Ambassador Gilad Erdan, Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, Statement on the decision of the UN General Assembly to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Durban Declaration, Orally delivered as an "Explanation of Vote" on the UN 2021 Program Budget (""Programme budget for 2021," A/RES/75/254 A-C")

UN General Assembly, New York

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Mr. President,

20-years ago, the Durban conference convened with the worthy goal of combating racism. But, like many UN initiatives, it was promptly high-jacked by organization and member states that are interested in attacking Israel and delegitimizing its right to exist. They are not interested in human rights.

The conference became a hatefest.

It was a shameful event that hurt the very causes it sought to promote. Israel was left with no other choice but to pull out of the conference.

Today we must all speak out against commemorating the disgrace that was the Durban Conference. Israel opposes any measure aimed at allocating a budget for this purpose -- we all know that such funds will not be used to support human rights but to spread even more antisemitism and hate towards Israel.

I call on the states here that share our vision of a world free of racism and intolerance to join us.

Since Durban, the antisemitism that coursed through the corridors of that conference has been given multiple opportunities to rise again.

At the Durban review conference, Iranian President Ahmadinejad spewed vile hatred from the podium as the UN’s highest-ranking officials looked on.

On the 10 year anniversary of the conference, this Assembly sponsored “Durban III” in New York. Once again, the Iranians and other antisemites were handed the microphone and the victims of racism were the losers.

Durban also served as the launch-pad of the campaign to delegitimize Israel. The real aim of calls to boycott, divest and sanction Israel is to challenge the very existence of the world’s only Jewish state.

It is an outrage then, that the United Nations General Assembly wants to convene and fund yet a fourth iteration of this disgraceful meeting.

The Jewish people are sadly familiar with racism and xenophobia. Its practitioners have murdered millions of us and changed our destiny forever. Because of this tragedy, combating racism is seared into the soul of our people and our nation.

We are unequivocally against commemorating the Durban Declaration and Program of Action. It will become another meeting demonizing the Jewish state, it will be used once again to slander us and to launch false accusations of racism against Jewish self-determination. We refuse to vote in favor of a budget allowing the UN to allocate resources for such a disgraceful event.

Unfortunately, the use of UN resources for anti-Israel initiatives and organizations is commonplace. It is part of a wider anti-Israel bias at the UN.

The UN's mishandled attempts at promoting the important issue of human rights have also become common. Under this assembly's watch, the issue of human rights is being cynically abused.

The Human Rights Council does nothing to protect human rights. Instead it serves as an alibi for the terrible crimes of some of the world’s gravest human rights violators.

The Council and the Durban Conference 20 years ago both focus on attacking Israel instead of fighting for human rights.

I will not stand by when such lies and incitement against Israel and the Jewish people are freely given a platform.

Mr. President,

It is time for this assembly to ask why it continues to support hateful, antisemitic, anti-Israel initiatives that do nothing to promote its stated goals. It is an outrageous habit and it must stop now!

Thank you Mr. President.