

**Human Rights Council
8th session
Agenda item 9**

**Presentation of the work done by the Preparatory Committee
for the Durban Review Conference at its first substantive
session
(Geneva, 21 April-2 May and 26 May 2008)**

**Statement by H.E. Amb. Glaudine Mtshali,
Vice-Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee, delivered on
behalf of the Chairperson, H.E. Amb. Najat Al-Hajjaji**

(17 June 2008)

Mr. President,
Madame High Commissioner,
Distinguished delegates,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee for the Durban Review Conference, Amb Najat Al-Hajjaji who is unable to be here with us today, I have the honour to present to the Human Rights Council a brief summary of the main activities undertaken and decisions adopted by the PrepCom at its first substantive session held here in Geneva from 21 April to 2 May 2008. This session of the PrepCom was resumed for half a day on 26 May 2008 to adopt the remaining decisions and to conclude its work. While the process of negotiations during this preparatory process was by no means easy, we have registered considerable progress towards a successful Durban Review Conference, through

concerted efforts of all concerned. I am pleased to report that the first substantive session of the PrepCom was able to conclude the organisational aspects of the preparatory process in a constructive spirit and take all its decisions by consensus.

Before I proceed with my presentation, I would like to congratulate and extend my best wishes to Brazil and other GRULAC countries which are starting today in Brasilia their regional preparatory meeting of the Durban Review Conference.

Mr. President,

Pursuant to pertinent decisions of the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, and the organizational session of the Preparatory Committee held last August, the first substantive session of the PrepCom in April and May this year concentrated its efforts on deliberating on and resolving various issues pertaining to the following three main areas:

- (i) Organization of the work of the Durban Review Conference, including the venue, date and duration of the Conference, as well as participation of observers;
- (ii) Review of contributions to the preparatory process; and
- (iii) Structure and modalities of preparation of the draft outcome document of the Durban Review Conference.

While the report of the Preparatory Committee on its first substantive session is still being processed by the UN Conference Services, delegations may consult an advance unedited version of

the report at the OHCHR website. I will therefore limit my statement to referring very briefly to the main decisions adopted by the PrepCom under the three chapeaux I mentioned earlier.

Firstly, with regard to the organization of work, the PrepCom decided that:

- The Review Conference, which would include a high-level segment, shall be convened at Geneva from 20 to 24 April 2009 (decision 13);
- The slogan for the Review Conference shall be: "United against Racism: Dignity and Justice for All" (decision 14), and the logo for the Review Conference shall be the same as that of the World Conference held in Durban in 2001, with the addition of the words: "Durban Review Conference" and of a reference to the '2001 to 2009' period (decision 15);
- The same criteria, practices and arrangements regarding the participation of observers at the sessions of the Preparatory Committee should also apply to the participation of all observers in the Durban Review Conference (decision 12);
- The High Commissioner, in her capacity as Secretary-General of the Conference, should prepare and carry out, in close cooperation with the UN Department of Public Information, a worldwide information campaign with a view to mobilizing support for the objectives of the Durban Review Conference by all sectors of political, economic, social and cultural life, as well as other interested sectors (decision 9);
- A dedicated extranet page should be developed where all the documents of the Review Conference shall be posted

- and be easily accessible by all stakeholders (decision 10);
and
- Finally, the PrepCom adopted the provisional agenda for the Durban Review Conference (decision 11).

With regard to the accreditation of NGOs to the Durban Review Conference and its preparatory process, the PrepCom adopted five decisions (decisions 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7) based on the 2007 decision PC.1/2, the essence of which is as follows: While there are hundreds of NGOs which already have consultative status with ECOSOC and which are automatically entitled to take part in the process, there are a large number of NGOs that participated in the 2001 World Conference in Durban and which may participate in the Durban Review Conference providing that any objection is not upheld by the PrepCom. The accreditation of any new NGO, outside these two groups, has to be processed appropriately by the PrepCom.

At the PrepCom the credentials of 43 NGOs were discussed. Four of them were fully accredited; one was excluded; 5 NGOs were provisionally accredited pending the submission by them of additional information confirming their competence and relevance of their activities with regard to the Durban Review Conference and its preparatory process, and their compliance with ECOSOC resolution 1996/31. There were 33 NGOs that were not invited to the first substantive session of the PrepCom (but were not yet finally excluded from the process); and one NGO withdrew its application.

Secondly, with regard to the review of contributions to the preparatory process, the PrepCom had before it contributions from 40 States and from a number of United Nations bodies, intergovernmental organizations, various human rights mechanisms and NGOs containing the responses to the questionnaires circulated earlier by the Secretariat at the request of the PrepCom. A panel discussion on the objectives of the Durban Review Conference, as outlined in the Organisational PrepCom, was held with the participation of several experts. Their presentations were followed by an interactive dialogue where delegations engaged in a detailed consideration of the individual aspects of the objectives of the Durban Review Conference, which were decided by the organisational PrepCom in 2007.

During this substantive session, the PrepCom was informed by the Government of Nigeria of its offer to host a regional preparatory meeting for Africa, scheduled to be held in Abuja from 27 to 29 August 2008. As I mentioned earlier, another regional meeting for GRULAC countries will be opened today in Brasilia.

I would like to use this opportunity to call upon other regions to announce the venues and dates of their respective regional meetings as soon as possible.

Thirdly, I will refer to the structure and modalities of preparation of the draft outcome document of the Durban Review Conference which was a central focus of the PrepCom's deliberations. Following intensive consultations, both formal and informal, the Preparatory Committee adopted a decision providing that the

outcome, consisting of a declaratory part and an action-oriented part containing further actions and initiatives, will be based on contributions received and the outcomes of the preparatory meetings and activities at the international, regional and national levels, and that it shall be drawn up in accordance with the agreed structure of the outcome document as contained in this PrepCom's decision (decision 8). Consultations regarding the finalisation of the modalities in this regard are ongoing.

In order to ensure an effective continuation of the preparatory process, the PrepCom decided to establish an intersessional open-ended intergovernmental working group (decision 4). This working group was mandated (I quote) "to follow up the work of the Preparatory Committee, including through reviewing contributions and commencing negotiations on the draft outcome document". The working group will report on its activities to the Preparatory Committee at its second substantive session to be held from 6 to 17 October 2008. This group, chaired by H.E. Mr. Mnatsakanian, Ambassador of Armenia and Vice-Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee, commenced with its first session at the end of May.

Finally, I would like to express, on behalf of the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee, my most sincere appreciation to the sterling efforts of all who participated in the work of the PrepCom, including Member States, observers, Bureau members, and the High Commissioner for Human Rights and her committed staff.

I thank you.