

The 8th Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration & Program of Action

For two weeks from October 11 to 22, 2010, the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action (DDPA) convened for the 8th time. Under the guidance of the Chairperson, Djibouti's Ambassador Mohamed-Siad Doualeh, the Working Group:

- 1) Adopted conclusions and recommendations on the Protection of Children, Migration, and Employment;
 - 2) Solicited an update from the OHCHR on the progress of the recommendations adopted at the 7th working group session, followed by several member state's individual updates on the implementation of the DDPA in their respective countries;
 - 3) Made recommendations for the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration, which will take place in September 2011; and
 - 4) Heard panelists speak on the elimination of structural discrimination and then issued a set of conclusions on the topic.
-

The Working Group spent the first four days in debates over the conclusions and recommendations on the Protection of Children, Migration, and Employment. The main participants were the EU (including individual delegations from France, Greece, and Italy); the African group (led by Nigeria), and the Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC) (led by Mexico and Brazil). Progress was very slow over this period. The EU seemingly maintained a spirit of non-cooperation throughout, refusing to compromise in the name of progress, even when called in line by the Chairperson.

The OHCHR reported on its continued commitment to the implementation of the Durban Declaration, reporting that it is currently in the process of building an anti-discrimination website database that will provide logistical support to all stakeholders and encourage best practices. In this regard, the Working Group encouraged states and all relevant stakeholders to submit information to the OHCHR to help build the database.

The Working Group was also charged with the task of planning the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the DDPA. There was a heightened spirit of collaboration here, and the Working Group agreed to hold a one-day commemoration of the DDPA during the high-level segment of the 66th General Assembly in 2011. The Working Group further encouraged member states to initiate national campaigns to widely disseminate materials on the DDPA, as well as special commemorative events to increase the DDPA's visibility. All member states agreed that the 10th anniversary should be a time for high-visibility events to promote positive measures to combat racism and discrimination.

The Working Group heard a wide-range of independent experts speak on structural discrimination. The panelists provided definitions of structural discrimination, made recommendations on combating it, and highlighted specific legislation being used to eliminate it. The Working Group consequently recommended that states develop national actions plans to combat discrimination, and strongly suggested the implementation of affirmative and positive measures.