

DURBAN

PERMANENT MISSION OF ROMANIA  
to the United Nations



MISSION PERMANENTE DE LA ROUMANIE  
auprès des Nations Unies

**Statement on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States**

**High Level Meeting**

**On the Commemoration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Durban  
Declaration and Programme of Action**

**United Nations**

**New York**

**22 September 2011**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Mr. Secretary-General,

Mr. President,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

The Declaration and the Plan of Action that were adopted 10 years ago, and we are now here to commemorate, highlight the commitment of the international community to focus its political will on the global fight against the scourge of racism, xenophobia and intolerance. They also showed that countries can go beyond inherent political grievances and unite around a common goal, namely to put an end to the phenomenon of racism.

We can acknowledge that no modern society, irrespective of its geographical, cultural and civilizational specificities or level of development, is free from the complex manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and hatred. No country has a perfect record, no society is beyond criticism.

Therefore, our pledged commitments in the fight against racism can only be successful through concerted actions taken at all levels: local, national, regional and international. To that end, although some states in our Group are not participating in the meeting today, all countries in the Eastern European Group remain stern and determined supporters of the global fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and are committed to continue taking measures to further secure, at all levels in our societies, the utmost respect for all fundamental rights and freedoms and for the principle of universal equality.

Mr. Secretary-General,

Your Excellencies,

Much has been achieved in ten years, yet much remains to be done. All of us, in our countries, at all levels, and in our respective societies, collectively and individually, must make sure that our political commitments are translated into actions. Action is needed now, since, in spite of all our rhetoric and good intentions, many regrettably continue to be victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. And all of us should, therefore, stay committed and alert in addressing and pre-empting all acts of incitement to violence, hatred and segregation. We have the means; we only need to seize the momentum!

All our efforts aimed at combating racism, xenophobia, discrimination, extremism and their diverse manifestations must be guided by the full respect for all fundamental rights and freedoms, in accordance with our obligations under the international human rights law. In this regard, the universal accession and

ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the full implementation of its provisions are necessary in order to ensure the effectiveness of the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. However, we can only note with regret that we are still lagging behind not only in its universal ratification, but also in its full observance.

Mr. Secretary-General,

Your Excellencies,

While we acknowledge the prime role of national governments in the fight against racism and the implementation of the Convention, we must also note the key role that the UN system plays in our fight. We highlight the constant efforts of the Human Rights Council, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism and of the relevant regional organizations in the field of combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

We must also continue to positively engage the civil society and the media in complementing our concerted efforts in this fight. Their contribution is essential, since they work alongside governments in providing assistance to victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and contribute, *inter alia*, to awareness raising campaigns and research.

We have come a long way since the adoption of the Declaration adopted in Durban 10 years ago. However, we are still facing many challenges and obstacles on the road towards a world free of racism. However, we are confident that everything can be overcome in the light of reason. For as Abraham Heschel, a great thinker coming from our part of the world, once said, "racism is man's gravest threat to man - the maximum hatred for a minimum of reason". To conclude, let me reiterate that the countries in our Group will stay committed and actively engaged in the complex fight against racism, intolerance and discrimination. And in doing so, we will stay united in our determination to prevent these acts in the future.

Thank you Mr. Secretary-General!