

WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM,
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA
AND RELATED INTOLERANCE

Preparatory Committee
First session
Geneva, 1-5 May 2000

GENERAL DEBATE

Note by the Secretariat

1. In accordance with its decisions regarding the organization of work and following the recommendations of the Bureau, the Preparatory Committee began, at its 10th meeting held on 5 May 2000, a general debate on various issues regarding the preparatory process for the World Conference. Statements were made by the delegations of Brazil, Chile, Israel, Mexico, New Zealand and United States of America. Since no time was available for the continuation of the general debate during the last day of the session, the Secretariat was requested to circulate the statements of those delegations inscribed on the list of speakers for the general debate that could not take the floor, in the form of a document of the session.
2. Pursuant to this request, all statements submitted to the Secretariat by the delegations concerned are reproduced, as received, in the annex to the present document. The following delegations submitted the text of their statements:

Governmental delegations: China, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Japan, Senegal, Spain, Turkey and Venezuela (on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States).

Non-governmental delegations: African Commission of Health and Human Rights Promoters, Indian Law Resources Center, Indian Movement Tupaj Amaru, Interfaith International.

Annex

CHINA

As the the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs. Robinson, pointed out in her report to the Commission on Human Rights at its 56th session, racism, racial discrimination and genocide are grave violations of human rights. We note that, although apartheid as a system has vanished from the stage of history and the worldwide campaign against racism has made huge advances, in today's world of swiftly developing globalization no fundamental solution to the underlying question of racism has yet been found and in the altered circumstances racism is emerging in new forms. Xenophobia, intolerance, discrimination against migrant workers and other vulnerable groups, neo-Fascism and neo-Nazism are gaining ground by the day and the tendency is spreading. This is a matter that has already had serious effects and has attracted widespread interest and attention from the international community.

As decided by the General Assembly, the World Conference against Racism is to be held in South Africa in 2001: the Chinese Government welcomes and appreciates this. We hope the Office of the High Commissioner will guarantee ample human, material and financial resources for the preparations, ensuring propitious conditions for the smooth running of the Conference. We also hope that the international community will actively support all the work of the Preparatory Committee and the Conference itself. All members of the Preparatory Committee must display ample flexibility so that the arrangements can quickly be completed and the smooth functioning of the Conference can be assured.

There are deep-rooted social and historical reasons for the emergence, persistence and spread of racism. An inequitable international political and economic order has created all sorts of discrimination and inequalities between States. Within countries, racism often manifests itself in politics, economics, culture and education. The prompt establishment of a fair, equitable international political and economic order and scrupulous respect for the equality of all nations, large or small, rich or poor, before the law, could bring about conditions favourable to the eradication of racism. Every country has a responsibility and duty to promote and protect human rights - to draw up and apply policies and rules on racial equality, especially - and to guarantee that different ethnic groups enjoy equal rights in all areas of social and political life. As regards the new forms of racism that in recent years have been springing up in the West, the developed countries must take swift action to uncover racist acts and do away with racist thinking and the soil in which it proliferates.

We are pleased to note that since the third United Nations Decade against Racism and Racial Discrimination was proclaimed the international community has been paying these problems increasing attention. A series of positive steps have been taken to combat them, to notable effect. Now the third Decade is nearing its close, but its objectives have not all been accomplished. The international community must use a variety of ways and means, including the combination of the third Decade and the World Conference against Racism, to sum up the experience gained and the lessons learned in practical terms and to devise feasible measures. The Chinese Government supports the international community's efforts to combat both the old and the new forms of racism and will participate actively in all the preparatory activities and the Conference itself. To demonstrate how seriously it takes the Conference, the Government has recently decided to contribute funds to it. We shall continue, along with the international community, to strive for the success of the Preparatory Committee and the Conference itself.

INDIA

Despite mankind's impressive triumph against Apartheid, the phenomenon of racism continues to persist and, indeed, to grow. It deeply affects individuals and permeates the work place, schools, the neighbourhood, political organisations, public administration and even systems of justice in several parts of the world. Our global civilisation, which is marked and indeed enriched by diversity, is witness to a recrudescence of extreme forms of exclusivism, hatred and racial discrimination. Racism is taking increasingly violent forms including physical aggression, murders, attacks on immigrants and their property as also on persons belonging to racial minorities. Simultaneously, xenophobia is finding reflection in national legislation relating to the right to asylum and free movement of persons. In many parts of the world, existing legislation against racism remains inadequate and enforcement mechanisms for such laws remain weak.

Reports in the international media point to widespread institutionalised racism in police and administrative services, endemic police brutality and death in custody of persons belonging to racial minorities, racist political ideologies and introduction of immigration and refugee laws with racist overtones. Social and political groups propagating racial superiority continue to thrive unhindered by the very guardians of human rights: the law, the media, civil society and governments. An even more disquieting trend is the misuse of fast spreading information technologies, such as the internet, to propagate racial intolerance.

Particularly disturbing are concepts of regional fortresses bolstered by political accords amongst groups of nations. These concepts tend to generate a climate in which foreigners are regarded as rivals or competitors and a threat to local prosperity, culture and identity. Yet another important aspect concerns the economic underpinnings of racism resulting particularly from the marginalisation of certain societies as a result of the process of globalisation.

In our view, the World Conference against Racism, Racial

Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance should focus on the phenomena that I have just outlined. Regrettably, however, the focus of global action against racism has tended to get blurred and in some cases deliberate attempts are being made to confuse various kinds of discrimination with racism. We oppose all such attempts. We believe that first and foremost, attention needs to be given to the building and strengthening of legal framework against racism which, as already stated, remains unsatisfactory in many parts of the world. We also need to focus on the social attitudes associated with racism which unfortunately cannot be eliminated overnight. Awareness campaigns and education, encouraging tolerance and pluralism, acquire an added importance in this context. Such measures should be accompanied by condemnation and effective action against all propaganda and organisations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race over the others.

The action emerging from the World Conference should be coherent and its goals well defined. The Conference must be instrumental in framing UN programmes and defining follow up action at all levels. It should reaffirm that diversity and pluralism are values that enrich societies rather than undermine them.

Madam Chairperson, the Preamble of the Indian Constitution resolves to secure to all its citizens, justice - social, economic, political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and opportunity and to promote fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and integrity of the nation. Various articles of the Constitution give further expression to this commitment to equality without discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them. A vibrant democracy, an independent judiciary, a vigilant press and an active civil society complement the efforts of the government towards promoting the right of equality of all. An important step towards the abolition of racial discrimination was taken on the eve of coming into force of the Constitution by the passing of the Criminal Law (Removal of Racial Discrimination) Act in 1949. Section 153 A of the Indian Penal Code prohibits dissemination of ideas which promote disharmony on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, caste or community.

Madam Chairperson, in the course of debate in the Preparatory

Committee, we have heard references being made to the caste system and members of the traditionally disadvantaged castes in my country. We are, however, not persuaded that such issues fall within the ambit of the World Conference. Article 1 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination includes in the definition of racial discrimination the term 'descent'. Even though the caste system has been based on birth, it is obvious that the term 'descent' in the Convention clearly refers to racial descent. The term 'caste', on the other hand, is not based on 'race'. It has its origins in the functional division of the Indian society during ancient times. Communities which are today described as 'scheduled castes' comprise castes that were traditionally subjected to severe discrimination and exclusion. However, my government unequivocally condemns all such practices. Some of the first few steps taken by independent India were aimed at combatting such practices. Aside from constitutional and legal safeguards for persons belonging to the scheduled castes, several other steps have also been taken; such as reservation of seats for them in the Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies as also reservation in government services and educational institutions. Special schemes have been undertaken for their economic welfare. Their representation in the higher echelons of government

has grown over the years and some of the senior-most positions at the federal level and in the States, including in the political executive, are today held by persons belonging to erstwhile disadvantaged castes.

To those who have brought up these issues here, let me say that we do not agree with them but we respect their right to express their views. As the representative of a country that cherishes values of democracy and freedom, I could not do otherwise. No country is perfect and India does not claim to be one. We still have a long way to go on the road of socio-economic transformation that we adopted after independence. The Indian political process has enabled not only the scheduled castes but also other weaker sections of the society to put their concerns on the national agenda. Let me conclude by saying that the tools to bring about change, where so desired by the people, are available within the Indian democratic polity itself and do not have to be sought elsewhere. We would request that these views be placed on the Prepcom records.

IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)

It is indeed my honor and privilege to take the floor, once again, in this Committee. I feel obliged to express my profound gratitude to you for your excellent stewardship that has enabled this Committee to function smoothly in the past few days. I am confident that your skillful leadership will bring the current session to a successful conclusion today.

I equally deem it necessary to express my appreciation to the Secretariat for providing the Committee with the reports that have enriched our deliberations in this session. We are also grateful to South Africa on their generous offer to host the World Conference. Undoubtedly, the costly and long struggle of South African people against apartheid and their majestic triumph in this respect will serve as a source of inspiration for the participants in the World Conference.

- 1- A broad participation of the states, national institutions, NGOs and all sectors of the civil society in the Conference can guarantee the success as well as the enforcement of its outcome by the international community. The Preparatory Committee is in fact in a right position to determine the criteria for a meaningful and effective participation of all these actors.
- 2- On the definition of race, the focus of the World Conference should be placed on Article 1(1) of the Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in order to avoid confusion, misinterpretation and misunderstanding in dealing with racism and related issues.
- 3- The agenda of the World Conference should include the items that will lead the Conference to develop action-oriented and practical measures and strategies towards the elimination of racism and all its manifestations. To address the theoretical and conceptual perspectives of the issue is certainly a useful practice.

However, in view of the earnest expectation of many participants, the Conference should refrain from devoting its precious time to the discussions of purely theoretical nature. And instead, it should focus on identifying the mechanisms and resources necessary to implement the strategies and plans of action. Obviously, the conceptual dimensions of racism and its different forms and manifestations have been rightly studied and developed in many forums and by relevant bodies such as the Committee on Racial Discrimination or the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

4- On the highly sensitive and important issue of globalization and its effects on racism, the Conference should duly take into consideration the implications of this phenomenon of the age. We share the view that the benefits of globalization are by no means globally shared. The responsibility of the states is to minimize the negative effects of this phenomenon, to the extent possible. The Conference should encourage states to ensure that their laws and policies, under the banner of globalization, would not result in exclusion, marginalization and exploitation. Societies facing racism and racial discrimination sustain a heavy burden for the different forms and patterns of exclusion. We concur with the view that "sustainable economic development will not be possible without global inclusion." Accordingly, unilateral coercive measures and its discriminatory consequences, which go well beyond national borders, should be examined within the framework of intolerance and exclusion at international level. The World Conference is an appropriate forum to assess the cost of exclusion and benefits of diversity.

5- Globalization is not, of course, the only concern of those who have been adversely affected by its social and economic impacts. The Internet, as a magnificent phenomenon of the day, has acquired a significant role as a special means for exchange of information around the world. Regrettably, this important means has been increasingly used for dissemination of information and propaganda on racism and racial discrimination. Given the increasing trend in the use of the

Internet, a solution must be found to prevent its abuse and the spread of racial hatred. Here, I must not omit to refer to the good report contained in document A/CONF.189 PC.1.5 in respect of the use of Internet "for the purpose of incitement to racial hatred, racial propaganda and xenophobia." In this respect, it is imperative for the World Conference to thoroughly examine the code of conduct and guidelines on hate speech and hate propaganda in the Internet with a view to diminishing the effects of this undesirable and triggering practice.

- 6- The questionnaire prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the progress made by states in enacting legislation to make any racist activities as an offence is of high importance. Responses of states to this questionnaire are indicative of many laws and regulations that exist in respective countries to deal with the issue of racism. The main problem however lies in the area of enforcement of such laws and legislation. In our opinion, for the purpose of the elimination of racial discrimination, the rule of law is instrumental in removing obstacles that hamper the effective implementation of those laws and regulations.
- 7- The creation of a mechanism to facilitate and promote dialogue among cultures, religions and civilizations, within the framework of human rights should be accorded due attention. Such a mechanism can serve as an effective means in reinforcing international cooperation against racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. It reaffirms the idea that combating racism is not only a matter of politics but also an issue of faith and culture.
- 8- To enhance the effectiveness of the UN activities and mechanisms through programs aimed at combating racism, and to create an effective system to follow up implementation of such programs are highly essential for the promotion of international cooperation and the use of available resources. It is therefore appropriate for the World Conference to take up this issue as well.

9- Despite the unacceptable nature of the sordid phenomenon of racism and racial discrimination, only 155 states have acceded to the Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination so far. The World Conference must therefore examine the ways and means to encourage non-member states to adhere to the Convention in a prompt fashion. Indeed, the universal acceptance of the Convention greatly depends upon the designation of a definite time frame by the Conference.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate a crucial point that I elaborated in my statement earlier this week. And that pertains to the importance of preparatory meetings and their valuable contribution to the World Conference. To this end, regional preparatory gatherings should be given serious attention and assistance in order to be empowered to contribute to the Conference significantly and substantively. We believe that such regional meetings have the potential to affect the outcome of the World Conference. The Conference itself has the potential to make a major contribution to the struggle against racism and its various forms and manifestations. It is indeed a paramount opportunity to review the past progress and achievements as well as to offer ways for our future endeavors.

ITALY

The Italian delegation considers that national conferences, seminars, regional conferences and the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance constitute parts of a unique, coherent and interdependent process.

Without the contribution and the participation of all and every grass roots organization of civil society, at all levels, the World Conference, would not be able to express all the potentialities and the commitments that everyone expects from it. The Conference would thus fail to correspond to the hopes of those who still suffer from all contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

On the other hand, Italy, in its capacity of Chair of the European Conference on Racism, commits itself to follow, in close contact with all Chairs of the Regional Conferences, the preparatory process of the World Conference. We took note with great interest of the appeal for resources coming from many delegations and NGO's in order to meet the cost of representatives coming from developing countries.

with you, Mme Chair, with the Bureau of the PrepCom and

I am therefore most pleased to announce, on behalf of my Government, a contribution of \$150,000 specifically earmarked for the preparation of the World Conference Against Racism. This contribution comes in response of the annual appeal of the OHCHR in which the High Commissioner indicated that she has given highest priority to the World Conference in order to reinforce United Nations' policies and programmes to fight racial discrimination and to orient those policies and programmes to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

This contribution- which may be immediately drawn from the year 2000 Italian contribution to the OHCHR - is an initial expression of support for activities related to the World Conference, in particular regional preparatory meetings, as well as for the crucial participation of civil society and NGO's in these meetings.

The Italian Government will consider additional contributions to the OHCHR for the World Conference as it shares the priority and urgency attached by the High Commissioner to the preparatory phase of this conference and so as to support her heavy responsibilities as Secretary-General of the Conference in the search for concrete, tangible and action-oriented results which would move the international community closer in her vision of the new century: that is one human family.

JAPAN

Japan reiterates its commitment to this historical conference on the issue of racism.

The delegation of Japan has been following the discussion with great interest. I wish to share some points which Japan considers to be important.

First, the World Conference against Racism has to promote the elimination of Racism and Racial Discrimination, and it should not be an impediment to measures already being taken. In particular, we must be aware of the fact that, given its sensitive nature, sometimes disseminating information and playing up partial, one-sided and stereotyped aspects of racism and racial discrimination, without giving any thought to the specific nature of the discrimination, results in counter-productive effects. Therefore, we believe that the approach to each case of racial discrimination should vary according to the particular historical and geographical background. A single approach cannot be a remedy for all cases.

Second, we should bear in mind that not all discrimination is racial. Racial discrimination is no doubt one of the most grave violations of human rights, however, confusing other kinds of human rights violations with racial discrimination will cause us to lose the real focus and objectives.

Given the confusion with other forms of discrimination, we must be very careful not to use terms such as 'race' or 'racial discrimination' with regard to people who never wish to be seen as separate or unique in this racial context; but rather wish to have their situations seen in terms of serious human rights violations. In this regard we have great concerns about the trend to treat any kind of human rights violation as related to racial discrimination.

Third, we should put great emphasis on the issue of prevention. Once racial discrimination has taken place, compensation, no matter how great, can only bring about a partial remedy at best for the victims. For this reason, we should spend much time on areas such as education, the role of the media, and other channels through which racism can be prevented. However, as I have stated before, we must keep in mind that an approach which is practical in one case may not be workable in another.

I have quickly illustrated some essential points which we believe are vital. In order to make the World Conference a real success, I hope these aspects will be carefully considered.

SENEGAL

De nombreuses délégations ont souligné le paradoxe de notre époque, une époque marquée d'une part, par le rapprochement des peuples et des Nations, grâce notamment aux satellites et aux fibres optiques, et d'autre part, par la peur et la négation d'autrui qui prennent des proportions alarmantes.

En effet, au moment où, à la faveur de la mondialisation, des forces transnationales se jouent des frontières, des races et des ethnies, un nombre de plus en plus grand de populations et d'organisations politiques adhèrent, sous nos yeux, aux idées racistes et xénophobes.

Nous assistons aussi à l'essor du nationalisme et du tribalisme ainsi qu'à l'émergence de formes nouvelles d'intolérance et de discrimination dont le caractère à la fois fréquent, grave, violent et massif est si gros de menaces contre la paix.

Cette évolution négative semble indiquer que les efforts investis au plan interne par nos Gouvernements respectifs, conjugués avec l'adoption d'instruments juridiques et le lancement de décennies pour la lutte contre le racisme, n'ont pas eu les effets escomptés.

La prochaine conférence mondiale apparaît donc comme une incitation à réfléchir et une invitation à se mobiliser pour mieux appréhender les différentes situations et envisager des solutions concrètes.

Elle devrait permettre aux délégations gouvernementales et non gouvernementales, par le dialogue, de s'enrichir de la différence et de la complémentarité de leurs approches.

Cadre d'écoutes et d'échanges, la Conférence mondiale devrait permettre aussi d'améliorer sensiblement la rapidité, la flexibilité et l'efficacité des actions entreprises contre le racisme, grâce notamment à la mise en place de systèmes d'alerte comportant une dimension prospective suffisamment accentuée.

Il serait également important de sortir de la conférence mondiale avec un mécanisme adapté de coordination des stratégies, des politiques et des actions nouvelles.

Enfin, la conférence mondiale devra accorder une place prioritaire au traitement de la question de l'accroissement qualitatif des ressources consacrées à la lutte contre le racisme.

Pour ma délégation, il faut s'attaquer aux racines profondes du racisme et de la discrimination raciale, à la fois sur le plan national et au niveau international.

Au plan interne, la tolérance et le respect des diversités sont des facteurs essentiels d'équilibre et d'enrichissement. C'est ce qui explique l'interdiction faite au Sénégal à tout parti politique, à toute association, de s'identifier à une race, une ethnie, une secte, une langue ou une religion.

Notre combat national contre toute forme d'exclusion s'appuie sur notre conviction que la discrimination, qu'elle soit manifeste ou diffuse, d'ordre politique, économique, social ou basée sur la race, l'ethnie, la religion ou la langue, est le fondement de toutes les formes de violations des droits de l'homme.

C'est fort de cette conviction, qui se vérifie chaque jour dans sa politique et sa pratique des droits de l'homme, que le Sénégal a offert d'accueillir à Dakar la rencontre régionale africaine préparatoire à la conférence mondiale.

La Conférence Régionale de Dakar ne devrait pas être une Conférence isolée des autres Conférences Régionales.

Ayant, toutes les mêmes objectifs, ces Conférences devraient pouvoir trouver, entre elles et à travers les pays hôtes et les Coordonnateurs régionaux, un mécanisme souple et efficace à même de favoriser un échange interactif.

Ma délégation voudrait saisir l'occasion pour lancer un appel à l'ensemble des pays et institutions partenaires au développement pour contribuer, selon qu'il conviendra, au financement de la Conférence Régionale africaine et des processus nationaux préparatoires.

Dans cette perspective, nous sommes d'avis que tout devra être mis en œuvre pour assurer la participation la plus large possibles des Parlements, des Mouvements de jeunesse et de femmes, des

Universités et Instituts de Recherche , des ONG ainsi que d'autres acteurs intéressés de la société civile.

Je voudrais conclure en insistant sur deux points qui revêtent une grande importance aux yeux de ma délégation.

Il s'agit, d'abord, de l'esprit de la conférence mondiale. Nous souhaitons vivement que cet esprit soit le prolongement de celui qui, sous votre talentueuse direction, a dominé les travaux de cette première session du comité préparatoire. L'esprit de la conférence mondiale devra être porteur de toute l'attention due à cette moitié de l'humanité qui, en temps de paix comme en temps de guerre, est souvent, trop souvent victime de violence. Un tel esprit exclut toute possibilité de confrontation stérile.

Il s'agit, ensuite, du suivi de la conférence mondiale ou plus exactement de notre volonté politique de traduire en actes concrets les recommandations qui seront issues de nos délibérations. A cet égard, ma délégation estime qu'il nous faut accepter de rompre avec le cycle des grandes conférences qui suscitent beaucoup plus d'attentes qu'elles ne règlent de problèmes.

De l'esprit de la conférence et de notre volonté politique dépendra, en grande partie, le succès de l'entreprise.

SPAIN

Gracias a sus esfuerzos esta sesión del Comité Preparatorio ha sido fructífera y nos ha dado una medida exacta del trabajo que queda por realizar, que es mucho. Quiero sobre todo reiterar nuestro apoyo a la Alta Comisionada y a la delegación sudafricana, reafirmando nuestro deseo de colaboración en la preparación de tan importante Conferencia.

Mi Delegación desearía reafirmar algunas ideas con respecto a la preparación de la Conferencia y a la sustancia de los asuntos que durante la misma habrán de ser tratados.

La primera tiene que ver con los procesos preparatorios. Para garantizar el éxito de la Conferencia será preciso asegurar las más amplias contribuciones de los procesos preparatorios regionales. Las aportaciones deberían ser equilibradas y provenir de los más variados orígenes. Cada una habrá de reflejar las distintas realidades del problema. Sólo así nos ayudarán a comprender mejor las causas actuales y manifestaciones más acuciantes del racismo y la discriminación racial. Debemos hacer todo lo posible para garantizar la realización de esos procesos. La Conferencia Europea, así lo esperamos, será una contribución sustantiva a la Conferencia Mundial.

La segunda tiene que ver con las acciones que habrán de llevarse a cabo, a nivel nacional o a cualquier otro nivel, como continuación o complemento de las conferencias preparatorias. El establecimiento de Comisiones nacionales o estructuras de apoyo y difusión de los objetivos de la Conferencia hasta su celebración, como se hizo en muchos casos para la conmemoración del Cincuenta Aniversario de la Declaración Universal, contribuirían a garantizar una plena conciencia y participación de la sociedad civil.

Al final, la Conferencia no debe ser tan solo un acto significado en el tiempo. Debe ser un proceso en el que las sociedades nacionales estén implicadas.

Creemos que la sustancia del orden del día de la Conferencia es una de las claves del éxito futuro de la Conferencia. Sin olvidar los objetivos fundamentales de la Resolución 52/111, sobre los que existe consenso y aprobación general, esperamos que podrá establecerse un orden del día ordenado en torno a cuestiones que han sido evocadas durante esta semana, orientadas al debate, pero, sobre todo, a la acción. No podemos perder una oportunidad histórica de combatir el racismo en sus manifestaciones actuales. Nos preocupan los fenómenos racistas, discriminatorios y xenófobos que se producen todos los días y darles la respuesta adecuada. Hay grupos vulnerables. Para ellos deberemos buscar soluciones efectivas. La Conferencia deberá generar una dinámica posterior de acción en la que todos nos sintamos comprometidos. Me refiero a cuestiones esenciales, como la prevención, las medidas de reparación, la sensibilización social permanente, incluidos los medios de comunicación y los nuevos cauces de expresión del racismo, la educación y una nueva perspectiva para los programas escolares allí donde ello sea preciso. Concentremos nuestros esfuerzos en las tareas importantes y miremos hacia el futuro, sin rehuir los debates, pero comprometidos con lo que verdaderamente importa.

Finalmente, Señora Presidenta, somos conscientes de que este ambicioso programa que nos conducirá hasta la celebración de la Conferencia va a requerir de medios de financiación adecuados. Es un debate aún no concluido. España está dispuesta a prestar su apoyo al proyecto en la medida de sus posibilidades. Ya hemos hecho una significativa contribución y en los meses inmediatos se prestará otra contribución al Fondo de la Oficina del Alto Comisionado. Seguiremos animando a otros a que hagan lo mismo y esperamos que puedan alcanzarse las soluciones definitivas que precisamos en el importante asunto de la financiación.

TURKEY

Racism, xenophobia and intolerance are the worst social diseases of modern times. Whatever name is used, they all imply a hatred, which sometimes comes to surface in the form of physical violence, for no reason other than the features of the victim. In the post Cold-War period, racism has taken up more subtle, contemporary forms. The nature of this « new racism » is different from the forms of racism and exclusion that preceded it: in that, communities of different origin are seen as « different » not so much on account of physical differences as on account of the cultural differences. As such, contemporary forms of racism constitute a violation of human rights and a major threat to social peace and harmony in many multi-cultural societies.

As pointed out by the High Commissioner for Human Rights at the International Day on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, we are witnessing a notable rise in racism and xenophobia. Racism is a leading problem in societies which are yet to absorb the culture of inter-communal, inter-cultural tolerance in the shrinking world.

Although racism is no more manifested in official policies after the fall of Apartheid, the potential for its reappearance at the official level still do exist. The return of racism as a political tool in Europe must be taken as a reminder that past race hatreds, which one might have thought had gone away, are still very much alive. Side by side with these old enmities principally against Semites, are new manifestations of racism, in the form of religious-cultural intolerance against migrant workers, refugees, asylum-seekers, Roma and indigenous peoples.

We are also dismayed to see that there has been an attempt to mix up racism with the concept of « ethnic conflict » which gives way to a confusion of the two distinct phenomena. In our view, ethnic conflicts do not necessarily stem from racism or, to be more precise, from ethnic discrimination.

What distinguishes a racial act from its likes is that this act is « racially motivated ». Be it a physical action like violence or non-physical action like discrimination, verbal and written abuse, before terming this action as racial or non-racial one should look into whether or not there is racial motivation behind it. Determining a racial motivation is indeed difficult, since the perpetrator has no aim in his mind but a feeling of dislike towards the victim because of his or her different physical or cultural traits. As such, acts of racism are a kind of stress discharging situations. Stress is discharged on an « other community ». The victim is unaware of this ailing psychology before it presents itself in an act.

On the other hand, in a situation of ethnic animosity or ethnic conflict there are, at least two parties which know each other and the ill-feelings towards each other and which compete for gaining advantage over a given material or moral stake. The stake may be land or political power or economic benefit, anything which brings about a certain advantage.

Another impediment which prevents us to take immediate and effective action against racism is the intention to give emphasis solely on the « discrimination » aspect of the phenomenon. This excludes such grave manifestations of racism as violence, harassment, molestation, hate speech and hate propaganda.

In this context, I would like to draw the attention of the Preparatory Committee that hate speech is tremendously on the rise. Racists have discovered in the new communication

technologies a useful tool by which they can spread their virulent and destructive prejudices. Hate speech is disseminated through the Internet at little financial cost and, in some countries, without the risk of penal consequences.

The Third World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance will take place against the backdrop of such conceptual conflict which unfortunately continues to exist despite the ever growing immensity of the problem. It comes at an appropriate time, ~~since~~ firstly, we need to re-evaluate what has and has not been achieved and, secondly, we must develop new strategies based on healthy diagnoses.

The World Conference must be action-oriented. It must focus on the contemporary forms of racism and develop a dynamic, comprehensive and result-producing Plan of Action. As stated by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, it must be « a people's conference », encompassing the civil society, inclusive of representatives of vulnerable groups. And, it must aim at constructing a global vision for a future without racism, diversity, equality, tolerance and mutual respect.

VENEZUELA

DECLARACION DE LOS PAISES DEL GRUPO LATINOAMERICANO Y DEL CARIBE EN EL DEBATE GENERAL DE LA PRIMERA REUNION DEL COMITE PREPARATORIO DE LA CONFERENCIA MUNDIAL CONTRA EL RACISMO, LA DISCRIMINACION RACIAL, XENOFOBIA Y OTRAS FORMAS CONEXAS DE INTOLERANCIA.

LA IDENTIDAD DE AMERICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE SE ASOCIA INTIMAMENTE AL CONCEPTO DE MULTIETNICIDAD; POR ELLO, Y POR SU COMPROMISO CON LA PROMOCION Y PROTECCION DE LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS, EL GRUPO LATINOAMERICANO Y DEL CARIBE ASIGNA LA MAXIMA PRIORIDAD A LA CONFERENCIA MUNDIAL CONTRA EL RACISMO, LA DISCRIMINACION RACIAL, LA XENOFOBIA Y LAS FORMAS CONEXAS DE INTOLERANCIA.

LOS SIETE OBJETIVOS CONTENIDOS EN EL PARRAFO 28 DE LA RESOLUCION 52/111 DE LA ASAMBLEA GENERAL CONSTITUYEN UN MARCO INDISPENSABLE PARA LOS TRABAJOS DE LA CONFERENCIA, QUE, SIN DUDA, SERAN ENRIQUECIDOS CON LOS APORTES DE LOS DIFERENTES PAISES, GRUPOS REGIONALES, ORGANOS DEL SISTEMA DE NACIONES UNIDAS Y ORGANIZACIONES NO GUBERNAMENTALES.

LA REGION ESTUDIA CON INTERES TODAS LAS PROPUESTAS QUE HAN SIDO FORMULADAS.

UNA SEGUNDA REFERENCIA BASICA LA CONSTITUYE TAMBIEN LA RESOLUCION 54/154 DE LA ASAMBLEA GENERAL, QUE REAFIRMA QUE LA CONFERENCIA MUNDIAL DEBE ORIENTARSE HACIA LA ACCION. TAMBIEN SE ESTIMA QUE LA CONFERENCIA DEBE CONCENTRARSE EN LA ADOPCION DE MEDIDAS DE CARACTER PRACTICO PARA ERRADICAR EL RACISMO, LA DISCRIMINACION RACIAL, LA XENOFOBIA Y LAS FORMAS CONEXAS DE INTOLERANCIA, INCLUIDAS MEDIDAS DE PREVENCION, EDUCACION Y PROTECCION, ASI COMO LA CREACION DE RECURSOS EFICACES, TOMANDO PLENAMENTE EN CONSIDERACION LOS INSTRUMENTOS DE DERECHOS HUMANOS EXISTENTES.

EL GRULAC TIENE GRANDES EXPECTATIVAS EN LOS RESULTADOS DE ESTA CONFERENCIA MUNDIAL. OPINAMOS QUE LA CONFERENCIA DEBE CULMINAR CON LA ADOPCION DE UNA DECLARACION Y UN PLAN

DE ACCION QUE CONTENGAN MEDIDAS PRACTICAS Y EFICACES Y ASEGURAR EL SEGUIMIENTO DE SUS RECOMENDACIONES.

SIN EMBARGO, NUESTRO GRUPO REGIONAL TAMBIEN ENTIENDE QUE LA LUCHA CONTRA ESTOS FLAGELOS ES UNA RESPONSABILIDAD COTIDIANA QUE NO SE AGOTARA EN LOS RESULTADOS DE LA CONFERENCIA. POR ESO, CREEMOS QUE EL COMBATE, LA PREVENCION Y LA ERRADICACION DEL RACISMO, LA DISCRIMINACION RACIAL Y LA XENOFOBIA, ESTAN INTIMAMENTE RELACIONADOS CON LA PLENA VIGENCIA DE TODOS LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS, TANTO LOS CIVILES Y POLITICOS COMO LOS ECONOMICOS, SOCIALES Y CULTURALES ASI COMO EL DERECHO AL DESARROLLO.

LA COMISION DE DERECHOS HUMANOS APROBO SIN VOTACION LA INICIATIVA DE UN PAIS DE NUESTRA REGION, Y CON EL FIRME APOYO DEL GRULAC, LA RESOLUCION SOBRE LA INCOMPATIBILIDAD ENTRE EL RACISMO Y LA DEMOCRACIA QUE SUPONE, ENTRE OTROS ASPECTOS FUNDAMENTALES, LA PLENA VIGENCIA DEL ESTADO DE DERECHO. EL GRULAC TAMBIEN CONSIDERA QUE LA LUCHA CONTRA LA POBREZA CONSTITUYE UN ELEMENTO FUNDAMENTAL EN LA LUCHA CONTRA EL RACISMO, LA DISCRIMINACION RACIAL Y LA XENOFOBIA.

NUESTRA REGION DESTACA A LA EDUCACION, EN TODOS SUS NIVELES, FORMAS Y EXPRESIONES, COMO UNO DE LOS INSTRUMENTOS PREVENTIVOS MAS EFICACES EN LA LUCHA CONTRA ESOS FLAGELOS.

LA CONFERENCIA Y SUS RECOMENDACIONES DEBERAN PRESTAR ATENCION A LA NECESIDAD DE PROMOVER LA APLICACION EFECTIVA DE LAS LEYES NACIONALES E INSTRUMENTOS INTERNACIONALES EXISTENTES EN MATERIA DE LUCHA CONTRA EL RACISMO, LA DISCRIMINACION RACIAL, LA XENOFOBIA, ASI COMO ALENTAR EL DESARROLLO LEGISLATIVO EN CONTRA DE LAS EXPRESIONES CONTEMPORANEAS DE ESTAS PRACTICAS. NOS PREOCUPA PARTICULARMENTE LA AUSENCIA DE REGULACIONES QUE, SIN PERJUICIO DE LA LIBERTAD DE EXPRESION, ASEGUREN EL USO RESPONSABLE DE INTERNET Y DE OTRAS NUEVAS TECNOLOGIAS DE LA INFORMACION.

EL GRULAC CONSIDERA TAMBIEN QUE LA CONFERENCIA DEBERA FORMULAR RECOMENDACIONES QUE ORIENTEN EL DISEÑO DE POLITICAS PUBLICAS PARA PROTEGER, A TRAVES DE MEDIDAS PRACTICAS, A AQUELLOS SECTORES, GRUPOS O PERSONAS AFECTADAS, Y A AQUELLOS PARTICULARMENTE VULNERABLES AL RACISMO, LA DISCRIMINACION RACIAL Y LA XENOFOBIA EN TODAS SUS FORMAS Y MANIFESTACIONES.

NUESTRA REGION ESPERA QUE LA DECLARACION Y EL PLAN DE ACCION QUE RESULTEN DE LA III CONFERENCIA MUNDIAL NO EXCLUYAN NINGUNA DE LAS PREOCUPACIONES Y SITUACIONES ESPECIFICAS DE CADA UNA DE LAS REGIONES. SOLO DE ESA MANERA, LA CONFERENCIA MUNDIAL CONTRA EL RACISMO, LA DISCRIMINACION RACIAL, LA XENOFOBIA Y FORMAS CONEXAS DE INTOLERANCIA SE CONSTITUIRA EN UN VERDADERO APORTE A LA HUMANIDAD DEL SIGLO XXI.

COMMISSION AFRICAINE DES PROMOTEURS DE LA SANTÉ
ET DES DROITS DE L'HOMME (CAPSDH)

Au nom des organisations et associations africaines qui ont pris part activement au débats de cette première session du Comité préparatoire de la Conférence mondiale contre le racisme, la discrimination raciale, la xénophobie et l'intolérance qui y est associée, je vous remercie de nous donner la parole pour exprimer toute notre gratitude à nos collègues des autres régions du monde, et aux distingués délégués et experts du Comité préparatoire de la Conférence Mondiale.

Je voudrais aussi et surtout remercier le Groupe africain pour la qualité et le pertinence de ses propositions qui augurent une nouvelle manière d'identifier le racisme aux fins de son éradication en tant qu'affront flagrant à la dignité humaine.

Les ONG et les associations africaines, tout au long de cette semaine, ont constamment gardé à l'esprit que la plupart des questions relatives aux droits humains portent sur la dignité humaine et rendent à peine justice à l'importance que le continent africain et ses fils de la diaspora, de par le monde, occupent dans cette problématique.

Le slogan qui nous est proposé : **"Unis pour combattre le racisme : égalité, justice, dignité"** doit signifier pour la communauté internationale un nouveau réveil. Il s'agit donc d'une nouvelle révolution de la pensée devenue une nécessité si l'on veut qu'écloso enfin une nouvelle manière de voir l'Afrique en tant que berceau des origines, et les Africains.

Les ONG et les associations africaines ont donc fait le constat selon lequel le continent africain, récipiendaire de la Conférence mondiale contre le racisme, est et reste toujours perçu comme un simple pourvoyeur de matières premières. Par conséquent, on ne peut et ne veut comprendre ni son rôle primordial dans l'équilibre de l'humanité, ni sa capacité à étonner l'humanité aujourd'hui ravagée par le pessimisme et murée dans le mépris, le déni de justice et de repli sur soi. Tel est le contexte mondial actuel et les défis africains contemporains que l'on peut résumer par le **paradoxe d'une pauvreté accablante et une richesse fantastique**. A cet égard, nous devons sans cesse rappeler que le monde tire plus de 90 % de ses diamants de l'Afrique, 70 % de son or, un tiers de son cuivre, un quart de son uranium et j'en passe.

On n'a pas encore déterminé avec précision les réserves du continent africain en autres minéraux importants, dont le pétrole, ou encore la variété de ses cultures, de ses trésors scientifiques, de son trésor spirituel, de son art et de ses richesses.

Les ONG et les associations africaines sont arrivées à la conclusion suivante : les violences qui se déchaînent sur notre monde que l'économie a rendu prospère pour les uns, infernal pour les autres, suggèrent qu'il nous faut trouver rapidement d'autres voies. Cette Conférence mondiale devrait servir dès lors, partout dans le monde, à rappeler les souffrances, les luttes, les conséquences de la douloureuse expérience de la traite négrière et de la colonisation.

L'Afrique et les Africains, de par le monde, au lieu de recevoir des leçons, devraient plutôt en donner : du moins, ils devraient rappeler que c'est eux qui en ce domaine précisément, assument une responsabilité de témoignage universel d'un devoir de mémoire de la souffrance.

Ce n'est pas à nous Africains qu'il faut prêcher les droits de l'homme. Nous sommes par excellence ceux à qui on a dénié ces droits, ceux à qui on continue de les dénier par plusieurs types d'attitudes et d'autres systèmes apparemment plus subtils mais également pernicieux.

Il paraît donc juste et urgent que la communauté internationale, à l'orée du troisième millénaire pose précisément, avec clarté la question de la réparation.

Les peuples africains et la diaspora constituent aujourd'hui un important ensemble de pays dans le système international, et donc de ressources humaines, de ressources naturelles mais aussi de problèmes, de misères et de malheurs. Voilà, Madame la Présidente, ce qui, directement provoque un blocage encore aujourd'hui dans le fonctionnement de nos affaires en général, y compris celui de nos institutions.

La problématique du racisme met en relief la préoccupation majeure de toute la famille humaine particulièrement des populations africaines : il s'agit pour nous, d'une part du droit sacré à la vie, et, d'autre part, du droit à la santé et au bien être.

Les ONG et les associations africaines, dans le sillage du Groupe africain, expriment avec force leur courageuse fidélité à une éthique et des valeurs qui nous sont communes. Elles souhaitent que cette Conférence mondiale, qui est notre chance et notre espérance, permette de changer le destin des peuples africains dans **le principe de la solidarité qui devrait être érigé en obligation reconnue entre les diverses nations et les divers peuples. Le principe de solidarité paraît un des éléments fondamentaux d'une éthique prospective appliquée dans le champ du devenir politique mondial.**

INDIAN LAW RESOURCE CENTER

The United Nations has declared this decade to be the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples. It is thus with high expectations that we have come to this first Preparatory Committee meeting for the World Conference Against Racism. You have said Madame Chair, along with the High Commissioner on Human Rights and many of the governmental and NGO delegates in attendance, that this is to be a conference of action. We enthusiastically agree and would like to make the following recommendations to this Preparatory Committee.

Racism as it affects indigenous peoples must be a prominent part of the agenda for the World Conference. Indigenous peoples must therefore be able to participate freely and fully in the Conference. We again recommend that those indigenous organizations that are already accredited to the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, the Working Group on the Draft Declaration on the Rights on Indigenous Peoples, the Working Group on the permanent forum and the Working Group on Minorities be fast-tracked for accreditation at the World Conference.

Once accredited, indigenous organizations must be able to directly participate in a meaningful way. Because this is the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples, we strongly urge you to accept the recommendations of the Chairperson of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, Professor Erica-Irene Daes, that a seminar on indigenous peoples be held in preparation for the Conference; that a roundtable on indigenous issues be held parallel to the conference and funded by the Voluntary Fund; and that the World Conference invite indigenous representatives to address the plenary session.

Finally, in keeping with the emphasis on action, we propose the following objectives for this conference:

(1) A first step in ensuring effective action against racism as it affects indigenous peoples, is the acknowledgment by nations that racism is deeply

embedded in the laws and policies which they inflict upon the indigenous peoples that live within their borders. The time has come to acknowledge that widespread, legally sanctioned discrimination and exploitation have put indigenous peoples at the bottom of nearly every socio-economic indicator that exists. This racism continues to dominate the laws and policies directed at indigenous peoples today. In the United States, indigenous peoples can be unilaterally deprived of their lands and resources without due process of law and without compensation; indigenous governments can be terminated at the whim of Congress; treaties may be arbitrarily abrogated; and the religious freedom of indigenous peoples goes unprotected. Further, indigenous peoples throughout the world are denied their right to self-determination and their rights to their own land and resources. These are just a few manifestations of the institutionalized racism faced by indigenous peoples today;

(2) The final documents and program of action adopted by the Conference should specifically address racism as it affects indigenous peoples and recommend that states immediately take steps to renounce and eradicate the racist foundations of the laws and policies which they apply to indigenous peoples;

And finally,

(3) The Conference should recommend the adoption of the draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in its present form and declares that Indigenous peoples are "peoples" with the right of self-determination.

INDIAN MOVEMENT TUPAJ AMARU

1.- El racismo y la discriminación racial que hoy azotan con brutalidad a las capas mas vulnerables de la sociedad, son fenómenos sociales tan viejos como el hombre. los perjuicios de superioridad racial en sus diversas formas y manifestaciones han estado omnipresente en la historia de la humanidad.

2.- Sus origenes remontan a la pre-historia de hombre, es decir a los albores de la sociedad primitiva llamada la "guerra de fuego", donde surge la sacrasanta propiedad privada y los hombres comienzan a atacarse con armas rudimentarias por un espacio de territorio, por los alimentos, por la caza, por una cabaña, incluso por una amante.

3.-En la larga evolución histórica, tan pronto el hombre se habia separado del mundo animal para devenir un ser pensante y ~~dotado de razón~~, la sociedad históricamente determinada por las leyes económicas, se divide en clases antagónicas y no en razas, como suelen hacernos creer.

4.-Los hombres no podian controlar sus primeros instintos y pulsiones para apropiarse de la riqueza. Entonces, los defensores del mito de la "pureza de sangre", solian y suelen aún afirmar que el odio racial está arraigado en la naturaleza misma del hombre y, que la humanidad estaría condenada a resignarse ante este flagelo universal. Esta teoría es falsa. Si bien el comportamiento del hombre se guia y se inspira en la razón y el instinto al mismo tiempo, pero no justifica en absoluto que la discriminación racial sea una fatalidad de la historia.

5.- En el correr de los siglos XV y XVI ya se expandia en Espana la teoria de "pureza de sangre "del colonizador, en virtud de la cual se pretendia establecer la siguiente "ecuación = una raza es una civilización. A la base de esta idea medieval se encuentra el determinismo biológico de tipo hereditario.

6.- Según el invento ibérico de la institución llamada de "Estatutos de limpieza de sangre", el racismo se determinaba a partir de la correlación existente entre el patrimonio genético de una parte y las aptitudes intelectuales y las facultades morales de otra parte. La supuesta "raza superior" se atribuyó el derecho de someter a su dominación, explotar y eventualmente destruir a los vencidos de las civilizaciones ancestrales.

7.--Pero en una fase históricamente determinada, la fatalidad del destino decidió de otra manera la vida material y espiritual de las civilizaciones ancestrales.

La guerra de conquista y el despotismo de la colonización europea dislocaron con violencia las estructuras sociales sobre las cuales descansaban las civilizaciones aborígenes. Así llegó el colonialismo al mundo chorreando sangre de cabeza a pies, predestinado para imponer a los vencidos un nuevo orden

basado en la economía de mercado que conlleva la servidumbre y la esclavitud de los nativos y negros.

8.-La evolución de la historia nos interpela que, el racismo nace, resurge y se nutre en los factores económicos e intereses egoistas por la usurpación de riqueza y poder que se traducen en los nacionalismos de conotación expansionista, los conflictos étnicos, religiosos, terminando en la epuración racial.

9.- Ha llegado el momento en que las Metrópolis occidentales del Norte y las élites dominantes de Sur hagan un examen de conciencia acerca de sus políticas etnocéntricas, económicas y sociales que constituyen un obstáculo mayor a la realización de los objetivos del Tercer Decenio de la lucha contra el Racismo y la discriminación racial.

10.- Las metrópolis coloniales tienen una deuda inconmensurable con los pueblos indígenas, la población negra y las minorías, condenados a la esclavitud, a la discriminación racial y el genocidio que aun perduran en el comienzo de este milenio.

11.-Incumbe a las antiguas y nuevas potencias coloniales del Occidente el deber moral de asumir su reponsabilidad política y histórica en la reparación de los daños inconmensurables causados por la colonización y reconocer a los pueblos autoctonos, los negros, mulatos y minorías una justa indemnización por el saqueo de sus riquezas y el exterminio de las comunidades históricas. La Conferencia Mundial no tendría sentido, si los Estados se niegan a reconocer la reparación e indemnización a las victimas del flagelo racial.

INTERFAITH INTERNATIONAL

The several NGOs subscribing to this intervention are: the African Commission of Health and Human Rights Promoters (CAPS); Interfaith International; the International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR); and the World Federation of United Nations Association (WFUNA).

We wish to call the attention of the Preparatory Committee to the concerns of our NGOs supporting the World Conference. At the 55th Session of the Commission on Human Rights, during the sessions of the "Open-Ended Working Group" on the subject of the World Conference, many NGOs submitted a series of proposals which were appended to the official report (Document E/CN.4/1999/16).

Mme Chairperson, we note with great interest the process of preparation for the World Conference at the national level. A large number of NGOs are already contacting the High Commissioners Office, either directly or through the World Conference web-site, inquiring about NGO participation next year. The NGOs have organised themselves in order to spread the information about the World Conference in all the regions, and the feedback has been most encouraging.

As far as giving a structure to the topics to be discussed at the World Conference is concerned, we note the efforts of the *European Regional Preparatory Meeting*, sponsored by the Council of Europe to be held in October in Strasbourg, with a NGO Conference to be held alongside. We understand that other regions are preparing their own conferences, and we sincerely hope that they will act quickly to establish their priorities for the World Conference.

The undersigned NGOs believe strongly that every effort must be made to engage the widest public in the struggle to eliminate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. We call on governments to assist in the establishment of national and local committees that bring together NGOs and movements working for the elimination of racism and discrimination in preparation for the World Conference and beyond it. Furthermore, we call on governments to contribute generously to the UN Voluntary Fund for the World Conference, including contributions to ensure the organisation of a dynamic parallel NGO Forum, and to help finance participation of NGOs and networks from all regions of the world, in particular those who are victims of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia.

We believe that NGOs and groups and networks actively working for the elimination of racism and racial discrimination that do not have consultative status with the United Nations have much to contribute to the preparatory process of the World Conference. We therefore call on the Preparatory Committee to open the way for their participation in its sessions, now and in the future.

Last year NGOs, mostly related to the Conference of NGOs in consultative status with the UN (CONGO) helped to establish an NGO Planning Committee. Its "Interim Steering Committee" disseminated information about the World Conference and the parallel NGO Forum, both to NGOs with and without consultative status. The NGOs meeting this week have proposed an even more representative form of world-wide NGO Coordination and are thereby making a considerable advance in the process of creating a structure to guide NGO input into the World Conference.

Mme Chairperson, the undersigned NGOs are convinced that the topics outlined in the Commission on Human Rights Working Group paper of the 55th Session need to be discussed at the World Conference. In many regions racism is again becoming a serious threat to democracy and peace. We hope that preparations for this World Conference will touch the public at large, and that the Conference itself will be a significant step in ridding the world of this destructive phenomena.

There is need to take more vigorous action in response to racist acts and discriminatory practices wherever and whenever they occur. Governments and civil society must take up the anti-racist cause as a high priority issue. Throughout the world, members of racial, ethnic, national and religious minorities are subjected to racism, discrimination and intolerance. Particularly vulnerable are groups that are economically or socially marginalised, especially women and children.

Thus, Mme Chairperson, we call for a wide-reaching *Plan of Action* and government commitments to result from the World Conference. The elaboration of such a plan should begin now. The positive results of many governments' *active programmes against racism* could be looked at together, evaluated and combined into a common proposal for international use. The institutes, both governmental and private, and NGOs active in combating racism, should begin joint consultations before the World Conference with a view to adopting common methods used to *inform the public* about racist phenomena. *Educators*, both

within government delegations and civil society, and NGOs should start organising and planning further consultations to be held at the World Conference. The *media* should be encouraged to prepare for the Conference in a way that a joint plan of action might emerge. In this context we must realistically combat the use of the media for racist ends.

In conclusion, Mme Chairperson, recognising that the elimination of racism is one of the major keys to the peace and well-being of our societies in the coming century, the undersigned NGOs hope sincerely that this Preparatory Committee will fully succeed in achieving its aims, and the structuring of the World Conference will be moved forward significantly.
