Statement by  
Delegation of the Republic of Indonesia  
On Agenda Item 67  
on Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance  

New York, November 2013

Mr. Chairperson,

I wish to begin by thanking the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination for their extensive and comprehensive reports.

In making this statement, Indonesia aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday by Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We would like to express our strong support for the work of the Working Group of Experts on People of African descent. As the report has stated, we share the concern that despite the global effort to eliminate racism and racial discrimination, people of African descent throughout the world are still facing arduous challenges, especially in tackling social inequality, economic disadvantage and environmental degradation.

In this regard, we therefore encourage the concerted efforts being made at the national, regional and international levels to make the International Decade for People of African Descent effective. In our view, and as the Chair of the Working Group stressed at the plenary yesterday, we believe that the International Decade will not only be beneficial for people of African descent, but also for the international community as a whole, since it will contribute to the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people.

Mr. Chairperson,

We would also like to underline our staunch commitment to the efforts towards the eradication of all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The report of the Special Rapporteur has clearly summarized the diverse efforts of countries and international organizations to dealing with this delicate issue. Indeed, since the seeds of hatred are often homegrown, we stress the importance of various programs at the national level to combat and prevent the spread of extremism by upholding the
principles of equality and non-discrimination. Other than legislative adjustment in accordance with international instruments, there is also a need to raise the awareness of the society to foster tolerance, respect for cultural diversity and mutual understanding.

My delegation would also like to highlight the important role of the mass media in promoting a culture of peace and tolerance by combating stereotypes and racial discrimination that are often voiced in the name of freedom of expression. Rather than fuelling the incitement to national, racial and religious hatred or violence, the media has the critical responsibility to ensure that the voices of the minorities are heard.

Let me also highlight the salient point underlined by the Indonesian Foreign Minister at the Sixth Annual Trygve Lie Symposium on Fundamental Freedoms: “Combating Hate Speech: Everyone’s Responsibility”, held in New York on 26 September 2013, that “Governments alone can never succeed in addressing intolerance, stigmatization and negative stereotyping without the staunch support of all relevant parties, including the media”.

Mr. Chairperson,

As one of the most diverse countries in the world, with more that 230 million people from at least 1,000 ethnic groups and with over 500 languages, it is imperative for Indonesia to build a strong and united nation. We are a nation which cherishes our diversity as a national heritage, and this is inscribed in our national motto, “Unity in Diversity”.

To serve this purpose, we have strengthened national mechanisms to promote and protect all citizens from acts of discrimination. In Law number 40 of 2008, on the elimination of racial and ethnic discrimination, Indonesia extended the protection of all persons from acts of which violate the Indonesian Constitution or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Under this law, the National Human Rights Commission is also mandated to monitor existing policies, laws and by-laws which could potentially contravene the Indonesian obligation as state party to the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discriminations (CERD), as well as to undertake fact findings on allegations of acts of discrimination.

Through education and reconciliatory dialogue, we have been persistent in our efforts to promote tolerance and mutual respect between different societies, cultures and religions, at national, regional and international levels.

At the national and sub national levels, the government has facilitated the establishment of the Inter Religion Harmony Forum (FKUB). The objective is to promote harmony among religious followers, and to discuss and promote solutions on issues affecting them. Currently, the Forum has been established in around 200 provinces as well as regencies within Indonesia.

To further illustrate our staunch commitment on this issue, we have partnered with some 22 other governments in conducting interfaith dialogues at the bilateral level. We have also initiated and organized many interfaith dialogues at the regional and inter-regional levels. At the global level, Indonesia actively participates in UN-sponsored dialogues between faiths and cultures.
Mr. Chairperson,

Let me take this opportunity to reiterate the proposal made last year by my President, Dr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, of the urgent need for the international community to build a more robust framework for international cooperation in combating religious intolerance. Last year, he proposed an international instrument to prevent incitement to hostility and violence on the basis of religion or belief.

While we are open to any format of the instrument, which could be in the form of model legislation, registry, a set of guidelines, a political declaration or a legally binding instrument, we wish to underline that what is more important is for the instrument to be the product of international consensus. We are of the view that the process of its formulation should take into account the national constraints of member states - so that it will gain the support and sense of ownership of all stakeholders.

To conclude, Indonesia would like to reiterate its unwavering commitment towards combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

I thank you.

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