



DURBAN REVIEW CONFERENCE - GENEVA 2009

THE REVIEW PROCESS

The anti-racism Review Conference to be held in Geneva, Switzerland 20-24 April 2009 will evaluate progress towards the goals set by the 3rd World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in Durban, South Africa in 2001.

The 2001 World Conference attracted some 18,000 people in all. The main conference alone was attended by around 10,000 people, with 2,500 delegates from 170 countries (including 16 heads of State, 58 foreign ministers and 44 other ministers), nearly 4,000 NGO representatives and over 1,300 members of the media. A total of some 7,000 non-governmental organizations (NGO) representatives attended a parallel NGO Forum, that began a few days before the main conference, and contained hundreds of workshops and other events.

After a wide-ranging – and at times difficult – debate, the Conference adopted by consensus its ground-breaking Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, which provided an important new framework for guiding governments, NGOs, and other individuals and institutions in their efforts to combat racism and similar forms of intolerance.

This document lies at the heart of the review process, which began in 2006 and includes a series of preparatory meetings, including regional meetings in Brazil (17-19 June 2008) and Nigeria (24-26 August 2008) that will contribute inputs to the 2009 Review Conference.



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Participants in indigenous peoples meeting, at UN Headquarters in New York

Objectives:

- To review progress and assess implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action by all stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels, including assessment of contemporary manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, through an inclusive, transparent and collaborative process, and identification of concrete measures and initiatives for combating and eliminating all manifestations of these phenomena;
- To assess the effectiveness of the existing Durban follow-up mechanisms and other relevant UN mechanisms dealing with the issues of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in order to enhance them;
- To promote the universal ratification and implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and proper consideration of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination;
- To identify and share good practices achieved in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.



UNITED NATIONS



Participants in the review process

The process is open to all UN Member States. Other entities entitled to observer status include inter-governmental organizations, specialized UN agencies and NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), as well as NGOs that were accredited to the 2001 conference and its follow-up mechanisms. NGOs which did not fall into either of those categories have been able to apply for accreditation provided they satisfy certain criteria. For more information on NGO participation go to: <http://www.un.org/durbanreview2009/ngo.shtml>

Role of the United Nations

In 2006, the UN General Assembly decided (A/RES/61/149) to convene a Review Conference in 2009 in order to assess the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. It requested the Human Rights Council to prepare for the Review Conference. The Human Rights Council decided to constitute itself into the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, and its work is open to the participation of all Member States and observers.

At the request of the Preparatory Committee, the UN Secretary-General designated the High Commissioner for Human Rights as Secretary-General of the Review Conference, and her Office (OHCHR) functions as its Secretariat.

ABOUT OHCHR

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), a part of the United Nations Secretariat, has been given a unique mandate to promote and protect all human rights. Headquartered in Geneva, the Office is also present in some 40 countries. Headed by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, a position established by the General Assembly in 1993 to spearhead the United Nations' human rights efforts, OHCHR takes action based on the unique mandate given it by the international community to guard and advocate for international human rights law. For more information please visit www.ohchr.org.