

Nepal

Statement by Nepal at the roundtable “Victims of racism, racial discrimination, Xenophobia and related intolerance: recognition, justice and development” of the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action

New York, 22 September 2011

(Check against delivery)

Mr. President,
Distinguished Heads of State/Governments,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

1. The adoption of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action ten years ago represented a landmark global initiative towards elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Guided by the objectives of the Declaration and Program of Action, the world has made encouraging progress in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. However, much remains to be done to completely eliminate racism from the world.
2. The remnants of racism and racial discrimination continue to undermine the foundation of human dignity, universal fraternity and fundamental freedoms. Racism in all its manifestations must be put to an end forthwith to promote a global society that is just, humane and inclusive. Discriminatory practices based on races, decent, ethnicity, language, religion, culture and socio-economic status constitute severe violation of human rights and fundamental freedom. Racism runs counter to core of human values and human dignity.
3. Racial discrimination, slavery, slave trading, and colonialism have resulted in the vicious cycle of underdevelopment, poverty and plethora of untold stories of sorrows and agonies for the large part of humanity. We cannot undo history, but we can certainly make hard efforts to ensure justice to those who have been victimized by such inhuman practices. A society which is plagued by racial discrimination cannot ensure peace which is vital for development. It is also important to acknowledge that development widens the prospect for social harmony and understanding if it is pursued in a holistic manner with the aim of promoting overall inclusiveness within a society.
4. This high-level meeting is an important step to take stock of our efforts in the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action and reinvigorate

our collective political will and commitment for more actions in the coming days. Commitments without concrete actions will have no meaning in a major fight against such an entrenched evil as racial discrimination.

5. Nepal has undergone fundamental changes after the signing of the historic Comprehensive Peace Accord in November 2006. We have made significant progress in promoting and protecting people's rights by establishing necessary institutions and enacting legislations. A detailed chapter dedicated to human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Interim Constitution is a clear testimony to our deep and unflinching commitment to human rights. The rights to life, equality, personal liberty, justice, education and culture, religion, freedoms to form political parties and associations, rights against torture, exploitation, exile, untouchability, and racial discrimination have been recognized as inalienable rights of the people by the Constitution. An independent judiciary provides constitutional remedies when these rights are breached.
6. Nepal is party to more than 18 major international human rights instruments including the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). We have also endorsed the Durban Declaration and Program of Action. As stated earlier, the Interim Constitution has guaranteed the right against untouchability and racial discrimination as fundamental rights. Any such discriminatory treatment is outlawed and entails compensation to the victim.
7. Nepal is passing through a historic transformation in all spheres-- political, economic and social-- following the historic people's movement for progressive and revolutionary change and transformation five years ago. Our journey for change is continuing. At this juncture of history, we are striving hard to erect a foundation for an inclusive, equitable and just society to ensure lasting peace, stability and prosperity to our people. We are in the process of completing the peace process successfully and making the new constitution to institutionalize democracy, ensuring people's rights, including right against racial discrimination. As a logical corollary, we are deeply committed to ensuring every individual the highest standard of human rights and fundamental freedoms which are sine qua non of a dignified life. Against the backdrop of this strong national commitment, we join our hand with the international community in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in a meaningful way.

I thank you Mr. President.