Statement by
H.E Ambassador Amr AboulAtta
Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Nations

Plenary meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

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Mr. President,

At the outset I would like to seize the opportunity to salute your exceptional leadership and commend you for convening this important plenary meeting to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Allow me also to associate myself with the statement delivered by Namibia on behalf of the African group and the statement delivered by South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. President,

Today represents a great occasion for the world to pay tribute and respect to the legacy of the victims of a shameful crime. We, Africans had suffered for long time of many types of unfair exploitation of our rich continent resources, the worse and most brutal was the Transatlantic Slave Trade of millions of our young men and women.

Humanity had undergone various symptoms of social illnesses that were more too often related to colour, race, belief or religion. Regrettably and despite the serious steps taken by the international community to implement the International Convention on the Abolition of Slavery and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), and despite the progress in realising the universality of the International Covenants of Human Rights, it is very saddening that we still witness new forms of slavery and racism in our contemporary world.

This inhuman and tragic phenomenon represented one of the darkest and disgraceful chapters of mankind. Hence, Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that ‘No one shall be held in slavery or servitude: slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms’. However, the negative heritage of slavery, slave trade, colonialism, foreign occupation, alien domination still manifested themselves in poverty, underdevelopment, marginalisation, social exclusion and economic disparities for the developing world.

The world intentionally turned this sad page and indisputably prohibits the slavery, nevertheless the mission is not totally accomplished yet as some slavery like practices remains a grave and persistent problem today. Our battle is not over, traditional slavery has been abolished and legally banned, but sadly it was replaced by contemporary forms including debt bondage, serfdom, forced labour, child slavery, sexual slavery, forced or early marriages, women and girls exploitation in pornography, trafficking in persons and injustice to workers, immigrants, refugees.
In order to effectively eradicate slavery in all its forms, Egypt stresses that facing these serious negative phenomenon requires the international community to formulate and implement strategies and programmes that consolidate ethical norms rejecting the notions of superiority and racial domination and promoting the values of equality, tolerance and coexistence. Likewise, it is imperative to show strong political will and coordinate actions of Governments to enforce international law and protect the rights of all and monitor and confront the growth of racist campaigns and contemporary forms of slavery.

Finally, Mr. President, we reiterate our pledge to work with all member states to eradicate all contemporary forms of slavery, as well as intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization.

Thank you.