



International Advocacy Reports and Statements

Durban Review Conference Geneva, 20-24 April

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Government delegates from more than 100 countries and 470 NGO representatives gathered in Geneva to assess progress achieved since the first World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2001 in Durban, South Africa. Despite a highly inflammatory speech by the Iranian president that marred the opening and a boycott by a small number of countries, the outcome of the Durban Review provides a basis for multilateral relations and international cooperation for the future.

The key achievement was the adoption by consensus of the [Durban Review Conference Outcome Document](#), which re-affirms the commitment to prevent, combat and eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. IFUW was one of the NGOs participating in the pre-Conference sessions that helped prepare the draft.

The Outcome Document re-reaffirms that the principles of equality and non-discrimination are fundamental principles of international human rights law and international humanitarian law that are essential in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and calls upon States to renew efforts to implement the Durban Programme for Action. It emphasizes the need for setting up effective national monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, calls for the sharing of best practices, and highlights the importance of partnerships with human rights institutions and civil groups.

In terms of gender equality, the Outcome Document expresses concern at the persistence of discrimination against women and girls on the grounds of race, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and stresses the urgent need to combat such discrimination through the development of a systematic and consistent approach to identifying, evaluating, monitoring and eliminating such discrimination. Special mention is given to the need to address all forms of violence against women and violence against children. The Outcome Document also calls upon States to incorporate a gender perspective in all programmes and plans of action to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

In their oral statement to the Conference, IFUW's representatives emphasized the challenges of the intersectionality of gender with race, ethnicity, nationality, cultural and religion, etc and highlighted the importance of education, notably human rights education, in teaching tolerance.

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IFUW believes that no society can fully develop if legislation and entrenched customs and habits prevent women from participating in the shaping of their society's future, if children grow up in believing that giving privileges to some and limiting the rights of others is permissible. Education is the tool that can give the power to understand, to differentiate, to progress and to achieve in building self-confidence and exercise tolerance and compassion.

Following the Conference, The High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay stressed the need to continue discussions on these often hotly disputed issues in a non-confrontational and non-politicized manner, whilst at the same time safeguarding the fundamental importance of freedom of expression.

IFUW Action

The fight against racism and the promotion of tolerance starts at the local level. As suggested by Resolution 4 from the IFUW 2004 Conference in Perth, national federations and associations (NFAs) can advocate that their governments adopt educational policies for primary and secondary students which will give them the opportunity to learn, appreciate and celebrate the richness of cultural diversity and ensure that school curricula include programmes that are designed to respect differences, promote understanding and counter racism within school communities and multi-cultural societies. NFAs can also play an important role by helping to monitor implementation at the national level and participating in the preparation of alternative reports for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR).