

Statement by the Delegation of Malaysia

**General Debate under Agenda Item 9:
Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Forms of
Intolerance: Follow-up to and Implementation of the Durban Declaration
and Programme of Action
Sixth Session of the Human Rights Council**

Tuesday, 25 September 2007

Mr. President,

Malaysia appreciates the opportunity to discuss this important item at the current Session of the Council. We associate ourselves with the statement by Pakistan on behalf of the OIC. We also wish to join other delegations in thanking Ambassador Najat Al-Hajjaji for her presentation on the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Durban Review Conference and Ambassador Juan Martabit for his presentation on the work of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

Mr. President,

2. Racism is abhorrent not only on its own, but as a root of many other more egregious forms of human rights violations, such as genocide and ethnic cleansing. Indeed, the history of the promotion and protection of human rights is, to a large extent, a history of the struggle to eliminate racism. It is important, therefore, to situate the convening of the Durban Review Conference in its proper context. The Review Conference will take place at a time when the world is witnessing a rise in incidences of racism. We strongly believe that the international community should seize the opportunity that will come in 2009 to take stock and assess the way forward in our common efforts to eliminate racism and related forms of intolerance. It is also an important opportunity for us to look at contemporary manifestations of racism and related intolerance.

3. The Durban World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Forms of Intolerance had raised awareness of the international community on the important issue of racism. In this regard, we are dismayed that events following the September 11 terrorist attacks have had a negative impact on our efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. September 11 had provoked racist reactions against Muslims, Arabs and other Middle Eastern groups in a number of Western countries. It had also given rise to what is now known as racial profiling in those countries. Actions by some quarters, such as those responsible for the infamous cartoon incident, simply does not help to improve the situation and only confirms the rising trend of Islamophobia and defamation against Islam that we are seeing now. Malaysia is deeply concerned by this unfortunate trend.

Mr. President,

4. The media has an important and indeed constructive, role to perform in each society. The media as a powerful tool for channelling information must act more responsibly in providing fair, correct and balanced reporting, particularly on sensitive issues relating to religion. We note that the media's lopsided representation of Islam could contribute to further acts of racism and xenophobia committed against Muslims. Misrepresentations which portray acts of violence, injustice and extremities as synonymous with Islam are indeed deeply regrettable. On the contrary, Islam propagates peace, love and tolerance. It would be a gross injustice to make a simplistic conclusion to equate Islam and violence.

5. Malaysia believes that at the national level, Governments could and should exert greater efforts to combat racism and related forms of intolerance within their midst. Malaysia has always been committed to eradicating racism. In our multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society, the development of a united Malaysia is uppermost in the list of the Government's priorities. We believe that anywhere in the world, inclusiveness lies at the heart of any government's efforts to eradicate racism.

6. Finally, Mr. President, Malaysia notes that the overall assessment on the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action has not been encouraging. It is our hope that the Durban Review Conference will be an opportunity for us to correct that situation.

Thank you.