

**International Conference on the Coalition of Cities against Racism and
Discrimination
“Cities Coping with Global Crisis”
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**(Session 3)
Towards an Inclusive Society :
Opportunities to Overcome the Crisis**

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Acknowledgements

**H.E Mr. Ahmad Heryawan, Governor of West Java Province
H.E Mr. Pierre Sane, Assistant Director-General, UNESCO
Distinguished Participants in the Conference
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I faithfully regret losing the opportunity to visit the wonderful city of Bandung and join your distinguished gathering at this important conference to discuss one of our major global concerns: Racism and discrimination during the Global Crisis;

I thank H.E Mr. Ahmad Heryawan and H.E Dr. Pierre Sane for hosting and organizing this important conference, and I'd like to seize this opportunity to express my deep respect to the city of Bandung which symbolizes to the birth of the Non Aligned Movement before 55 years, which have played a vital role in liberating many of the south countries from colonialism, and supported neutrality during the cold war and contributed to the prevention of a Third World War in 1963;

I'm also proud to be one of the UNESCO's consultants who participated in the tireless efforts made by UNESCO to establish the Arab coalition for cities against Racism in mid 2008, as part of our international coalition, which represents a milestone towards the effective implementation of the Durban declaration and program of action (Sep. 2001), and again recognized by the Durban review conference last April 2009;

Overview

The General Assembly announced the three decades (1973 – 2003) to combat racism and racial discrimination, and despite the efforts made, the objectives have not been attained.

During the Durban conferences (Durban Conference in South Africa, in 2001 and the Durban review Conference in Geneva in 2009), the international community was unable to reach consensus on some issues, and the political confrontation affected the humanity hopes;

A day after the conclusion of the 2001 conference, the massacre of sep. 11th took place in New York, and without having a minute look down our feet, we ran into the War against Terrorism, with appeared as a just and legitimate war, but once we started to act and violate the human rights guarantees and committed aggressions, we has crossed the lines, and destroyed a five decades of humanity struggle, including the 3 decades against Racism, and retreated a long walk back;

During the last 8 years, we have seen the ongoing national security considerations (countering terrorism campaign) affecting the foreigners and outsiders in most of the countries around the globe, including those who has earned citizenship, the refugees, the asylum seekers and the migrant workers;

Before the Global Crisis, the security considerations has interacted with the competitions on the available jobs, and furthermore, with the fuelling made by the negative political discourse and the defamation of religions, unfortunately, the same aspects continue effective to date, and shall be again fostered by the Global Crisis;

The Crisis

Such as the Food Crisis of mid 2008, the current crisis has a disproportionate impact on the livelihoods of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in our societies;

The crisis' undermining access to work, affordability of food and housing, as well as of water, basic health care and education;

After one year of the current crisis, researchers and social scientists have been trying to assess the social impacts of the crisis, and if one year isn't enough, the main problems, dilemmas and complications are still the same;

The global crisis have swept different countries of the world, and led to major collapses in the world of finance and economy, especially in Western countries and the rich north;

Nevertheless, the impact was limited in most of the developing countries and the poor South, but the limitations of such an effect does not diminish from being such a great loss for

their weak economies, especially when the comparison is correct, and when we measure the effects on their vulnerable and fragile economies, which cannot bear any additional troubles;

States in our era, after the transition to the free market economies and the adoption of economic structural reform policies, as well as, the administrative and economical decentralization, unfortunately, pays more attention to the growth indicators, rather than the human and social development indicators;

The Millennium Development Goals has become casualties of the crises;

The City and the Crisis

In our era of decentralization, the cities have become our immediate community, and rather the globalization effect, we still focus on our cities and towns as our immediate interest;

In our cities around the globe, the vulnerable groups are mostly the same: the Poor and the extremely poor people, the Minorities, the Disabled, the Foreigners (migrants, refugees and asylum seekers), the IDPs and the Houseless;

We can understand that Recession may give rise to xenophobic passions, discriminatory practices and even attacks against

In times of hardship for families and communities, we often expose women and girls to the greater risks, since the venting of frustration and despair increases the likelihood of violence against them. And, in the course of economic downturns, women's economic and social rights are jeopardized

At the same time, we still face different defamations / manifestation, including on the bases of religion, sector, gender, class, race, color ...

The crisis has affected the basic services and social protection mechanisms;

A more competition is going for the scarce resources available, and the hate propaganda continues to be fuelled by the media and the racist political parties;

While in particular, Cities in the developing countries are in a more vulnerable situation when facing the impacts of the crisis;

The crises have resulted in the decline of investments, and remittances which are essential factors contributing to the growth of economies of developing countries, and have led to difficulties in foreign indebtedness

Kea solutions

Human Rights as a kea solution

The crisis require concerted solutions, through partnerships, with a reasonable view to preventing and alleviating its impacts,

Human Rights provide the base for the promotion and protection of the individual human beings, as well as for the nations, peoples and groups;

Human Rights are essential pillars, plays with development and peace the three main pillars for true Security and Prosperity;

In addition, human rights are essential pillars for peace, democracy and development: human, social and sustainable development;

Human rights shall play a vital role in the adoption of a correct policy to overcome many of our era's dilemmas, including the negative impacts of the global crisis;

The crisis have resulted in slowing the efforts for the realization of all human rights, including the right to development,

The human rights approach shall contribute to making solutions more durable in the medium and long run. Such an approach helps to identify the specific needs and entitlements of vulnerable groups and individuals, particularly women and children, migrants, refugees, indigenous peoples, minorities and persons with disabilities. They stand at the frontlines of hardship and are most likely to lose their jobs and access to social safety nets and services

How can Human Rights help?

A human rights framework offers the appropriate context, legal rationale and ground to guide policies and programs, confronting the negative effects of the financial crisis at the national, regional and international levels. States are not relieved of their human rights obligation to protect the economic, social, civil and political rights of those groups and individuals most affected and marginalized by the crises must be put in place as matters of both urgency and priority;

Protection of the rights of the vulnerable groups in terms of their working and living conditions, and in the event of loss of employment, should be integrated in the responses to the crises;

- Human rights is an outstanding guarantee for Equality and nondiscrimination in all events and conditions, as well as the current crisis
- Human rights also is a guarantee for Dignity and the no humiliation
- Human rights also is a guarantee for Justice
- Human rights also is a guarantee for Tolerance
- Human rights also is a guarantee for Freedom

- And in the previous meaning, Human rights are the standing guards for democracy

“Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions” (CESCR - 11)

HOW?

- Mobilize the city resources for development and to address the impact of these crises, and, in this context, community to alleviate, in an inclusive and development oriented manner
- Cities should ensure that those at risk of being most affected by the crisis are protected in a non-discriminatory way
- The urgent need to establish an equitable, transparent and democratic system to strengthen and broaden the participation of all city inhabitants in economic decision-making and norm-setting
- Establish an open, equitable, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system can substantially stimulate development for all

Democratic Governance

Policies should go beyond temporary stop-gap measures and address the deeply rooted causes of discrimination and marginalization in order to prevent crises from having snowballing and more enduring effects on ever larger sectors of the populations;

- Democratic Governance will work as a guarantee and as a solution
- Democratic Governance shall complement and one of the aspects to enforce human rights
- Participation shall bring hope to the people to join forces to overcome the crisis, to assist each other and to reduce the negative impacts

- Special attention to the special groups is urgent needs (the poorest, minorities, women, children, disabled persons, IDPs ...) shall assist in building trust among the community and encourage the joint forces methodology

Other Proper Approaches

Adoption of policies which really meets the new definitions of the basic human needs, and today's challenges:

1. Small Income Generating Projects
2. Democratic Public Finance, to make the transformation and democratization of the whole financial system
3. Vast programs to provide for collective services and infrastructures
4. Transparency
5. Supporting the labor will lead to supporting (*in sequence*) the consumers, the markets, the corporations and again the labor

My best wishes for a productive debate.

Thank you.

Alaa Shalaby

Shalaby is a lawyer and a writer, was born in 25 Nov. 1970, Egyptian national;

Shalaby is the Assistant Secretary General for the Arab Organization for Human Rights. Former head of the UN field observation mission in West Darfur, Sudan (2004), former Human Rights Officer with UNAMI (Iraq) in 2005, and the former head of OHCHR office in Gaza Strip in 2006;

Shalaby works also as a consultant with many UN entities, including UNESCO;

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