

Remarks by Azerbaijan

Human Rights Council
Durban Review Conference Prepcom (oral report)
Item9
8th session
17 June 2008

Mr. President,

The Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan cordially welcomes H.E. Ms. Najat Al-Hajjaji, the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee for the Durban Review Conference and commends her for the exemplary manner in which she has steered the deliberations within the Preparatory Committee.

Azerbaijan has been supportive to the Durban follow-up process from the very beginning and will continue to do so in the months to come. It is our firm belief that racism is one of the worst scourges of nowadays and we should be all united in our fight against racism and racial discrimination. In this regard, we would like to once again echo the slogan adopted by consensus lately by the Preparatory Committee and express its appropriateness at this juncture of development.

We equally welcome the adoption of the decision on the structure of the outcome document.

Azerbaijan is worried by the contemporary manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Unfortunately, in the last years, amongst others, defamation of religions, especially Islamophobia is taking more dangerous form in some societies and is accompanied by growing trend of stereotypes. In this connection, one should necessarily touch upon the co-relation of right to freedom of religion and the freedom of expression whereby neither of them could be misused at the expense of other. Thus, in the cases where such provocative acts occur this gives rise to a fertile condition for arousing and growing mistrust between various nations and religions and undermine harmonious world.

Azerbaijan also notes with great concern the plight of people under foreign occupation which is in most cases the victims of racism and racial discrimination. It is not strange that this type of vulnerable groups is in many cases subjected to ethnic cleansing.

Furthermore, refugees, migrants, asylum seekers are facing innumerable problems and require due attention and effective solution.

Mr. President,

Despite all efforts to tackle challenges, we witness increase of these evils throughout the world. Therefore, Azerbaijan is of the view that the existing Durban mechanism would not be sufficient to effectively respond to the new challenges once the follow-up process is not qualitatively and adequately held. New response mechanisms could allow us to prevent all human calamities from occurring again. In our opinion, all relevant stakeholders should consider this process from human rights perspective, not political considerations. To this end, we appeal to each and every stakeholder to act in one single voice.

We need clear political will and strong determination not to limit ourselves with nice words and good intentions, but to translate those into real actions and send these evils to the dustbin of history.

Azerbaijan hopes that Durban Review Conference will open a new page in the struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

We welcome the decision of the Government of Brazil and Nigeria to host regional preparatory meetings. We should benefit to the maximum from the outcomes of these regional initiatives and enrich our deliberations availing ourselves of the national, regional and international developments up until the Durban Review Conference.

Azerbaijan expresses its hope to see civil society as an important actor in this process and voices out its conviction that only through the common efforts, comprehensive analyses and general participation we may target the objectives of the Durban Review Conference.

Finally, Mr. President, let me stress that Azerbaijan is committed to contribute to this important process and will actively participate in the relevant events and Durban Review Conference.

Thank you Mr. President.