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RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED FORMS OF INTOLERANCE: FOLLOW-UP TO AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DURBAN DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION

Joint written statement* submitted by the International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations (ISMUN), a non-governmental organization in general consultative status, the African Association of Education for Development (ASAFED), the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), Espace Afrique International, the Indian Movement "Tupaj Amaru", the Indigenous World Association (IWA), Interfaith International, North-South XXI, the Southern Diaspora Research and Development Center (SDRDC), Tiye International, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), non-governmental organizations in special consultative status, the International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) and the Pan African Movement (PAM), non-governmental organizations on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[31 August 2009]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Civil Society Forum 2009 for the Durban Review Conference[1]

The Civil Society Forum for the Durban Review Conference was held in Geneva April 17 to 19, 2009 as a Peoples preparation and input for the Durban Review Conference. It assembled some 400 participants from all regions of the world who met in Plenary Sessions and engaged in intensive discussions in 8 working groups relating to the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

The final document of the Civil Society Forum was adopted by consensus by the participants after thorough deliberations and represent an important NGO and Civil Society contribution to the work against racism after the Durban Review Conference.

The Civil Society Forum was the only large NGO and Civil Society event in connection with the Review Conference that was based on full support for the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, with representation from all regions and which covered a broad range of Durban issues.

Geneva 2009 Declaration Against Racism

FROM THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE GENEVA CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM 2009

People United Against Racism - A Time to Speak Out

We participants of the Civil Society Forum for the Durban Review Conference 2009 held in Geneva 17 to 19 April strongly welcome the holding of the Durban Review Conference and reaffirm our full and dedicated support for the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action (DDPA) adopted by the 2001 World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

We commit ourselves to renew our efforts and intensify our work for the implementation of the 2001 landmark programme which constitutes a solid foundation in the struggle of humankind against racism and racial discrimination.

We express our deep concern over the decision by some powerful countries to boycott this important conference which falls short of their Charter obligations to combat racism and promote human rights for all.

We are appalled by the many obstacles that have been put in the way of preparing and holding of the Durban Review Conference as a result of lack of political will resulting in the erosion of support for the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action among some member states which also has been reflected in the lack of United Nations support and encouragement for Civil Society preparations for the Review Conference.

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[1] The following NGOs without consultative status and many more share the views expressed in this statement: African European Women's Movement "Stichting Sophiedela", Afro-Swedish National Association, Retorno a la Tierra, Costa Rica, Spanish Society for International Human Rights Law, Stichting National Monument "Dutch Slavery Past", English International Association of Lund, PanAFSTRAG Europe/NL

We strongly believe and insist that the outcome of the 2001 Durban Conference is and must be recognized on an equal level with the outcomes of other major United Nations conferences, Summits and Special sessions and that strong and concerted actions need to be taken by the United Nations, Member States and Civil Society to reinforce its standing and rightful place at the top of the agenda of global priorities.

We must not forget the historical importance of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action in declaring the transatlantic slave trade as a crime against humanity. It also provided an understanding and clear analyses of the emergence of the present day world and the deep roots of racism in the transatlantic slave trade and colonial era. Its remaining legacies are felt throughout the world in terms of situations of profound social and economic inequality, hatred, bigotry, racism and prejudice.

While noting with appreciation all the measures taken since 2001 to combat racism we are alarmed that today we are witnessing an upsurge of racism in many countries as a result of neglect to address root causes and institutionalised racism. This has been further exacerbated by the deepening world economic crisis. Racism is now taking increasingly violent and aggravated forms in many countries and regions.

We express our concern at the increasing acts of xenophobia against migrants, migrant workers and members of their family, especially by the migration policies of many countries that lead to aggravated forms of discrimination. Migrant workers and their families must be granted residency and equal rights in the countries in which they contribute through their work.

We are equally concerned by the increasing discrimination, violation and exploitation faced by refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, internally displaced persons and trafficked persons, including women and children, as this constitute an affront to human rights and human dignity. We seek all the international community to put the responsibility of all violations of their rights and all forms of racism and discriminations against them on the host countries under the international law.

We emphasise the multiple and aggravated forms of discrimination experienced by women globally, at work and at home, especially marginalized and displaced women, which is exacerbated by racism, racial discrimination and related intolerance and leads to the denial of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and call for the full respect and implementation of these rights urgently.

We call on states to adopt strong and effective measures and support initiatives for children and youth relating to work, culture and education so as to eliminate social exclusion and better counter racism, intolerance and conflicts.

We are alarmed by the fact that counterterrorism measures after 9/11 have led to the rise of increased racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, racial intolerance and religious stereotyping as new and contemporary manifestations of racism. We condemn the stereotyping of religious minorities and call for this to be closely monitored and addressed by the United Nations bodies. This includes incitement to hatred based on religious believes, in particular the serious increase in islamophobia. We call for the review of the Anti-terror legislation and measures and actively bring them into accord with international human rights standards.

We will continue our work against all forms of racial and religious discrimination, including afrophobia, anti-Arabism, anti-Ziganism, anti-Semitism, islamophobia, anti-African and Indigenous Peoples ancestral spiritual traditions

We acknowledge that poverty affects the majority of people world-wide who suffer from unequal distribution of wealth and reiterate that the present global finance and trade system must be restructured and reformed in the interest of justice and the equitable sharing of resources at all levels. This is on behalf of the healing of a world still divided by the exploitation of peoples' resources and the past and continuing legacies of slave trade and colonialism.

We reiterate that the barbarism of the transatlantic slave trade stands out in the history of humanity in terms of its magnitude and organised nature and express our concern over any attempt to revise the verdict of history of this unparalleled crime against humanity. We call for the full implementation of the Durban agreements on the transatlantic slave trade and the full integration of those provisions as well as those of the recent General Assembly resolutions in the work of the United Nations Durban follow up mechanisms. Such an active role for the Durban follow up mechanisms should provide the ground for a collaborative effort to bring the matters of remembrance, identification of legacies, apologies, reparations, repatriation and other forms of remedies forward.

We call on the United Nations to create a Permanent Forum for Peoples of African Descent and African diaspora in order to ensure their visibility in the UN system.

We note the continued failure of the international community to recognize the destruction of many of the world's indigenous peoples through the impositions of the dominant culture in the countries they live. We call on the international community to renew the attention to this and to recognize the historical debt the world owes to indigenous peoples worldwide.

We are appalled by the ongoing atrocities, extreme forms of institutionalised discrimination and racist colonialist practices committed against the Palestinian People struggling against all odds to achieve their inalienable right to self-determination according to international law. We condemn the continued impunity of the perpetrators and those responsible of these crimes against humanity and war crimes and call for immediate measures to bring them to justice. Our solidarity with the Palestinian People will remain firm and alive until the full achievement of all their rights, including the right to return, under international law enshrined in the resolutions of the United Nations.

We strongly deplore the silence in the official Durban process and documents regarding discrimination based on work and descent, including caste based discrimination, which affects some 260 million people globally, especially women, violating their individual and collective rights and dignity for generations. We call on the United Nations and international community to support their cause for equality and justice.

We express our strong concern about crimes against humanity and war crimes in Darfur with massive violations of human rights of civilian populations, the continuing multiple, racial and discriminatory acts and mass rapes of women. We urge the international community to implement the relevant United Nations resolutions.

We affirm our solidarity with all victims groups and express our concern of over any acts of harassments and intimidation of persons and groups combating racism and racial discrimination. We call for the release of human rights defenders and community and political leaders unjustly imprisoned for their engagement against racism and racial discrimination.

We express our determination to actively use all the relevant instruments and mechanisms for the protection of Human Rights, especially the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination of Women, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education and the ILO related conventions. We call for their speedy universal ratification.

The 2001 World Conference Against Racism became a catalyst for networking and activism for anti-racist movements and many victims groups. It allowed them to take their rightful place in partnership with the movements against war and occupation, for human rights, for sustainable development and the quest for social justice, believing that another world is possible and necessary.

Now is the time for a declaration of resolve to be made by Peoples, Governments and the United Nations to safeguard the achievements of the World Conference Against Racism. It is time to provide for the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action in its entirety.

We call for Governments to decide on a 10-year Summit, a Durban +10, to review the continued implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

We declare that irrespective of the decisions of Governments we will join forces with all people of good will to launch our own Durban + 10 process in solidarity with all victims groups in order to ensure that the combat against all forms of racism and racial discrimination is moved forward.

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