

H. Res. 212

In the House of Representatives, U.S.,

July 30, 2001.

Whereas since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the international community has taken significant steps to eradicate racism, xenophobia, sexism, religious intolerance, slavery, and other forms of discrimination;

Whereas national and international measures to combat discrimination and promote equality, justice, and dignity for all individuals have proven inadequate;

Whereas the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance (“WCAR”), to be held in Durban, South Africa, from August 31 through September 7, 2001, aims to create a new world vision for the fight against racism and other forms of intolerance in the twenty-first century, urge participants to adopt anti-discrimination policies and practices, and establish a mechanism for monitoring future progress toward a discrimination-free world;

Whereas the causes and manifestations of contemporary racism, xenophobia, sexism, religious intolerance, slavery, and other forms of discrimination are many and increasingly complex and subtle;

Whereas all states and societies that have sponsored, encouraged, or tolerated slavery, including states involved in the transatlantic slave trade, the Indian Ocean slave trade, or the trans-Saharan slave trade, benefited economically while inflicting extreme pain, suffering, and humiliation on millions of African people;

Whereas victims of racism, xenophobia, sexism, religious intolerance, slavery, and other forms of discrimination have suffered and continue to suffer from the deprivation of their fundamental rights and opportunities;

Whereas to varying degrees, states, societies, and individuals have adopted the notion that racial, cultural, religious, and social diversity can enrich a country and its citizens;

Whereas participants of the WCAR currently plan to discuss remedies, redress, and other mechanisms to provide recourse at national, regional, and international levels for victims of racism, xenophobia, sexism, religious intolerance, slavery, and other forms of discrimination;

Whereas the achievement of full and effective equality between peoples requires that states, civic groups, and individuals cooperate to address the real difficulties in attaining societies free of discrimination;

Whereas some preparatory materials for the WCAR take positions on current political crises which, if adopted in the final WCAR Declaration and Program of Action, could exacerbate existing tensions;

Whereas the attempt by some to use the WCAR as a platform to resuscitate the divisive and discredited notion equating Zionism with racism, a notion that was overwhelmingly rejected when United Nations Resolution

3379 (1975) was rescinded in 1991, would undermine the goals and objectives of the conference; and

Whereas the United States encourages respect for an individual's human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) encourages all participants in the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance (“WCAR”) to seize this singular opportunity to tackle the scourges of racism, xenophobia, sexism, religious intolerance, slavery, and other forms of discrimination which have divided people and wreaked immeasurable suffering on the disempowered;

(2) recognizes that since racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance exist to some extent in every region and country around the world, efforts to address these prejudices should occur within a global framework and without reference to specific regions, countries, or present-day conflicts;

(3) exhorts the participants to utilize the WCAR to mitigate, rather than aggravate, racial, ethnic, and regional tensions;

(4) urges the WCAR to focus on concrete steps that may be taken to address gross human rights violations that were motivated by racially and ethnically based animus and on devising strategies to help eradicate such intolerance; and

(5) commends the efforts of the Government of the Republic of South Africa in hosting the WCAR.

Attest:

Clerk.