

BANGLADESH

05/03/2009

P.M.

Allow me, Mr. President, to express our appreciation to Madam High Commissioner for her presentation of annual report. The presentation has been useful and informative. Her frank and candid responses to questions have also been greatly appreciated. As the High Commissioner briefed us about the works of her office, she has also made pertinent remarks on a number of thematic issues. We will certainly give due consideration to those *comments and recommendations.*

We share with ~~the~~ Madam High Commissioner that discrimination is at the root of many human rights violations and that the global community should fight discrimination in all its forms. Apart from race-based discrimination, migrants are a predominant group that suffers worst form of discriminatory treatment. This group is likely to be the first line victim of xenophobic and anti-racist policies and practices in the wake of global economic crises. We agree with the High Commissioner that the ~~receiving~~ states should take adequate measures to protect rights of migrants at this trying time regardless of *their* origin, nationality ^{or} legal status.

We can not agree more when the High Commissioner said, prosperity, security and welfare hinge upon implementation of economic, social and cultural rights including realization of right to development. Right to development assumes particular importance in the context of wide spread poverty and in the emergence of global crises and climate change. We are pleased to note that the Office of the High Commissioner is making considerable efforts to the promotion and advocacy of these issues. As the Council strives to correct regrettable discrepancy between these two groups of rights and to level the human rights playing field, the OHCHR has also the responsibility to guarantee equal emphasis to these rights in their programmes and actions.

Madam High Commissioner has touched upon a hotly debated issue, ~~of~~ freedom of expression versus incitement to racial religious hatred. My delegation fully subscribes to the ^{position} ~~notion~~ that it is vital to strike a balance between freedom of expression and the need to avert incitement to hatred particularly against religions. This is ^{essential} ~~important~~ to foster an environment of tolerance and ^{mutual} respect. We must develop a better understanding of the permissible limitations of freedom as enshrined in the ICCPR. *We ~~are~~ are ready to accept healthy criticism of religions or beliefs but we can not condone propagation ^{incitement} of hatred, insult to religion persons or symbols in the pretext of freedom of religion.*

Discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, colour, religion or creed has long been identified as a prevalent and odious form of exclusion. Adoption of Durban Declaration and Plan of Action was a milestone in combating this menace. The forthcoming Durban Review Conference provides an opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved and what needs to be done for making further progress and how to deal with contemporary manifestation of racism. ~~Attempt to bring~~ extraneous issues or all other forms of discriminations within the purview of review ~~is not acceptable~~ ^{unacceptable to us} it will dilute the focus on racism and as such ~~we should refrain from~~ ^{such} ~~an~~ ^{attempts} unhelpful endeavor. We should make all efforts to make the conference successful. In this regard, I would put on record our deep admiration to Madam Pillay for her personal ~~effort~~ ^{commitment} to the Review conference.

Finally, I would like to touch upon the issue of geographic representation in the staff position of OHCHR. We are thankful to the High Commissioner for her very detailed briefing on the issue. We have noted some improvements. However, ~~we would~~ ^{the situation remains far from satisfactory} appreciate receiving information on the geographic representation at different levels, i.e. from P1 to D2. Representation is more important at the higher levels i.e. decision making /policy making levels.

As the High Commissioner said, it will take time to reach to ~~a satisfactory position~~ ^{an acceptable stage}. Some other measures may also be considered to make rapid progress. Temporary suspension of recruitment from the overrepresented group is an option worth considering. But before that the Secretariat that serves the Human Rights Council should be constituted with individuals from different regions and cultures. ~~I would urge~~ ^{The Secretariat indeed has a crucial role to perform} on the High Commissioner to look into this at the earnest.

I thank you.