

भारत



INDIA

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**PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA**

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**CONCLUDING STATEMENT BY  
H.E. MR. SWASHPAWAN SINGH  
AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA**

**AT THE**

**70<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION  
OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**

**CONSIDERATION OF 15<sup>TH</sup> – 19<sup>TH</sup> PERIODIC REPORTS OF INDIA**

**GENEVA  
FEBRUARY 26, 2007**

**STATEMENT BY  
AMBASSADOR H.E. MR. SWASHPAWAN SINGH TO CERD  
ON 26 FEBRUARY 2007**

Mr. Chairman, as we come to the end of a very rich and thought provoking discussion over two sessions, I wish to thank you and the members of the Committee for engaging in this free and frank dialogue. In particular, my delegation was touched by the warm expressions of friendship and goodwill towards India by members of the Committee.

2. We have listened attentively to your expressions of concern for the traditionally disadvantaged sections of Indian society. We take on board these concerns for no society can make real and sustainable progress till its weakest links are strengthened and enabled to contribute to its development. This effort to empower the Scheduled Castes therefore commenced right from the time of independence when an impressive array of constitutional, legal and administrative measures were designed and implemented. These enjoyed broad political consensus that has enabled the undertaking of sustained efforts that are required to address this age old social evil. Empowerment and changing of mindsets require patient application, perseverance and persuasion.

3. The impressive gains made in this regard attest to the fact that we are on the right path charted by our Constitution and followed by the elected representatives of the land undaunted by the enormity of the task. It is, therefore, our concern that nothing should be done to introduce elements which can only detract from such endeavours, which I am sure is not the intention. You would appreciate that there are enormous political and social sensitivities involved.

4. We have also presented during the course of our meeting, the efforts being made to empower the Scheduled Tribes which again emanate from our Constitution and are supported by a large array of legal and administrative measures.
5. We agree that implementation can always be improved and have sought to consult with and involve the relevant stakeholders both nationally as well as internationally at appropriate fora.
6. Our position with regard to General Recommendation 29 has been presented very clearly and, we hope, convincingly. It is important that in matters such as these which have far reaching implications, we should thoroughly discuss the issues involved with all the relevant stakeholders and take their views on board. The *travaux preparatoire* shows the painstaking discussions that were held to achieve a consensus with clearly defined goals, which are in the process of being achieved. Events of recent years underscore the need to focus on our strengths in order to ensure continued relevance in the years ahead. We believe that this Committee's core competence and *raison d'etre* is in the area of combating racial discrimination and should be preserved. A redefinition of its mandate would, in our view, result in loss of specificity which should be avoided, since it can have unpredictable consequences.
7. We are optimistic that from our next report we will be able to start a new chapter in our interaction which would be harmonious and reinforce the esteem we have for each other. I thank you Mr. Chairman.