



*Mission Permanente
de la République Islamique d'Iran
auprès des Nations Unies
et des autres Organisations Internationales à Genève*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and with reference to the Note no. GVA 0031 dated 17 January, 2008 of the Office concerning the questionnaire for the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee of the 2009 Durban Review Conference, has the honour to transmit herewith the response of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the above-mentioned questionnaire for due consideration.

The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration. *A.R.*



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Answer to questionnaire about implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of action

Question 1: Can you assess the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action in your country?

The Islamic Republic of Iran according to its formal and practical policies is opposed to any policy based on racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and has fought against this phenomenon at national, regional and international levels. At the national level and in order to remove all aspects of discrimination, the Islamic Republic of Iran has adopted various measures some of which are as follows:

Judicial and Legal Development:

In addition to the existing laws and regulations and as a complementary measure the Head of Iran's Judiciary has issued the following guidelines:

- No discrimination or difference should be considered among the parties of the legal cases and both parties should be treated equally.
- Judicial officials and officers should refrain from using offensive words or phrases or anything that might result in offending the feelings and emotions of the individuals in the process of investigations.
- The judicial unit stationed in any region of the country shall inform and assure the residents of that region of the impartiality of the judicial system and that no any ethnic or cultural difference can interfere the judicial process.

The judiciary power of the Islamic Republic of Iran has also worked out a bill of citizens rights. One of the main principles incorporated in this bill ensures the enjoyment of every person of equal rights so that his individual rights and freedoms are guaranteed irrespective of his ethnic origin and other factors such as race, color, sex, etc. The bill maintains that affirmative actions in favor of special groups to redress the past inequalities are not considered as discrimination. This bill also affirms that:

- Nobody shall propagate, spread or publish an opinion, icon or sign among the public which is indicative of discrimination.
- No body can incorporate into a legal action a condition which entails discrimination.
- Nobody shall prevent others from having access to public services because of discrimination.

In order to materialize these objectives a mechanism has been envisaged based on which a committee for removal of discrimination is formed. This committee is comprised of representatives from the three Branches, minority groups and women.

Establishment of Human Rights Headquarter is another mechanism which is trying to formulate needed policies for promotion of human rights throughout the country. This Headquarter has the competence to deal with the individual complaints arising from the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Development Projects in Deprived Regions

According to the article 95 of the fourth economic, social and cultural development plan of the country, the Document on the Elimination of Poverty was adopted the main principles of which are as follows:

- The poor people should be participated in the process of poverty elimination inside the country;
- The financial and economic supportive measures should cover, with special priority, the most deprived people.
- Proper skill courses should be provided for the poor aiming at their financial empowerment and their participation in economic activities.

Measures Aiming at the Advancement of the life Standards for Ethnic Groups

a) Nomadic Groups:

- Allocation of almost 52 billion Rials extra budget and financial facilities to nomadic groups, during the provincial visits of the cabinet, which has been a big stride towards realization of the designed targets for life standard advancement of these groups.
- Education programme for development and empowerment of nomadic women;
- Allocation of 20 articles in the third economic, social and cultural development plan of the country aiming at the economic and financial advancement of the nomadic groups in different fields of employment , infrastructures , housing , social welfare etc.

b) Refugees:

- Despite the shortages of financial sources and lack of international support, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has made its utmost

efforts to provide an appropriate life standard for foreign refugees residing inside the country.

According to the country's law, the foreign refugees are enjoying a big variety of different rights including residing, education, employment, marriage etc.

It is worth mentioning that the Islamic Republic of Iran is among the countries who are hosting the biggest number of the foreign refugees in the world.

Political participation:

Since the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 25 different national elections have been held in the country. The high turn out of all these elections confirms that the average of political participation of people in Iran is at the highest records. The statistics of the three recent elections could be a good yardstick for evaluation of this fact.

Statistics relating to the participation of the provinces of the country, including those with larger ethnic groups, in the first phase and the second phase of presidential election (2005), the seventh parliamentary election and the third Council election clearly shows the extensive participation turnout of ethnic groups in the political life of the country.

Education:

Ministry of Education as part of the policy-making and planning system of the country in the area of education is trying to eliminate the inequalities particularly in the regions resided by the ethnic groups by drafting the necessary rules and regulations and allocating the required budgets for alleviation of deprivation.

In view of the principles of the Constitution of I.R. Iran (Article 30) which ensures equal access for all to education, all the decisions of the High Education Council as the highest policy-making authority of the country in the area of education must be based on the principles of equality and justice.

Question 2: Can you assess contemporary manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance as well as

initiatives in this regard with a view to eliminating them in your country?

The increase in racist violence and xenophobic ideas in many parts of the world such as in political circles, in the sphere of public opinion and in society at large are alarming. Another threatening issue is defamation of religions that endangers peaceful and harmonious co-existence among societies and civilizations. Political resistance to cultural diversity has led to the denial of the very humanity of the immigrant, indigenous people and foreigners. The rejection of diversity is manifested increasingly by intolerance and repression of cultural symbols and expressions that reveal the specific identity of various ethnic, cultural or religious communities. This rejection of diversity practice in some member States is fostering a culture of intolerance and providing a fertile breeding ground for xenophobia. These include the visible rise of Islamophobia with its most visible upsurge in the some countries. Most worryingly, the culture of Islamophobia or incitement against Islam is being transcending into political ideologies.

Gross and systematic violation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian Territories remains a matter of deep concern for all. Gaza had become an imprisoned territory as a result of the economic sanctions. The wall presently under construction in Palestinian territory, checkpoints and roadblocks, settlements, an arbitrary permit system, the pervasive practice of house demolition, targeted assassinations, and arrest and imprisonment violate a wide range of civil and political rights. This tragic situation should be stopped by the concrete action of the international community.

Question 3: Please identify concrete measures and initiatives for combating and eliminating all manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in order to foster the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

In view of the importance attached by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to combat against racism and racial discrimination, Iran hosted the Asian Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference. This Meeting was held in Tehran from 19 to 21 February 2001. Iran was also a very active member in the Preparatory Committees and the World

Conference. It was also a member of the bureau of the Preparatory Committees, the general committee of the World Conference, and the chairman of the Drafting Committee at the World Conference.

Believing in importance of promoting and fostering dialogue among civilizations, religions and cultures and respect for cultural diversity as well, as one of the basic grounds for the fundamental fighting against different forms of racial discrimination at international level, during the past recent years, The Islamic Republic of Iran has initiated the idea of "Dialogue among Civilizations" which was welcomed by the international community and the Durban Declaration and Program of Action as well.

With regard to the enhancement of respect for the cultural diversity, The Islamic Republic of Iran has initiated the draft resolution on "Human Rights and Cultural Diversity" since 1999, which was adopted by consensus at the United Nations General Assembly plenary sessions during past five years. In this regard, the initiative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to hold a Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement on Human Rights and Cultural Diversity, held in Tehran, September 2007 and the Decision by the NAM Ministers to establish "the NAM Center for Human Rights and Cultural Diversity" was intended to present a unique opportunity for exchanges of ideas and views of the developing countries on the sensitive issues relating to human rights and cultural diversity and to establish a framework for promoting respect for cultural diversity and institutionalizing intercultural dialogue in the field of human rights.

Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to such activities a effective measures to foster the effective implementation of Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

Question 4: How would your Government assess the effectiveness of the existing Durban follow-up mechanism and other relevant United Nations mechanisms dealing with the issue of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in order to enhance them?

Despite the clear instructions and actions which were elaborated in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, still we witness the continuation and in some areas escalation of the systematic racism and racial discrimination in many parts of the world. Some negative phenomena were described in the response to question 2.

There is a great need to political will and commitment to implement Durban Declaration and Programme of Action at global level. Some countries in particular those who resisted the adoption of the Durban

Declaration and Programme of Action does not show enough commitment to implement it. It seems that Durban Declaration and Programme of Action needs a more continuous and effective mechanism to monitor its implementation.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination can find some procedures in order to contribute to the follow up of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

Due attention of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteurs to new forms and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, and xenophobia is needed to enhance the effectiveness of the provisions of Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

Question 5: what are the steps taken by your Government to ratify and /or implement the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and give proper consideration of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination?

Islamic Republic of Iran is a member of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Islamic Republic of Iran has provided the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination with its sixteenth and seventeenth periodic report. It will also submit its 18th and 19th report in close future. In this report the recommendations of the Committee have been duly considered and dealt with.

Question 6: Please identify and share good practices achieved in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in your country?

Iranian society is a successful example of fraternal and friendly cohabitation between different peoples. Promotion and strengthening of this situation remains a major Government priority, towards the realization of which numerous activities have been dedicated. Given the absence of any division based on race or ethnicity in any walk of life, significant investment by the Government as part of the first, second, third and fourth five-year economic, social and cultural development plans was channeled towards peripheral regions, where ethnic groups tend to reside, to improve basic social and infrastructural services and promote job creation, and help lessen

deprivation in the peripheral regions of the country and include them within the process of intrinsic development. More details were provided in the response to question 1.

Islamic Republic of Iran has launched many initiatives in order to promote the national coherence and solidarity among different groups of society. Holding different festivals, intercultural programmes, cultural exhibitions, educational programmes etc. are among successful activities which have been organized by the government and non governmental organizations.

These initiatives have had a considerable contribution to the promotion of understanding and fraternity among people.