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**Oral Statement by North-South XXI,  
Human Rights Council, 7<sup>th</sup> Session  
Agenda Item No. 9**

Mr. President, Distinguished Representatives of States and NGOs,

Perhaps no obligation has more frequently reiterated by the international community than the obligation to combat racism and other forms of discrimination. This obligation was affirmed in the first human rights instrument adopted by the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It has been reaffirmed in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR). Alas the world in which we live today is more dangerous and permeated with racism and intolerance than even seven years ago when we gathered in Durban for the WCAR.

At WCAR states undertook to continue their fight to eliminate racism. They also agreed to a follow-up process that would continue the work started in Durban and move it forward with renewed energy and force. Now some states are backing out down from this obligation. Canada has reportedly stated that it will not take part in a Durban follow-up Conference. The United States and Israel are objecting to such a conference. We also observe that some countries in the North seem to be less enthusiastic about moving the WCAR process forward with the force and energy it deserves. This was indeed reflected in the slow progress of work in the 'Intergovernmental Working Group' to follow-up the WCAR. Attempts to undermine the world's collective efforts to fight the evils of racism will fail and those who support these efforts shall discredit themselves.

North-South XXI urges all states and civil society groups to recommit themselves to WCAR follow-up. We urge all states to participate in, and abide by the consensual decision-making that characterized the world resolve to eradicate racism in all its forms and manifestations. States that do not participate not only threaten this process they also threaten all humanity by their failure to commit to fighting the evils of racism in all its forms and manifestations.

North-South XXI strongly supports the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, which condemned racism and all associated forms of discrimination ranging from anti-semitism to Islamophobia. Equally, North-South XXI strongly supports the recognition of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery as crimes against humanity. This inhumane act has benefited many countries who allowed

it as a national policy protected by law. We encourage those states that benefited from this inhumane practice and their descendants to face their legal and moral obligation and shoulder the responsibility to repair the damage done and compensate the decedents of the victims of the transatlantic slave trade.

Nord Sud XXI urges all states to take urgent steps to ensure the Durban Review Conference takes place and that the commitments made in Durban are strengthened. We hope that all states will have the courage to reaffirm the strides made against discrimination at Durban and to redress past acts of discrimination.

Thank you Mr. President for your attention.

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