

# COMMISSION MEETING PAPER

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**TO:** The President and Commissioners

**DATE SUBMITTED:** 5 May 2009

**SUBJECT:** Report on the Durban Review Conference

**FROM:** Margaret Donaldson

**ACTION REQUESTED:** That the Commission note the report

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Commissioner Calma, Margaret Donaldson and Ihab Shalbak attended the Durban Review Conference (DRC) from 20 - 24 April 2009 in Geneva. Margaret Donaldson also attended the Preparatory Committee meeting from 15 – 17 April 2009. The Commission was one of 39 National Human Rights Institutions attending the conference.

Commissioner Calma and staff participated in a number of side events and meetings at the conference:

- Commissioner Calma participated in the panel leading the forum on the role of National Human Rights Institutions in implementing the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA). A copy of his paper is attached along with the document produced by NHRIs (including the Australian Human Rights Commission) at the conference concerning their role in implementing the DDPA.
- Commissioner Calma participated as a panel member in a forum on the recent UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and its contribution to the realization of the DDPA.
- Margaret Donaldson participated as a panel member in a forum on Policing in Diverse Societies. The forum also viewed the video produced as part of the *Unlocking Doors* project on police and Muslim communities in NSW and Victoria.
- Commissioner Calma, Margaret Donaldson and Ihab Shalbak attended many side events including forums on: the role of local councils in fighting racism and racial discrimination; addressing racial discrimination and promoting diversity in the workplace, and the role of

the intercultural dialogue in the struggle against racism. They also attended the 'Voices' event in which Barbara Shaw spoke of her experience of the Northern Territory Intervention.

- In addition to the formal aspects of the conference, Commissioner Calma met with a number of UN experts and representatives including Patrick Thornberry, member of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Gaye McDougall, Independent Expert on Minority Issues and members of the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, including Antti Korkeakivi, Coordinator of the Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Unit. Commissioner Calma also met with Ambassador Caroline Miller and held extensive discussions with representatives from NHRIs about issues of common concern. These discussions offered an opportunity to discuss the continuing and new manifestations of racism, to learn about best practices in fighting racism and to share knowledge and experiences on these issues.

*The Durban Declaration and Program of Action (DDPA) and Outcome Document of the Durban Review Conference (DRC)*

The DDPA and Outcome Document adopted at the DRC provide a comprehensive framework for states, NHRIs and civil society to work together to combat racism. Many of the paragraphs in these documents are relevant to Australian society including sections on racism against Indigenous peoples, ethnic minority groups, migrants and refugees.

The DDPA and Outcome Document also provide a reference point for Australia to develop a detailed and progressive National Action Plan to combat Racism in consultation with civil society and the Commission.