

STATEMENT BY MS. SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, ON AGENDA ITEM 64: PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS [B] HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, [C] HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS AND REPORTS OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS AND REPRESENTATIVES, AND [E] CONVENTION OF THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AT THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 63RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 28, 2008



Mr. Chairman,

I would like to thank the UN Secretary-General for his reports, the Special Rapporteurs of the special procedures and Representatives of the UNSG for their concise presentations under the sub-agenda items 64 (b), (c) and (e) relating to 'protection and promotion of human rights'.

I would also specially thank the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for her statement last week before the Third Committee. With her vast experience in the field of human rights and her objective and practical outlook, I am sure she will be able to deliver effectively, her ever expanding mandate. We look forward to work with her.

Mr. Chairman,

The report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, informs that the number of victims of hunger and malnutrition around the world are increasing at a steady pace. This situation has been exacerbated by the ongoing international food, financial and energy crises. There is an urgent need for greater partnership, commitments on technology transfer, provision of additional financing, as well as cooperation between developed and developing countries to tackle these unprecedented crises so that a conducive environment is created for the realisation of all human rights including, the right to development.

We support the efforts of the Working Group on the Right to Development, and the endeavour to operationalize it and mainstream it in policies and operational activities of relevant actors at the national, regional and international level, including multilateral financial, trade and development institutions. This will also promote social justice. After all, development without democracy, social justice and respect for human rights can be neither lasting nor sustainable.

Mr. Chairman,

As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 15th Anniversary of the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and its Programme of Action, we have not yet attained a global culture of human rights, which can serve as a unifying force rather than a divisive force. A major challenge is the determination of the most effective approach for promotion and protection of human rights. Attempts have regularly been made to single out countries for intrusive monitoring and pointing out the failure of the state mechanism in the promotion and protection of human rights of its citizens. We need to reflect on whether such international action has forced member states to accelerate appropriate activities at the domestic level and has genuinely improved the human rights situation.

Instances of gross and systematic violations of human rights anywhere in the world must certainly be addressed by the international community, collectively, and in a holistic manner. However, dealing with human rights situations with a specific bias against a certain country, does not promote the cause of protection of human rights. Instead, an approach based on dialogue, consultation and cooperation, has a better chance of leading to a genuine improvement in the enjoyment of human rights by the people of a country.

Mr. Chairman,

The phenomena of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia are the anti-thesis of all that humanity stands for. India abhors these phenomena and has been in the forefront in fighting racism in all its manifestations. In fact, this was an intrinsic part of our freedom struggle against colonial rule. Despite differing views on the implementation of programmes against these phenomena, everyone accepts their importance and the need to cooperate on

them. In this context, the Durban Review Conference provides an opportunity to take comprehensive stock of the progress made in the implementation of various provisions in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, against racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia. India remains committed and will actively contribute to the preparation for the Durban Review Conference and work towards its successful outcome.

Mr. Chairman,

The adoption and entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is an important achievement at the international level. The Convention recognises disabled persons as rights holders and active members of society, rather than objects of charity. India, with more than 22 million disabled persons, was among the first countries to sign and ratify the Convention. India has in place the Persons with Disability (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act of 1995 and the National Policy for Disabled People of 2006, for the rights of persons with disabilities. However, we recognize that much more needs to be done to secure full enjoyment of the rights enshrined in the Convention by the disabled people in India. We look forward to the first meeting of the State Parties to the Convention later this week and the election of the Committee members to this new treaty body.

Mr. Chairman,

With its democratic, pluralistic and secular polity, an autonomous and impartial judiciary, a vibrant civil society, a free media, and independent human rights institutions, India has been successful in ensuring effective guarantees for the protection and promotion of human rights. Our vibrant democratic polity also requires that we continuously pursue higher norms and standards, be it in the area of human rights or development. As the world's largest democracy, India considers it an honour to uphold and cherish the values of human rights and fundamental freedoms of each and every citizen. It will be our constant endeavour to continue to do so.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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