

UN Human Rights Council 48: Joint Statement on the Resolution Calling for Action Against Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the United Kingdom and Australia.

Madam President, We remain resolute in our commitment to combating all forms of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and related intolerance whether that be at home or abroad. Our common commitment on this issue is strong. Discrimination of any kind has no place in society, and we will continue to treat all forms of discrimination with equal seriousness.

Internationally, we believe that one of the most effective ways to tackle injustices and advocate for respect among different ethnic groups is to encourage states to uphold their human rights obligations. We are committed to engaging on UN resolutions which consider how to eliminate racial discrimination. We were one of the first countries to ratify the International Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and we have engaged constructively with its Committee, and HRC Working Groups.

With regard to resolution before us this morning [L3.Rev 1] we thank the African Group for taking on board some of our proposals. However we still have a number of concerns with the text.

We do not agree with the multiple references to the Durban Conference, given the historic concerns over antisemitism. And we can not accept the references to the Durban Review Conference or the positive language welcoming the recent commemorative event in New York.

Madam President, fellow members of the Council, The UK and Australia did not attend the recent 20th anniversary commemorative event for the Third World Conference Against Racism. There were reportedly nearly 40 states who, like us, made the decision not take part. We think we all need to ask ourselves, why so many states stayed away and how we can move forward. If we are to be able to forge a consensus in the future then it is clear that we must come together to find a new approach. The importance of this topic requires that we move forward together on a common path.

Madam President, Racism should be tackled in all its forms and, regrettably, for far too long, the UN has downplayed the scourge of antisemitism. This must end. The UK is clear that we will not attend future iterations of the Durban Conference while concerns over antisemitism remain.

We therefore wish to call a vote on the resolution before us and will vote against the draft text before us.

Thank you Madam President.