



**Statement delivered by H.E. Mr. M Shameem Ahsan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Bangladesh to the UN, Geneva
Third Committee, 74th UNGA, 30 October 2019, UNHQs, New York
(5 minutes)**

Agenda item 68: Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

Mr. Chair,

Bangladesh is principled and uncompromising in her stand against racial discrimination. Our Constitution clearly mentions that. Discrimination against any citizen on grounds of race, religion, caste or creed, gender or place of birth is prohibited. We promote international cooperation amongst and between nations irrespective of race, religion, ethnicity, culture and civilization.

Our Government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina maintains a “zero tolerance” policy to all forms of terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization. Our flagship GA resolution in the UN on “Culture of Peace”, overwhelmingly supported every year, is a testimony of our commitment to the principle of inclusion and peaceful co-existence of diverse groups. We believe in unity in diversity. Our adherence to the culture of pluralism, communal harmony, democracy, freedom, liberalism, peace and development is well-known.

Mr. Chair,

People around the world are still facing discrimination, deprivation and oppression because of their racial, religious or ethnic identity. Hundreds of millions of human beings continue to suffer from racism, discrimination, xenophobia and exclusion, including the Rohingya in Myanmar. There is a clear need for putting into practice what was agreed to in Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

Decades of systematic deprivation and discrimination against the Rohingya has deep-roots of hatred in Myanmar. The UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar confirmed that discrimination, including State-sponsored hate speech, has contributed to continued violence and hostilities against the Rohingya. The same statement has also been mirrored in the document A/74/173 on ‘Implementation of the DDPA’.

Having identified hate speech as one of the root causes of violence in Rakhine State, the FFM has recommended to combat hatred against the Rohingya people. It has called on the Government of Myanmar to develop and implement a public communication strategy focused on countering hate speech and false narratives and the fostering of an enabling, inclusive and tolerant environment in which the human rights of all are respected while involving all relevant stakeholders in its development, including Rohingya.

The Advisory Commission on Rakhine State also found the indication of hate speech and racial discrimination. The Commission recommended that the Government of Myanmar actively combat all forms of hate speech, specially when directed at ethnic or religious minorities, and to prosecute those behind them. The Commission has further asked religious leaders to play active role in ending hate speech and racial or religious discrimination.

Special Rapporteur Ms. Achiume called for elaboration of legal or constitutional provisions to prohibit incitement of racial, religious and national hatred and propagation of extreme ideologies. Notable, a general recommendation of the CERD says that the rights to equality and freedom from discrimination, and the right to freedom of expression should be fully reflected in law, policy and practice as mutually supportive human rights. Government of Myanmar should heed and take necessary action.

At a recent event in India, the UN Secretary General António Guterres quoted a high-ranking Myanmar official who once said, I quote, "Look at them. They are darker. They are ugly. They are not ours. They should leave." Unquote. The Secretary General further said, I quote, "In my experience, I have never seen a community so discriminated in the world as the Rohingyas. There is very deeply rooted racism within the Myanmar society against the Rohingyas. They have no right of movement, they ask permission to go from one village to another, face police harassment. They could not even move within Rakhine State, they could not marry without permission, and their children could not go to good schools or colleges in Yangon, access to health is limited." Unquote. He added that racism against the Rohingya has been intensified with hate speech, including through social media. UNSG also termed horrendous atrocities in Myanmar as 'ethnic cleansing'. The plight of Rohingya, as the most discriminated segment of population in Myanmar, has also been echoed in Secretary General's report A/74/312.

Clearly, unless those hate-merchants are brought to justice, unless racial discrimination ends, this textbook case of ethnic cleansing would continue in Myanmar.

Mr. Chair,

As a state party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and an active member of the UN Human Rights Council, we support comprehensive implementation of the Convention. Strong political resolve and international cooperation is needed to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action for elimination of racial discrimination.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also recognizes the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies based on respect for human rights for all. We must redouble our efforts to resolve all disputes generating intolerance, discrimination and hatred. We hope our collective efforts will help create a society based on tolerance, inclusion, justice, equality, equity, and human rights.

I thank you.
