



STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR KHADIJA MASRI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION ON THE REPORT OF THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE, MR. DOUDOU DIENE. 5TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, 11TH JUNE, 2007

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Commission of the African Union, I would like to welcome the report by ~~the~~ Mr. Doudou Diene, and to underscore the importance of the work that he has been doing over the years in alerting the international community ~~to~~ the many forms and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Of particular concern to the African Union are the insidious forms that racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance take today, and their legitimization under extremist political platforms, as well as the intellectual justification given to them. The combating of all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance is the basis of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. It is also the focus of activities in the African Union. Therefore, the Commission of the African Union places great importance on this subject and would cooperate with the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur and the international community to work towards eradication of this scourge. We therefore welcome the report and hope that it will be adopted and follow up actions agreed upon.

One key issue that we would like to stress is that there should be recognition that the report of Mr. Diene has raised a fundamental ethical question. Should manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance be tolerated or accepted as part of the overall framework of democracy, freedom of opinion and political plurality? This is a ~~key~~ *key important* question that must be answered faithfully.

I thank you.

OSMAN SARKI