

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Islamic Republic of Iran's general comments in Response to call by Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Racism for Input Regarding the Report on 20th Anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

After two decades, Durban Declaration and Programme of Action remains a landmark document in global efforts to eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerances. Simultaneously, DDPA's unique composition serves as a benchmark and also as an instrument. For that very reason, in following decades after its adoption, DDPA has proven hard to be substituted.

Nevertheless, DDPA remains a model document because it does not prevaricate from identifying the root causes of racial discrimination such as Colonialism and Apartheid. At the same time, these factors are not merely recounted as historical tragedies, rather, their tangible consequences such as generational rifts are reflected upon and the warning is echoed through the lines that a potential for reversal always exists. Furthermore, DDPA also aptly recognizes the repercussions of its warnings, that the threat of genocide always looms when concerns about racism and racial discrimination are sidelined.

The Islamic Republic of Iran considers DDPA as a successor to 1978 and 1983 "World against Racism" conferences. Given that those conferences' main focus was the eradication of Apartheid policies, DDPA too, in that regard is considered as an Anti-Apartheid effort, while it celebrated 10th anniversary of

abolishment of the racists laws in South Africa, DDPA recognized both genocide and Apartheid as crimes against humanity that needs to be prevented at all costs and thus requires due diligence from the international community.

That is why the ever-increasing Apartheid policies of the Zionist regime is a further source of dismay when DDPA is held as a benchmark to assess progresses and setbacks. Forcible transfer of communities and incessant persecutions based on ethnical grounds are among a slew of Israeli Apartheid policies which have been systematically oppressing and institutionally discriminating against Palestinians. These are all grounds for crimes against humanity and its exponential nature is indicative of what will be a genocide in a short span of time if left unchecked.

Given these realities on the ground, it is no wonder that such a regime and crony politicians who call themselves allies of such a racist entity, have relentlessly tried to sideline the Durban event of 2001 and the subsequent 2009 and 2011 conferences. Almost all of these so called declarations of boycott have been issued by countries that have a history of colonial pursuits or genocide of the indigenous populations. Ironically, such precedents tend to create a persisting rift among communities within a society unless an inclusive dialogue centered on remedial measures is formulated. DDPA is in a sense, a prescription for societal amelioration, the very panacea that is sadly avoided by those who need it most.

As a longtime signatory of International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to fight the scourge of Racism both in home and abroad. Most recently in 2020, a new law was passed to mitigate the challenge of promulgation of hate speech in cyberspace through

defining criteria such as the number of audience and the publicity or privacy of the platform which has been used to disseminate hate speech.

Given the trend of intensifying challenges and the necessity to address them and share best approaches, “World against Racism” conferences based on DDPA should be convened with a much higher frequency such as a biannual basis. In this regard, formation of the Permanent Forum for People of African Descent is a positive development which helps to channel specific issues and helps to maintain necessary perspective for DDPA.