



# PAKISTAN

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT BY

H.E. MR. ZAMIR AKRAM  
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
ON BEHALF OF THE OIC

AT THE

CLOSING SESSION OF  
THE DURBAN REVIEW CONFERENCE

Geneva  
24 April 2009

Mr. President,

I have the honour to address this concluding session of the Durban Review Conference on behalf of the member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

We take this opportunity to welcome the consensus adoption of the Outcome document of this Review Conference. Every single member state present in this hall today deserves appreciation for their commitment to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Our differences of opinion notwithstanding, the adoption by consensus of this document is reflective of our common desire to combat the scourge of racism.

I would like to express our appreciation, Mr. President, for your judicious and skillful conduct of this Conference. We also express our appreciation to Ambassador Hajaji, to the High Commissioner Pillay and all Bureau members for their contribution towards the preparation of this Conference. Furthermore, the OIC wants to place on record its deep appreciation and admiration for the Russian delegation, in particular Mr. Boychenko, for his hard work that has significantly contributed to the successful conclusion of the Review Conference. A special word of thanks goes to the valuable contribution of civil society, which provides grass root knowledge of victims' perspective and preferences.

This is a historic document which reflects the collective wisdom of the international community. It provides a valuable review of our collective efforts against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of related intolerance since the Durban Review Conference in 2001. While reaffirming the continued relevance and comprehensive nature of the DDPA in its entirety, the document makes a significant contribution by identifying new forms of discrimination and intolerance, in particular, negative stereotyping and profiling on the grounds of religion and belief. It also calls for setting up new standards to bring under its purview contemporary and new forms of discrimination as well as evolving measures to address them.

Mr. President,

In keeping with our commitment to the elimination of intolerance and discrimination in all its forms and manifestations and in particular in a spirit of solidarity with Africa, the OIC exercised exemplary restraint, and made significant sacrifices to ensure the adoption of a consensus document. In particular, we commend the positive role played by the delegations of Palestine, Syria and Iran.

Our contribution has been recognized by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in her statement to the opening session of this Conference. We are also thankful to delegations from all other groups who constructively participated in the negotiations and through a spirit of compromise and cooperation, enabled the adoption of a consensus document.

It is regrettable that a small number of states decided to disassociate from this process. We believe that engagement rather estrangement would have been the better course to follow. There is nothing in this document that can provide justification for their decision.

Moreover, we believe that all UN officials must abide by the well established norms and practices of impartiality and refrain from passing judgment on views expressed by a sovereign state.

Mr. President,

The flexibility that the OIC has demonstrated does not mean that we have abandoned our principled positions and we shall continue to pursue these objectives in all relevant international fora.

The OIC continues to remain concerned over the efforts by some quarters to stereotype, stigmatize and vilify Muslims. The defamation of Islam and its followers under the garb of freedom of expression is a new and contemporary form of discrimination, intolerance and xenophobia. As civilized societies we are bound to exercise our freedoms judiciously and within the parameters of internationally accepted norms. Muslim lands continue to be occupied where Muslims are being subjected to repression and racial and religious discrimination. For the one and a half billion Muslims in the world, this situation is intolerable and unacceptable.

In these circumstances, the civilized and pragmatic course to pursue is one of dialogue and engagement between different religions and cultures. Our faith commits all Muslims to respect the beliefs of others. We have a right to ask for the same in return.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that we welcome the successful conclusion of this Durban Review Conference. We also look forward to working with our partners to ensure effective implementation of this document in the future. This will require, above all, the necessary political will on the part of all stakeholders to be united against racism, on the basis of equality, dignity and justice for all.

I thank you, Mr. President.