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STATEMENT

BY

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UNITED NATIONS IN GENEVA**

AT

**THE THIRD COMMITTEE ON
AGENDA ITEM 67: ELIMINATION OF RACISM, RACIAL
DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND
RELATED INTOLERANCE**

**66TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
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SADC STATEMENT ON AGENDA ITEM 67: ELIMINATION OF RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, ZENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE

Chairperson,

I am privileged to address this Committee on behalf of the following Member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC): Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and my own country, South Africa. SADC member states align themselves with the statement by the Argentina, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Chairperson,

In Durban, the world spoke with one voice and reaffirmed its commitment to continue to fight against the scourge of racism and to do everything to eradicate it. The world collectively agreed on the need and significance for a comprehensive framework to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. In this regard, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) was unanimously adopted.

SADC welcomes the Political Declaration adopted during the High-Level Meeting to commemorate the Tenth Anniversary of the adoption of Durban Declaration and Plan for Action, held in New York, on 22 September 2011.

We wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his reports on this agenda item. We also view the recommendations made therein as providing useful foundation for our collective struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Indeed some progress has been made in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. However, these phenomena have not been eradicated and no country can claim to be free of their destructive influence. Hence we strongly advocate that the UN should lead from the front by mainstreaming the elimination of racism within the UN programmes and work and by assisting Governments to do so in their countries.

Chairperson,

In this regard, SADC Member States in compliance with their international human rights law obligations, have instituted domestic laws to combat this scourge and to achieve substantive equality for our peoples in line with their Constitutional imperatives. It is this progress we have achieved that gives us hope and unwavering conviction to continue to

confront the scourges of racism and with the ultimate goal of creating societies based on dignity and equality with social cohesion, nation-building, economic and social integration.

Chairperson,

SADC Member States are deeply concerned that following the historic achievements of the 2001 WCAR, which extended maximum protection and adequate remedies to the victims of these scourges and also ensured that for the first time in the United Nations history (a) slavery, the slave trade and the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade were declared crimes against humanity and (b) that colonialism was acknowledged by consensus as one of the major sources of historical racism and racial discrimination, there has been a discernable pattern by some countries to renege on the commitments made at Durban, as well as to attempts to renegotiate the DDPA. SADC Member States express concern at the little progress made in the last ten years on the implementation of the DDPA, particularly its key paragraphs 157-159 of the DDPA.

SADC appreciated the participation by delegations during the recent High-level event this year. We look forward to working with all other delegations, including those who were not able to participate, to join in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. We believe that the international community should not lose of the fight against racism as well as the plight of victims of this scourge.

Chairperson,

SADC Member States reaffirm the principle of non-discrimination and to this end condemn all ideologies based on racial superiority and intolerance and that the prohibition of the dissemination of all ideas based upon racial superiority or hatred is compatible with the exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, which in our view has limits under international human rights law as provided for under Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and succinctly elaborated by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

We wish to reiterate the importance of the Durban follow-up mechanisms. In this context, we further welcome the progress made by the Ad Hoc Committee on Complementary Standards, which agreed on a clear programme of work during its Third Session in Geneva. We also want to place on record that the Durban Follow-up Mechanisms have provided insight to the Human Rights Council into the challenges that are faced by the international community.

Chairperson,

SADC Member States remain convinced that the lack of political will and commitment remains one of the core factors affecting global efforts towards the total eradication of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Despite 173 ratifications to the ICERD, it remains a concern that reservations are entered on some of the key

provisions of this Convention, particularly Article 4, which in our view regress the fight against this scourge.

Chairperson,

SADC Member States believes that racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in all its forms and manifestations, is an affront to human dignity and constitutes a total negation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To this end, we are determined and committed to continue to seek solutions to this historical scourge, and to address contemporary forms of the scourge, which have unfortunately risen in modern times.

Chairperson,

In conclusion, we remain convinced that the lack of political will and commitment remains one of the core factors affecting global efforts towards the total eradication of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. As the SADC Members States we commit ourselves to work co-operatively and constructively with you and all other delegations who pursue similar objectives namely; combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

In this context, we urge the world not to be distracted in this noble struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other related intolerances. We should continue with the same resolve and determination that led to the end of slavery, colonialism and apartheid.

I thank you.

