

DURBAN



South Africa

**ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT JACOB ZUMA ON THE OCCASSION OF THE HIGH
LEVEL MEETING TO COMMEMORATE THE TENTH ANNIVESARY OF THE
ADOPTION OF THE DURBAN DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION**

UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK

22 SEPTEMBER 2011

President of the General Assembly,

Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr Ban Ki Moon

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Madame Nave Pillay

Heads of States and Government,

Excellencies,

Representatives of Civil Society,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ten years ago, South Africa had the honour to welcome to our shores Member States of the UN and people from the across the World to attend the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related intolerances.

Just under a decade before that, it would have been inconceivable that a gathering of that nature discussing racism, would have taken place in South Africa.

The conference was a testament to the success of humanity against the scourge and demon of racism and racial discrimination.

It was also a confirmation of the success of the international community, represented by the UN, in the struggle against the evil of racism, which the UN boldly and correctly declared a Crime against Humanity.

Mr President,

It was also symbolic that the Conference was held in African soil given that in the preceding two centuries the African peoples had experienced untold sufferings, brutality and inhumane treatment during the course of colonialism, occupation and Apartheid.

In Africa, the legacy of all these ills is still visible and is part of our daily efforts for the improvement of the lives of our people.

In Durban, the world spoke with one voice and reaffirmed its commitment to continue to fight against the scourge of Racism and to do everything to eradicate it.

The World collectively agreed on the need and the significance for a comprehensive framework to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Mr President,

In this regard the Durban Declaration and its Program of Action was unanimously adopted.

The Durban Declaration and its Program of Action provided a comprehensive assessment of the state of Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other related intolerances in the World at the time and offered a collective set of actions to be undertaken to address the challenge.

South Africa appreciates the decision the UN General Assembly has taken to mark the Ten Years after the adoption of the Durban Declaration and its Program of Action.

We note the progress made in the implementation of the DDPA and the fight against racism, however, as we meet today, racism continues to pose a challenge the same way it did in 2001.

Racism and racial discrimination continue to be a brutal attack on human dignity, an affront to self worth of individuals and has a prolonged and negative impact on its victims.

Mr President,

We continue to reaffirm our strong conviction that racism and racial discrimination are a negation of the United Nations's Charter and its principles.

The prevalence of racism, xenophobia and other related intolerances would, therefore, be an indictment on the organisation itself and its member States.

In this Tenth Year, we must reflect with openness and honesty on the issues that continue to divide us.

There is no need to have detractors on this question, when we have all long agreed that racism is an affront to humanity and a negation of the principles of the United Nations.

Mr President,

We urge the world not to be distracted in this noble struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other related intolerances.

We should continue with the same resolve and determination that led to the end of slavery, colonialism and apartheid.

We welcome some of the initiatives taken in redress. We have since 2001 seen authorities make public apologies to victims of racism and racial discrimination in some countries.

Cultural artefacts have been returned to their places of origin in some instances, and in some cases reparations have been paid. However, there is still a lot of outstanding work that must be done.

Therefore, we support the initiative to erect a permanent memorial to honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade as among the important interventions that are urgent and necessary.

Mr President,

We take this opportunity to reaffirm the Durban Declaration and its Program of Action as a comprehensive United Nations Framework for the eradication of Racism.

We call on all the Member States of the UN and the world in general to reaffirm our political commitment at national, regional and international level to fully and effectively implement the Durban Declaration and its Program of Action.

We encourage all member states to continue to adopt measures at the national level to fight the scourge of racism and effectively implement the Durban Declaration and its Program of Action.

In conclusion, racism and racial discrimination continues to pose a challenge to humanity today and we need a collective effort to rid the World of this scourge.

We look forward to the adoption of a Political Declaration this afternoon renewing our political will to continue the full and effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and its Program of Action.

I thank you!