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**Human Rights Council**  
6<sup>th</sup> Session

**Agenda Item 9 : Follow up it Durban Conference**

**Statement by : European Union of Public Relations**

**Mr. Chairman,**

The World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in Durban in the first week of September 2001 deliberated with great objectives against racism and decided a well-planned Programme of Action addressed to various sections of civil society, national and international organizations and made provisions of effective remedies, recourses and other measures at the national, regional and international levels.

Despite the efforts undertaken by the international community, government and local authorities, the scourge of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance persists and continues to result in violation of human rights, sufferings, disadvantages and violence which must be combated by all available sources. Despite the grim assessment of the Durban Conference, it is to be noted and should be a cause of celebration that the past decade has seen the dismantling of the apartheid regime.

The incidence of 9/11 which occurred hardly one week after the Durban Conference have changed the situation and added a new form of religious discrimination. Normally the religious discrimination takes a form of ideological violence which is encouraged by elites, politicians and media adopting a certain posture that predisposes public to discriminate a particular community. In the incidents after 9/11 even the people of other communities were also discriminated in the western world.

Islamophobia, as apparently witnessed today, is not merely a consequence of 9/11. Rather it is a reaction to the aggressive assertion of an identity that has unfortunately, been hijacked by groups who have justified violence in its name. What has made the situation worse is the response of some segments in the Muslim world to the tragedy of 9/11 particularly the senior religious and political leaders of some countries. Even today admiration is expressed by them for the ideology and actions of Osama Bin Laden and his Al Qaeda unmindful of the devastation that this ideology promise for their own nations.

There is an immediate need that Governments of Member States to express and demonstrate a firm political will and commitment to combating the rise of racial and religious hatred. In this context governments should be particularly vigilant in combating the political use of discrimination and xenophobia, notably the ideological and electoral impregnation of racist and xenophobic

platforms into the programmes of democratic parties, and should strongly reaffirm the principle that the respect for human rights, including the eradication of the roots of the culture of racism, xenophobia and intolerance, constitute the strongest pillar of national security and democracy and should not be dependent on any ideological and political convenience.