

L. 2 - Preparation for the Durban Review Conference

Canada - Statement in Explanation of Vote

Mr. President,

Addressing, combating and eradicating racism is a priority for Canada, both domestically and internationally. Canada has done ground-breaking work in the promotion of tolerance, multiculturalism and anti-racism, and we are convinced that Canada can make a substantial, constructive contribution to the fight against racism within our country and internationally.

In the first session of this Council, Canada was pleased to join consensus on the resolution giving Consideration of the report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. By doing so, Canada wished to demonstrate its willingness to engage constructively in combating racism. We hope the Council will take a fresh approach in the promotion and protection of human rights with a focus on dialogue, sharing best practices, co-operation and implementation. The current resolution, and the lack of transparency that has led to it, do not allow us to ~~join consensus~~, but rather ~~to~~ ^{timely contribution on a} ~~vote against it.~~ ^{and collaborative}

Canada recognizes the scourge of racism, all forms of discrimination, intolerance and xenophobia, and is committed to their eradication. In 2005, Canada released its National Action Plan against Racism: A Canada for All, which describes the myriad of federal government programs and major initiatives ~~in one framework~~, and introduces a series of new measures in key domains identified through an open consultative process. These measures respond to the need for action on specific issues with respect to immigrant youth in schools, workplace discrimination, race-based issues in the justice system, culturally sensitive policing services, victims and perpetrators of hate crimes and the development of inclusive government policies, programs and services for all Canadians.

However, we do not feel that a global conference to review progress on implementation of the Durban Program of Action would be the best approach to taking stock of ~~the global~~ efforts to advance the fight against racism and discrimination. We believe regional gatherings would be a more efficient and effective level at which countries could share information and best practices regarding their progress to implement the Durban Plan of Action. Implementation challenges are more concrete and similar at the regional level and regional review conferences offer the opportunity to develop regional plans of action for implementing Durban commitments.

Thank you Mr. President.