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## Racism, xenophobia lie at the root of many inter- and intra-state conflicts -

Ambassador Jayatilleka

Tuesday, 24 March 2009

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Statement made by Ambassador Dr. Dayan Jayatilleka, Chairperson/Rapporteur and the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka, at the 10th Session of the Human Rights Council on 24th March 2009, during the submission of the Report on the 6th Session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration & Programme of Action: The statement in full:

“Mr. President, In my capacity as Chairperson/Rapporteur of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration & Programme of Action, it is my honour to submit the report on its 6th Session to the Human Rights Council, pursuant to Resolution 1/5 and Decision 3/103. Racism, xenophobia and related intolerance pose a threat to national and international peace and security as they lie at the root of many conflicts, both interstate and intrastate. Therefore, it is our responsibility to work whole-heartedly towards the eradication of racism and xenophobia by fulfilling the mandate of the Inter-Governmental Working Group accordingly. I am committed to ensuring that the goals established under the mandate are realized effectively. Mr. President, The Working Group held its 6th meeting in two parts: from 11th to the 22nd February 2008 and on the 18th December 2008. This report includes narratives on the meetings and deliberations of the Working Group. At the first meeting, the Working Group elected the new Chairperson/Rapporteur and adopted its agenda. My nomination as the new Chairperson/Rapporteur was proposed by the distinguished delegate of China on behalf of the Asian Group, to whom I wish to offer my sincere gratitude for his most kind words. My gratitude extends to the entire Working Group including the distinguished Representative of Egypt, who seconded the nomination on behalf of the African Group, for the trust bestowed on me. The session of the Working Group included discussions on its programme of work, during which the Representative of Slovenia, on behalf of the European Union, suggested that the Group adjourn its session until the conclusion of the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Durban Review Conference. However, this position was not supported by other delegates, who held the view that the Working Group had to carry on with its work as per the amended mandate. Thereafter, the Intergovernmental Working Group approved the programme of work by consensus and resumed its session. Mr. President, Consistent with the agenda and the programme of work, the Working Group prepared its contribution to the Durban Review Conference pursuant to Council Resolution 3/2 which requested the Working Group and other mechanisms to “assist the Preparatory Committee by undertaking the review and submitting recommendations through the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as contributions to the outcome of the Review Conference”. The contribution was submitted to the Preparatory Committee of the Durban Review Conference in the form of a document entitled “Compilation of Conclusions and Recommendations adopted by the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action”. The Intergovernmental Working Group was unable to formally adopt a draft programme of work for the 2nd part of its sixth session and to discuss the content of the draft programme of work, owing to non-availability of full conference services. Despite challenging circumstances under which the session was held, some progress was achieved in terms of dealing with the thematic areas relating to other important provisions of the DDPA. The Intergovernmental Working group has to deal with its future programme of work and it is important to summon the necessary political will and good faith in collectively tackling issues of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Action-oriented and forward looking Conclusions and Recommendations need to be adopted by the mechanism, with a view to tangibly contributing towards the total eradication of racism. A decision on future areas of work could not be reached despite efforts made by some delegations to put forward proposals for possible inclusion in the future programme of work of the Inter-Governmental Working Group. There is still strong posturing in certain quarters which often leads to a delay in the conduct of the sessions of the Inter-Governmental Working Group. The necessary political will and good faith will guide the next session of the Inter-Governmental Working Group. The Working Group adopted the draft report on its sixth session ad referendum on the conclusion of the session on 18th December 2008 and concluded the sixth session. Thank you Mr. President.”