion. Of particular note are the findings of the Special Rapporteur which attest to the fact that racism is still fuelling violence and conflict in some parts of the world. In this context, we support his continued engagement on the issue of the prohibition of incitement to national, racial or religious hatred.

People of African descent in some parts of the world continue to face discrimination, notwithstanding the recommendations by the CERD and the United Nations declaration on the

Promotion and Full Respect of the Human Rights of People of African Descent. The various Forums, Programme of Action, Working Groups, and Recommendations dealing with the issue of the discrimination and plight of the People of African Descent addressed at the United Nations level over these many years, have yet to realize meaningful change for the People of African Descent.

We are mindful that the benefactors of Colonialism and its legacies of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade should have long delivered substantively to the People of African Descent in the area of corrective and repairing needs. This should not take the form of more volumes of affirmative text, further declarations and noble speeches. We call for real, substantive, and tangible measures in specific and identifiable areas that would bring about quantitative and qualitative benefits in the lives of People of African descent in some parts of the world as appropriate.

#### **Permanent Memorial on slavery and the transatlantic slave trade**

Mr. Chairman,

We are pleased with the decision taken by the General Assembly to erect a Permanent Memorial to honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. We encourage Member States, NGOs, the private sector and private individuals to continue to support this and other initiatives which will serve to enhance the visibility of the message of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. For CARICOM Member States this Memorial takes on added significance, showcasing our determination to ensure that such a historical wrong and its associated after-effects of racism and racial discrimination will never be repeated.

It is for that reason and in that context, that CARICOM is steadfast in our campaign to draw international attention to and gain recognition for that horrific chapter in the history of mankind when the enslavement of People of African Descent was considered the norm. We are even more resolute in our call for this grave human tragedy never to be repeated. Consequently, our initiative on slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, led in partnership with the African group of

States at the United Nations, maintains the theme of "acknowledging the tragedy, considering the legacy, lest we forget..."

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the Member States of CARICOM reaffirm our commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action, and to the outcomes of the 2009 Durban Review Conference and the recent high-level meeting of the General Assembly held to commemorate Durban+10. We remain convinced that the Durban process, if given the necessary support of all Member States, could lead to the eradication of all forms of racism and intolerance, thereby allowing people everywhere to experience the full enjoyment of their fundamental human rights and freedoms.

Thank you for your attention.