**High Level Meeting of the 66th General Assembly
to Commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the
adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

**"Victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and
related intolerance: recognition, justice and development**

**Statement by Edna Maria Santos Roland,
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Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I am honoured to speak before the audience of this High Level Meeting to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action in my capacity of an Independent Eminent Expert, with the mandate to assist in the effective implementation of the DDPA.

In 2001, for the first time the international community discussed the issue of racism using lens through which it focused on the various victims of racism on all parts of the world: Africans and people of African descent, indigenous peoples, people of Asian Descent, Roma/Gypsies/Sinti/Travellers, migrants, refugees, displaced people, asylum seekers; national, religious and linguistic minorities; women, youth and children victims of trafficking.

The 2001 conference acknowledged that slavery and slave trade were a crime against humanity.

The DDPA also recognized that racism manifests itself in different forms for men and women and the existence of multiple forms of discrimination that combine with the consequences of racism. The conference demanded that a gender perspective should be integrated into relevant policies, strategies and programmes.

Establishing a landmark, the DDPA recognized the Afrodescendents as a specific group of victims of racism. Other victims were also in focus: the Roma/Gypsies, who have received insufficient attention from governments and international institutions; migrants who have been the object of serious incidents of racism, including institutionalized discrimination.

Special mechanisms were created to ensure the effective implementation of the DDPA.

Organizations of the civil society created programs and networks to monitor the implementation of the DDPA.

Policies were developed in many countries in the areas of education, health, labour, access to land and housing; laws and regulations were approved; networks were established in the civil society, governments and international cooperation. There is a vibrant network of Afrodescendent youth, keeping a dialogue with the UN regional agencies. There are initiatives of making national plans and conferences to discuss policies at the local and national levels.

Inter-American Bank for Development, UNIFEM and ECLAC sponsored a number of meetings to discuss social indicators to account for the racial disparities and policies.

By 2009 only 9 out of 19 Latin American countries had information on Afrodescendents in their databases. To date, Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panamá, Venezuela and Uruguay have also incorporated this variable in their census. The Afrodescendents in Chile are campaigning to be counted on during the 2012 census.

In August this year, more than 1,000 people, from 44 countries from all regions gathered in Honduras in the First World Summit of Afrodescendents and, reaffirming Durban, requested that the United Nations declare the decade of Afrodescendents to start in 2012.

Despite of achievements we must however admit that there are serious problems worldwide.

High numbers of Afrodescendents and indigenous youth are victims of violence and homicide, configurating a situation that has been considered genocide. Great inequalities, based on race/ethnicity, persist in terms of employment, income, education, health. There is a rising number of incidents of intolerance against the followers of religious communities of African traditions, increased number of incidents of racist violence and use of information technologies to disseminate hate and racist ideas.

Durban recognizes the right of Afrodescendents to their ancestrally inhabited land. However, the implementation of this right with titles of property and development programs is far from its realization.

Afrodescendents and indigenous peoples who constitute the majority of displaced people in countries like Colombia and Ecuador, are being victimized by confrontations between armed groups and narcotraffic.

The international community needs to deal with these problems. We need to produce data on the population disaggregated by race/ethnicity, to develop a system of social indicators, and to consider the creation of a synthetic index in order to evaluate the progress made regarding racial inequalities, as proposed by the Independent Eminent Experts' 2003 report.

Mr President,

We must strengthen and improve the existing mechanisms to follow up the implementation of the DDPA, offering them adequate financial, political and administrative support. The Working Group on Afrodescendents must be reinforced with the creation of a Permanent Forum on Afrodescendents; the United Nations should declare the decade for People of African Descent.

The needs of youth regarding education, sexual health, preparation for the labour market, culture and leisure, should be recognized as their rights.

Where there has been political will of governments, support from the international agencies and participation of the civil society, the DDPA has been a strong and useful tool in defense of the human rights of all peoples and victims of racism, racial discrimination xenophobia and related intolerance.

It is essential that national bodies be created in order to combat racism and promote racial equality policies; also national monitoring mechanisms should be put in place so that a consistent follow up may guarantee progress in the implementation of policies.

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action should be widely disseminated to avoid misinformation and misinterpretations. We need to reaffirm our commitment and will so that our dream of a social and international order in which all human rights can be fully realized for all, without any discrimination, may become true.

I thank you.