



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

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ON BEHALF OF

THE GROUP OF LATIN AMERICAN AND
CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES (GRULAC)

AT THE

HIGH LEVEL MEETING TO COMMEMORATE THE
TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DURBAN DECLARATION
AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION

66TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 22 SEPTEMBER 2011

Final Text

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC) at this High Level Meeting commemorating the Tenth Anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action under the theme: "Victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance: recognition, justice and development."

Ten years ago in Durban, the international community courageously took the stand to eliminate from our world the scourge of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other intolerance. Today, we take stock of the strides taken over the years to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA). We are equally mindful that, notwithstanding, our efforts, much more needs to be done if we are to fully realize these goals and objectives.

Mr. President,

We note the progress at the intergovernmental level, with the creation of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism and the Independent Expert on minority issues.

We are conscious that many of our governments have at the national level, sought to protect the diverse and multicultural nature of their societies. Some States have created specialized National Mechanisms to combat racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and related intolerance and to promote equality, justice and dignity, while in others, legislation, as well as national plans and policies, including affirmative action measures, have been adopted which will ensure that minorities and vulnerable groups can be fully integrated into the society. We reiterate our commitment to enhance the work and functioning of national mechanisms to combat racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and related intolerance.

However, despite the progress made in combating racism, the effective implementation of the DDPA has not been satisfactory. We acknowledge that the Durban process is a work in progress, which will require the combined effort of every member of the international community if we are to eliminate these atrocities from our midst. To this end, we are hopeful that this meeting will serve as a catalyst for united action in formulating concrete strategies to achieve our objective to recognize the victims of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and related intolerances and to provide them with justice, dignity and a fair chance for realizing their full potential, as well as raising racism as a global concern.

Mr. President,

Member States from the Latin American and Caribbean region have been supportive and have actively participated in the work to promote the goals and objectives of the DDPA. We re-affirm our unwavering commitment to achieving a world free of racial intolerance and other injustices.

We must be mindful that victims in many parts of the world continue to suffer from violence on the basis of their ethnic origin or religious affiliation. Migrants and migrant workers are still easy targets of manifestations of racism and xenophobia and racial discrimination. We therefore call upon Member States to develop policies and programmes to protect the rights of migrants and migrant workers. In this regard, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities also suffer grave forms of racial discrimination and related intolerance and require specific measures to promote their participation in society and the full realizations of their human rights. Negative stereotyping of persons based on their religion or belief and an increase in incidents related to religious hatred are still factors that must be addressed, both at the national and international levels. The proliferation of hate-speech also remains a challenge in many parts of the world, exacerbated by the misuse of new technologies for mass dissemination of negative and/or stereotypical information. It is, therefore, necessary for all Member States to promote greater levels of social inclusion which is essential in order to reduce racial discrimination and related intolerance.

The Member States of GRULAC remain convinced that intercultural dialogue, tolerance, education and respect for diversity are useful approaches for the international community to

embark on a common and consensual global programme of action to combat these scourges. It is also necessary to address the root causes and to take a broad range of preventive and corrective measures, including legislative action, where appropriate, to eliminate acts of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Today's commemoration of the Tenth Anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action presents another opportunity to mobilize political will for a global resolve to end racism and place victims at the centre of our deliberations. In this context, the Group emphasizes that renewed emphasis and adequate funding for the follow-up mechanisms, as well as sustained international cooperation are indispensable to addressing all forms and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

We are pleased with the decision taken by the General Assembly to erect a Permanent Memorial to honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. We encourage Member States, NGOs, the private sector and private individuals to support this and other initiatives which will serve to enhance the visibility of the message of the Declaration and Programme of Action. This year, as we celebrate the International Year for Persons of African Descent, the Memorial takes on added significance, showcasing our determination to ensure that this historical wrong and its associated residual effects of racism and racial discrimination will never be repeated.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, the Member States of GRULAC reaffirm the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the outcome of the 2009 Durban Review Conference as well as our commitment to its full and effective implementation. We are convinced that the Durban process, if given the necessary support of all Member States can result in the eradication of all forms of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and related intolerance, thus allowing people everywhere to experience the full enjoyment of their fundamental human rights and freedoms.

We look forward to the adoption of the Political Declaration at the end of this morning's session.

I thank you.

