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STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MR. RAJEEV SHUKLA
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
AND
MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION

on

AGENDA ITEM 62 :
ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

and

AGENDA ITEM 63:
RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION

THIRD COMMITTEE
63rd SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK
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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on Agenda items 62 and 63 on 'Elimination of racism and racial discrimination' and 'Right of peoples to self-determination' respectively. We thank the UN Secretary General for his various reports under these agenda items and also the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination and related Intolerance, and the Chairperson of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self determination, for their statements in the Committee. My delegation also associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Antigua and Barbuda, as the Chair of the G-77.

Mr. Chairman,

As the Secretary General's report has mentioned, the forthcoming Durban Review Conference in April 2009 will offer an opportunity for all stakeholders to assess the successes and shortcomings in the implementation of various measures adopted by member states to alleviate the discrimination faced by people on account of various factors, including, ethnicity, race and religion. The Review Conference will also contribute to strengthening development and equality through the wider involvement of all the stakeholders, including civil society organisations. The Review Conference is also being convened at an opportune time as the problems of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other related intolerance have not reduced. Instead, political violence induced by these are on the rise globally and has become more brutal and vicious.

We support a multi-faceted approach to combat racism, including through adoption of relevant legislation and amending existing laws combined with action at the national level based on strategies elaborated through national action plans. In addition, a sincere operationalisation of the commitments prescribed in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action is extremely important to tackle this menace and promote social harmony and peace. We hope that the international community will be able to reach a consensus on this important issue. We look forward to a successful outcome of the Durban Review Conference in Geneva.

Mr. Chairman,

India has maintained unwavering support and solidarity for the goal of the people of Palestine of attaining their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination. The establishment of an independent, contiguous, viable, independent and sovereign state of Palestine, existing side by side with Israel in peace and security, remains an important unfinished task in the realisation of the right of peoples to self-determination. We are with the overwhelming majority of countries who consistently affirm their commitment to a negotiated two-State

solution, accepted by the two principals, that would result in such a state emerging in the Middle East.

It is in this context that India has welcomed the resumption of a direct dialogue between the parties to the conflict, and the process set in motion during the Annapolis Conference last year. We remain convinced that the Roadmap, as endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 1515, remains a valid framework of reference for an eventual settlement, and we reiterate the central importance of all parties abiding by their commitments under the Road Map.

We welcome all efforts to take forward the ongoing dialogue and the achievement of the goal announced at Annapolis, ideally within the announced timeframe. We believe that all such efforts should be aimed at the earliest possible conclusion of an agreement that would ensure a just, fair, equitable and mutually-acceptable solution to this conflict, based on relevant UN resolutions, including Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Chairman,

Having said that, the United Nations and other international fora should not be used to selectively redefine some of the core principles of the United Nations Charter in order to satisfy domestic political rhetoric. This is true especially in the context of the right of peoples to self-determination. This concept should always be seen in a historic perspective. Relevant international principles reaffirm that self-determination is a right applicable to the peoples of non-self governing colonies and trust territories. Once exercised, this right enables people to freely choose their own form of Government and for all segments of society to collectively participate in national decision making through representative, democratic institutions. Additionally, the international community has consistently affirmed that the right of self-determination does not extend to component parts or groups within independent sovereign states and any attempts aimed at the partial or total disruption of their national unity are incompatible with the purpose and principles of the UN Charter.

The right to self-determination cannot become an instrument to promote subversion and erode the political cohesion or territorial integrity of sovereign member states of the UN. It cannot be abused to encourage secession and undermine pluralistic and democratic states. Moreover, there is no room for self-determination to be distorted and misinterpreted as a right of a group, on the basis of ethnicity, religion or racial criteria, or any other such categorization, and thus, use it to attempt to undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a state.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
