



**60th Session
United Nations General Assembly**

Third Committee

**Statement by Ambassador Stafford Neil,
Permanent Representative of Jamaica &
Chairman of the Group of 77 and China**

on

**Agenda item 69 (a): Elimination of racism and racial
discrimination, and (b): Comprehensive follow-up to the
Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

**New York
7 November 2005**

Mr. Chairman,

It is my honour to speak on agenda items 69 (a) and (b) on the elimination of racism and racial discrimination and the comprehensive follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Over time, this Committee has facilitated discussions and seen the introduction and adoption of a plethora of resolutions, addressing various issues on human rights. While not intending to establish a hierarchy among them, it is our firm belief that the issue of racism and racial discrimination must of necessity assume a central place in any such discussions.

The General Assembly has reiterated that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and have the potential to contribute constructively to the development and well-being of their societies, and that any doctrine of racial superiority is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous and must be rejected, together with theories that attempt to determine the existence of separate human races.

It is undeniable that in this twenty-first century, in 2005, racism and racial discrimination remain prevalent, both overtly and covertly across societies. The elimination of this scourge must remain a priority of the international community. The denial or violation of equal rights on the basis of race, runs counter to the very foundation and principle upon which the United Nations is based and remains one of the most serious problems in human relations today.

The World Summit held in Durban, South Africa in 2001 was a significant milestone by the International Community to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in a concerted and comprehensive manner. The outcome of that Conference expressed the will and commitment of the International Community to establish a clear set of objectives and course of action to address them strategically, from all angles.

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was the outcome of intensive negotiations and the result was a carefully balanced document. No

country or Government was selectively targeted. What was targeted at Durban was racism and action for its elimination and should be supported by all Governments.

Mr. Chairman,

It is now four years since the adoption of the Durban Declaration and it is of critical importance that we continue to closely monitor progress in the implementation of those decisions at Durban. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his report on the global efforts for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, as contained in document A/60/307. This report has provided useful information on the activities of the various organs of the UN and other stakeholders at the international, regional and national levels, which indicate that action against racism is being undertaken at the various levels.

It is encouraging to see that at the national level there has been institutional strengthening, for example through the introduction of national action plans by some governments; through social integration, educational and cultural programmes introduced by countries towards promoting mutual understanding and appreciation of cultural and racial diversity.

We are pleased that Governments are beginning to react more often against cybercrime and or the dissemination of racist ideologies via the internet, a concern that was mentioned in the Secretary-General's report of last year. Efforts must continue in this particular area, as advancing information technology may lead to increased use of the internet to encourage racial discrimination through the spread of racist propaganda. While we believe that freedom of speech remains a valuable component of democratic society, its exercise should come with responsibility with regard to the rights of others.

Racism and the fight against terrorism

Mr. Chairman,

We thank the Special Rapporteur of the Commission for Human Rights on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related

intolerance, Mr. Doudou Diène for his continued efforts in investigating forms of racism and in particular for his interim report contained in document A/60/283. The Special Rapporteur has drawn to attention some alarming signs of a retreat in the struggle against racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, on account of counter-terrorism policies and programmes that encourage new forms of discrimination against ethnic groups, entire communities, and religious groupings.

It is regrettable, that, according to the findings of the Special Rapporteur, the fight against terrorism, to which we remain committed, has created an opening for some political parties to adopt racist and xenophobic political platforms in their programmes, in order to win popularity under the guise of combating terrorism, defending the "national identity", promoting "national preference" and combating illegal immigration.

Racism in sports

Mr. Chairman,

The role of sports as an important means for promoting social integration and friendly relations among people and between countries is well recognized. It is therefore regrettable that in sports there is increasing frequency of racist and xenophobic incidents. The Special Rapporteur in his report to the Commission on Human Rights earlier this year, made some useful recommendations to combat this problem, including for international sports bodies to focus on the national dimension of the fight against racism, by asking national federations to submit annual reports on racist incidents and the action taken in response to them. This practical measure of accountability could prove effective in combating deviant patterns. It is hoped that the recommendations will be pursued by the national sports authorities.

Legacies of the past

Mr. Chairman,

The General Assembly has last week adopted a resolution addressing the need to honour the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. Paragraph 58

of our Durban document has declared that the Holocaust must never be forgotten. Acts of genocide on that scale must constantly remind us of the danger of racism. This general approach should be broadened to acknowledge other historical instances of racist oppression which have left a legacy that has remained with us today. This is particularly so for people of African decent. In 2007 we will celebrate the anniversary of the ending of the slave trade in the British Empire which started the process leading to the ending of slavery. It will provide an opportunity to reflect on the fate of millions who endured the horrors of the middle passage and enslavement.

The persistence of racism and racial discrimination is related to past atrocities including conquest, colonialism, the Holocaust, slavery and other forms of servitude. The legacy of slavery in particular, is at the heart of situations of profound social and economic inequality which continue to affect people of African decent. The fight against racism should therefore recognise the social and economic dimensions of the injustices of the past and to seek to redress them appropriately.

Mr. Chairman,

The countries of the G77 and China is fully committed to the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Platform for Action. We continue to support the work of the Inter-governmental 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 and the implementation of the outcomes of their recently concluded sessions.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, The G77 and China will again table a resolution on the global efforts towards the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of the follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. We look forward to the full support of all members of the international community as a demonstration of the will of all of us to continue to work towards the full and complete elimination of a dangerous evil that has remained with us for too long.

Thank you.