STATEMENT

BY

MS. FAITH DANIEL
COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

UNDER AGENDA ITEM 67:

(A) ELIMINATION OF RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE AND

(B) COMPREHENSIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE DURBAN DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION

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Mr. Chairman,

1. My delegation wishes to express its sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Special Rapporteur for his comprehensive report presented before us today and also sincerely commends those countries that contributed to the report.

2. Botswana acknowledges the important role played by the Special Rapporteur and other relevant special procedures and mechanisms in the fight against all forms of discrimination.

3. My delegation further appreciates the Special Rapporteur's focus on the latest developments with regard to the human rights and governance challenges that extremist political parties, movements and groups, continue to pose.

4. We applaud the Special Rapporteur's commitment in undertaking his mandate and take due note of the activities he undertook during the period under review.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Botswana attaches great importance to the issues of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

6. We acknowledge that racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in their contemporary forms are complex and difficult to detect, understand and permanently eradicate.

7. In this regard, we firmly believe that tolerance and understanding must be fostered among peoples as one of the many ways to fight racism. We are also in complete agreement with the view that the first step in dealing with this scourge is to acknowledge that it exists. Only then can we come up with ways of dealing with this phenomenon accordingly.

Mr. Chairman,

8. Botswana seriously abhors any acts of extremism and hate speech.

9. It is in this connection that discrimination in all its forms and manifestations, does not find a place in our society. Guided by our National Vision 2016, Botswana is committed to achieve a moral and tolerant nation which is compassionate, just and caring.

10. In this regard, the promotion of peace, harmony and tolerance among our people remains a top priority. We therefore continue to review all our policies and programmes to be consistent with this ethos.
11. We strongly condemn recent terror attacks in Kenya. The killing of civilians in for whatever reason will never bring about a solution to any form of discord or differences between and amongst people, but will only bring insecurity and undermine the achievements and efforts made in combating racism, xenophobia and related intolerance. We therefore wish to appeal to the international community to work in concert in order to combat this malice.

12. We also welcome the recommendation by the Special Rapporteur on the need to prioritize the strengthening of capacity for law enforcement officials to deal with racist and xenophobic crimes. The importance of public officers' human rights training, including training with a specific focus on racist and xenophobic crimes perpetrated by individuals linked to extremist political parties, groups and movements cannot be overemphasized.


14. My delegation welcomes the conclusions and recommendations reached by the Intergovernmental Working Group regarding the role of politicians and political parties in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; and the enhancement of international cooperation in the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, among others.

15. We remain hopeful that global efforts in the realization of the objectives of the International Decade for People of African Descent will be achieved both at the national, regional and international levels.

Mr. Chairman,

16. At national level, Botswana continues to ensure that efforts are guided by the ideals espoused in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the Outcome Document of the Durban Review Conference.

17. In this regard, we continue to integrate human rights training in the curricula of law enforcement officers. This is an effort that requires both financial and technical resources to be sustained, and targeted assistance in this regard will be of great value to us. Human rights education and training, with a particular focus on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, will remain a key priority for Botswana.
Mr. Chairman

18. In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, my delegation wishes to reaffirm the centrality of the DDPA and the Outcome Document of the Review Conference in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

19. We therefore share the view that political leaders and their respective parties should strongly and clearly condemn all political messages that disseminate ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination or xenophobia. This would go long towards contributing to achieving full and effective equality for all and to strengthening respect for the rule of law, human rights and democracy.

I thank you.