



INDIA
भारत

Please check against delivery

STATEMENT

BY

HON'BLE MRS. JAYA BACHCHAN
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
AND
MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION

on

AGENDA ITEM 69 :
ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

and

AGENDA ITEM 70:
RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION

THIRD COMMITTEE
60th SESSION OF THE
UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK

NOVEMBER 8, 2005

Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations
235 East 43rd Street, New York, NY 10017 • Tel: (212) 490-9660 • Fax: (212) 490-9656
E-Mail: india@un.int • indiaun@prodigy.net

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on Agenda Items 69 and 70 on 'Elimination of racism and racial discrimination' and 'Right of peoples to self-determination'. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Jamaica in his capacity as the Chairman of the Group of 77 under the Agenda Item 69.

The era of colonialism and imperialism is now well behind us. Yet, it is unfortunate that even today attitudes, habits and thought processes foment racial hatred and segregation. The Secretary-General in his Report to the 60th Session of the General Assembly concluded that new forms of racism are receiving increasing attention. The Special Rapporteur on the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance has emphasized the resurgence of racism, discrimination and xenophobia against national, ethnic, cultural and religious minorities, immigrant populations, asylum-seekers and refugees. He has called on the international community to address these issues.

It is time to renew the commitments made at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in Durban in September 2001. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action made practical recommendations to address the intolerance of ideas, faiths, colour and creed, and to move towards dignity and equality for all. We thank the Secretary-General for his report on the global efforts for total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, which contains useful information on the activities of the UN bodies and other stakeholders at all levels.

The battle against racism has to be fought within societies in each nation so as to change thought-processes and attitudes. To this effect, action by States for the promulgation of stringent national laws, their strict implementation, and the setting up of independent national institutions with powers to address manifestations of racism, needs heightened attention.

India's commitment to the elimination of racism is historic and well recognised. The contribution of our great leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi to the fight against racism is significant and memorable. It is, therefore, natural that at independence, adequate safeguards were built into the Indian constitution and the Indian Penal Code against dissemination of ideas that

promote disharmony in the country. The Constitution of India, in Article 15, expressly prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race and this constitutional guarantee is vigorously implemented. The instruments of governance in India buttressed by the energetic and committed non-governmental sector provide necessary support for eliminating all forms of discrimination.

Mr. Chairman,

India has played a leading role in the struggle for decolonisation, and was at the forefront of the movement to secure the right of peoples to self-determination so that those under alien subjugation, domination and exploitation could freely determine their own political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development. Self-determination has long been recognised as the right of peoples of non-self governing colonies and trust territories to independence and self-government.

Today, Palestine remains the unfinished task in the realisation of the right of peoples to self-determination. India has maintained unwavering support and solidarity for the people of Palestine to attain their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination. My delegation has reiterated its full support for the Peace Process and the Quartet Roadmap, which would realise the dream of the peoples of Palestine and Israel to live in peace, side by side, within recognised and secure borders, thus realising the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Attempts continue to be made at the United Nations and elsewhere to reinvent some of the basic principles of the Charter, such as self-determination, and to apply them selectively for narrow political ends. Those who do so, would do well to realise that such a reinterpretation may sweep their own countries into its vortex.

Mr. Chairman

With freedom, comes responsibility. No right, including the right to self-determination, may be used as an instrument to promote subversion and erode the political cohesion or territorial integrity of Member States of the UN. The right to self-determination cannot be abused to encourage secession and undermine pluralistic and democratic states. Moreover, there is no room for self-determination to be distorted and misinterpreted as a right of a

group, on the basis of ethnicity, religion or racial criteria, or any other such categorization, and use it to attempt to undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of state. Ethnic or religious segregation and chauvinism cannot be legitimised on the ground that societies need to be constituted on homogenous lines before they can be tolerant towards diversity and accept multi-culturalism. Such a view will only aid forces of extreme nationalism and narrow chauvinism.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.