



General Assembly
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Commemoration of the Tenth Anniversary of the adoption of
the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Mr. Espen Barth Eide
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr/Madame Chair,

The promotion of non-discrimination lies at the heart of human rights. Promoting non-discrimination is one of the purposes of the UN, stated in article 1 of the Charter.

Norway supported the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. We engaged actively to secure a good follow-up of the decisions made in Durban through the Outcome Document adopted in the Review Conference in Geneva in 2009. We remain fully committed to the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The mission of the Durban Conference – and the Review Conference - is to fight racism everywhere in the world. My Government attaches great importance to following up these political commitments as well as our commitments through the Human Rights conventions, especially the International Convention on elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination.

Racism and xenophobia is more than intolerance and discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin. Discrimination is equally unjust when it targets people because of their religious belief, their nationality, their gender or sexual orientation.

Discrimination feeds mistrust, resentment, violence, crime and insecurity. Racism and xenophobia remains one of the most dangerous forms of discrimination. It can easily lead to hatred, violence, and – in the worst cases – full-blown conflict, crimes against humanity and genocide.

Today, exactly two months ago, on 22 July, Norway experienced a shocking and unexpected event.

77 people were killed and many more were wounded. The attacks appear to be politically fuelled by hate towards a multicultural society, different religions, cultures and individual rights.

(Check against delivery)

22 July represents an attack on Norway both as a democratic society and on our values that are based on equality, non-discrimination and other fundamental human rights and freedoms.

Our response to this is to intensify our resolve for more democracy, more openness and more inclusiveness.

Mr/Madame Chair,

In a new Action Plan to promote equality and prevent ethnic discrimination for the period 2009-2012, my Government has fortified its efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Our strategy highlights the following:

- It is imperative to combat both prejudices and racial discrimination through dialogue and open public debate;
- It is equally important to create an inclusive learning environment in kindergartens and schools that is free of racism, discrimination, bullying and violence, and an education system that reflects the diversity of the population.
- It is more important than ever to confront prejudices and stereotypes of cultural and religious intolerance in the public debate and to bring out the counter-arguments.

Mr/Madame Chair,

The only effective way to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance is that we constantly insist on and require unconditional respect for the human dignity and the human rights for everyone, by everyone, everywhere and at all times.

Thank you