

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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Durban Review Conference: We have the words, now it is time for the action

Amnesty International welcomes the consensus adoption by the Durban Review Conference of its Outcome Document. It is a significant achievement for the international community that -- notwithstanding difficult negotiations and actions that threatened to derail the Conference -- states were able to come together to reaffirm the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) and their commitment to prevent, combat and eradicate all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

As the Conference comes to a close, it is now time to turn to action and implementation of the DDPA and the Outcome Document. The adoption of the Document offers an opportunity for a fresh start in national and international efforts to combat racism. All states should now renew their efforts to implement the DDPA beginning at the national level.

Amnesty International strongly encourages those governments that withdrew from or did not participate in the Review Conference to demonstrate their commitment to combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including by reaffirmation of their commitment to the DDPA* and support for the Outcome Document.

Amnesty International believes that the availability of objective information on all forms of racism, discrimination and intolerance throughout the world would contribute to more constructive and effective results-oriented measures in the future. In this regard, the organisation encourages the High Commissioner for Human Rights to pursue her proposal to establish a UN observatory on racism. Amnesty International urges governments to provide the High Commissioner with the support necessary to give effect to this proposal.

The Outcome Document calls on the Human Rights Council to take measures to enhance the effectiveness of the follow up mechanisms to the DDPA. Amnesty International urges states to approach this task in an action-oriented fashion, avoiding the mutual recriminations and politicization and political bargaining that marred so much of the Conference and its preparatory process. The Council should ensure a substantial focus on identifying and encouraging the adoption of best practices.

Amnesty International recognizes that racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance undermine the key principle of the universality of human rights. It is an issue that should continue to be a priority of the international human rights agenda. Amnesty International will continue to campaign for governments to fulfil their responsibilities and commitments to combat racism and discrimination.

*Israel and the USA did not support the DDPA in 2001.

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