



**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE DELEGATION OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC, DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE ON AGENDA ITEM 69, ENTITLED “ELIMINATION OF RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE”, WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

*New York, 27 October 2023*

**Mr. President,**

1. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has the honor to take the floor on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations.

**Mr. President,**

2. The joint approach, through multilateral perspective, to the global call for the adoption of concrete measures for the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, as well as for the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up of the Durban Declaration and its Programme of Action, remains a top priority for the Member States of the Group of Friends, mindful of the fact that political, economic and cultural diversity is a basic characteristic of international society, which shall not be a cause for alienation, but, on the contrary, for unity around the common and urgent challenge of peacefully and constructively coexisting, in accordance with the very founding spirit of the United Nations.
3. Articles 1 and 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted 74 years ago by the General Assembly, establish that *“all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood”*; and, in addition, that *“everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind (...)*. Fraternity and equality without discrimination are essential values and ethical foundations for human coexistence and are top premises that must guide the political action of the States that make up our Organization.
4. The political, social, economic and cultural advancements that humanity has made in the past 78 years, since the establishment of the United Nations, must continue



to inspire all our peoples to a continued struggle for social, economic and cultural equality, in which there are no privileges derived from belonging to a particular class or group, but in which rights emanate from justice and equitable access to opportunities that are equally guaranteed to all. Time has come for definitively overcoming the historical shame that since immemorial time has resulted in slavery, human trafficking for purposes of labor or sexual exploitation, even in modern manifestations; or for the imposition of political ideas by certain groups that assume themselves superior to others, under exceptionalist conceptions, within the framework of a phenomenon that has been repeated for centuries in many regions around the world and whose debt must be repaired once and for all, without further delays.

**Mr. President,**

5. The Group of Friends considers that, in the face of the global aspiration reflected in the Charter of the United Nations and in the entire Universal System of Human Rights, systemic racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and any related form of intolerance constitute anachronistic expressions of human relations that have already been overcome by humanity. Hence, we condemn and reject any current manifestation that infringes upon the fundamental rights, dignity and value of the human person, while urging all States to categorically criminalize any manifestation and acts of hatred and segregation on ethnic or any other grounds or that attempts to establish categories or to set formulas of racial exceptionalisms, which would undoubtedly represent a terrible moral setback for humanity as a whole.
6. In this very same vein, we also seize this opportunity to categorically condemn the resurgence of tendencies that assume superiority among human beings, including fascism, Nazism, neo-Nazism and other similar ideologies, which represent a past that has already been defeated by humanity, following the establishment of the United Nations, and of which there is a collective yearning of never going back. Their focused resurgence represents an obstacle for the advancement of humanity towards new levels of material and spiritual development.
7. Moreover, we also consider it immoral and a politically contradictory that some governments, while attempting to give lessons of good governance and political rectitude to the rest of the world, have been unable to fully guarantee the right to non-discrimination of their own citizens, while actively promoting it through the illegal imposition of unilateral coercive measures, which today affect more than a third of humanity and have become a sophisticated and modern form of systematic discrimination.

**Mr. President,**

8. The establishment and most recent session of the Forum of People of African Descent, pursuant to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 75/314, constitute an important step forward in the fight against all expressions of racial discrimination and in vindicating the historical struggles of these peoples and communities, including those who bear the disastrous legacy of transatlantic slavery, colonialism and the plundering of the natural resources from their homelands. In this context, we stress that time has come for moving forward with processes seeking reparations, as part of ongoing and valuable legal remedy to try to compensate this historical debt and legacy of appropriation and injustice.
9. Hence, we believe that accelerating the process of drafting an optional protocol on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), within the Ad Hoc Committee of the Human Rights Council on the Elaboration of Complementary Standards is critical.
10. To conclude, the Group of Friends considers that the Durban Declaration and Program of Action adopted by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, in September 2001, constitutes our agreed roadmap *par excellence* for charting political action aimed at combating these terrible evils that still find painful manifestations in today's world, and that the path towards progress shall be based on the values of mutual recognition, solidarity, respect, multiculturalism, tolerance, harmonious and peaceful coexistence, dialogue among civilizations, religions and cultures, the promotion of the culture of peace, and the rejection of hate speech, within the framework of an environment that guarantees the rule of law and that allows for adequate accountability for the perpetration of those crimes that threaten peace and coexistence. We insist that both multilateralism and the recognition of the other are the only realistic ways for achieving the noble ideal that "*We, the Peoples of the United Nations*" gave ourselves when signing the founding Charter of our Organization, as a guarantee of faith in human rights and in the creation of all conditions for justice and social development for all, equally, without distinction or exclusion of any kind or for any reason.

I thank you, Mr. President.