E– Bulletin for NGOs on the Durban Review Conference

This new series of E-bulletins is issued by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide regular updates and guidance for NGOs in the lead up to the Durban Review Conference, which is scheduled to be held in Geneva from 20 to 24 April 2009.

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Background

In 2001, the United Nations organized the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa. The conference was attended by more than 10,000 people from all regions of the world and led to the adoption by consensus of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, which to date is the most important framework in the combat against racism and racial discrimination. In 2006, the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 61/49, decided to convene in 2009 a Review Conference on the Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and requested the Human Rights Council to undertake preparation for the Conference.

1. Overview of the second Substantive Session of the PrepCom for the Durban Review Conference

1.1 Main developments:

The second Substantive Session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the Durban Review Conference met in Geneva from 6 to 17 October 2008. It followed a first substantive PrepCom session which was held from 21 April to 2 May 2008.

The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, opened the session by underlining the need to embrace a multi-faceted approach to achieve the maximum gain from the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA). This approach includes a greater attention paid to input, information and expertise from civil society on anti-racism.

To access the High Commissioner's speech:
http://www.unhchr.ch/huricane/huricane.nsf/view01/6BC9732D5EB6CB18C12574DA0037070C?opendocument

The session saw the beginning of negotiations on the draft Outcome Document of the Review Conference. The PrepCom agreed to work as a Drafting Committee and elected five facilitators to guide the exercise for each of the five sections of the draft outcome document. Each section was chaired by a representative of one of the regional group:

- Nigeria (African Group) chaired the negotiations on the first section of the draft outcome document (*Review of progress and assessment of implementation of the DDPA by all stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels, including assessing the contemporary manifestations of racism, racial, discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance*);
- Argentina (Group of Latin American and Caribbean States) chaired negotiations on the second section (*Assessment of the effectiveness of the existing Durban follow-up mechanisms and other United Nations mechanisms dealing with the issue of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in order to enhance them*);
- Turkey (West-European and Others Group) on the third section (*Promotion of the universal ratification and implementation of the ICERD and proper consideration of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*);
- The Russian Federation (Eastern European Group) on the fourth section (*Identification and sharing of best practices achieved at the national, regional and international levels in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance*);
- Sri Lanka (Asian Group) on the fifth section (*Identification of further concrete measures and initiatives at all levels for combating and eliminating all manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in order to foster the implementation of the DDPA and to address challenges and impediments thereto, including in the light of developments since the adoption of the DDPA in 2001*).

During the first week of the session, Member States made an initial compilation of suggested paragraphs for the Outcome Document of the Durban Review Conference. The sources for these paragraphs included the Brasilia Regional Meeting Outcome Document, the Abuja Regional Meeting Outcome Document, the Asian Group contribution, the European Union contribution, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference contribution; in addition to the document produced by the inter-sessional working group chaired by the Ambassador of Armenia and named: *"Certain indicative elements in relation to the outcome document."*

All relevant documentation in relation to the five sections of the draft Outcome Document is available at:
http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/racism/DurbanReview/session2-documentation.htm

During the second week of the session, Member States started reviewing the compilations for each of the five sections of the draft outcome document.

1.2 Participation of NGOs in the PrepCom:

It was agreed that NGOs will take the floor after the reading of each section. However, this arrangement was changed because only the reading of one section was completed. NGOs were then allowed to speak on the last two days on all the remaining sections. Several NGOs took the floor and made concrete proposals regarding the final outcome document of the Review Conference.

1.3 Accreditation of NGOs:

The Preparatory Committee agreed on the accreditation of the following NGOs, in addition to those already accredited: Gherush92 Committee for Human Rights, Bexley Council for Racial Equality, National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, Humanrights.ch/MERS, People for Peace and Defence of Rights, Terre Nouvelle, Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organisation, Bilaal Justice Centre, the International Dalit Solidarity Network, Swadhikar, Peoples Education for Action and Liberation and ABGLT.

2. Next steps

The PrepCom took decisions regarding the continuation of the preparatory process and agreed to convene a **third substantive session in Geneva from 15 to 17 April 2009.**

It further decided to establish an **inter-sessional open-ended intergovernmental working group** with a mandate to continue and finalize the process of negotiations on and drafting of the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference on the basis of the compilation of proposals resulting from the work of the second substantive session of the PrepCom and any further contributions, and to report thereon to the third substantive session of the Preparatory Committee. This new working group shall meet for a total of up to 10 working days in advance of the third substantive session of the PrepCom: **its first organizational meeting is scheduled on 27 November 2008, the first session of the Working Group will take place from 19 to 23 January 2009, and its second session from 6 to 9 April 2009** *(These dates may be subject to change)***.**

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