



Fact Sheet: Durban Review Conference, April 20-24, 2009, in Geneva, Switzerland

Background

The [Durban Review Conference](#), scheduled to take place in Geneva, Switzerland from April 20-24, 2009, is a follow-up conference to the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR) organized by the United Nations in Durban, South Africa. WCAR was attended by more than 10,000 people from all regions of the world and resulted in the adoption, by consensus, of the [Durban Declaration and Program of Action](#). The Durban Review Conference has been convened to assess and advance the implementation of the measures established in the Durban Declaration and Program of Action, which remains the most important framework to date for combating racism and racial discrimination. **Unfortunately, the Bush Administration withdrew from the WCAR and did not participate in any of the preparatory meetings leading up to the Durban Review Conference. We are now urging the Obama Administration to re-engage in the process.** Please see the following page for more information on United States participation. The [Durban Declaration and Program of Action](#) can also be found at www.hrpujc.org.

Objectives of the Review Conference

- To review progress and assess implementation of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action by all stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels, including assessing contemporary manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and identifying concrete measures for combating and eliminating all such manifestations;
- To assess the effectiveness of the existing Durban follow-up mechanisms and other relevant United Nations mechanisms dealing with racism in order to strengthen them;
- To promote the universal ratification and implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and proper consideration of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination;
- To identify and share good practices in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Update on Durban Review Process

In 2006, the United Nations General Assembly agreed to establish a Preparatory Committee to inform the organization and process of the Durban Review Conference, as well as oversee the substantive negotiations on the text that will become the [outcome document](#) of conference. The Preparatory Committee has convened a number of meetings including two regional in Brazil and Nigeria in preparation for the Durban Review Conference. In the process, a working group was established to continue and finalize the process of negotiating and drafting the [outcome document](#). Yury Boichenko, First Counselor at the Russian Permanent Mission, was elected as the first Chair of the working group at a formal meeting in November 2008.

Governments are already negotiating text of the [outcome document](#) that resulted from the compilation of various proposals submitted by regional and other interest groups. ***If your organization would like to propose substantive changes to the outcome document, please see next page for more information on how your organization can participate in the process.***



NGO Accreditation for the Durban Review Conference

Your organization needs to be accredited to the Durban Review Conference in order to participate in the meetings of the working group or contribute to the outcome document. The deadline for NGOs to submit applications for accreditation to the Secretariat of the Durban Review Conference is **February 10, 2009**. Please note that this date only applies to NGOs that are not yet accredited to the Durban Review process (i.e. NGOs that do not have consultative status with ECOSOC, did not participate at the WCAR and have not been accredited by the Preparatory Committee for the Durban Review Conference). Accreditation and other NGO requests should be sent to NGODurbanRevConf@ohchr.org or by fax at +41 22 928 90 50.

NGO Participation in the Working Group & Preparatory Meetings of the Durban Review Conference

NGOs may contribute to the content of the outcome document including by making specific amendments, additions, or deletions in the following ways:

- **making statements as observers at times determined by the Chair of the meeting**
- **submitting written contributions to the Secretariat prior to or during the meeting**

The next formal sessions for negotiations are scheduled as follows (*these dates may be subject to change*):

April 6-10, 2009. Formal Session of the Working Group in Geneva, Switzerland

April 15-17, 2009. Final Session of the Preparatory Committee in Geneva, Switzerland

For further information on NGO participation, please contact the Secretariat at: Anti-Discrimination Unit Tel: +41 22 928 9208 Fax: +41 22 928 90 50 E-mail: adusecretariat@ohchr.org

Act Now! Urge the Obama Administration to participate in the Durban Review Conference

The Bush Administration boycotted the process leading up to the Durban Review Conference, and the Obama Administration has not yet announced whether it will participate in the Durban Review Conference. As many may remember, the United States withdrew from WCAR in 2001 citing the amount of time that participants spent condemning Israel's treatment of the Palestinian people as the reason for the walk out. While the United States government has presented reasons for its refusal to participate in the Durban Review process, those reasons are not related to the WCAR Declaration and Program of Action, which is the main instrument and focus of the Durban Review Conference. The Durban Review Conference is the most important forum for recommitting the global community to combating racism and racial discrimination, and the United States must engage in it as a full and active member. Non-participation is simply unacceptable.

Please call your representatives to urge their leadership in pushing the Obama Administration to participate in the Durban Review Conference, or go to www.hrpujc.org for information on how to help.