



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN JEWRY Inc.

The Durban 2 Sub-Committee and the Executive approved the terms of the following letter (omitting formal parts) that was sent to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Steven Smith, on 21 January 2008.

"Thank you for your letter dated 10 January 2008. I will approach your office to schedule a meeting as suggested.

One of the matters of considerable concern to the Australian and global Jewish communities, which we wish to deal with at our meeting relates to the 2009 UN World Conference against Racism (Durban 2). Durban 2 is a follow-up to the infamous UN anti-racism NGO Forum and government conference held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001, which focused almost exclusively on an antisemitic and anti-Israel agenda.

We are of course most grateful that the Government recently adopted a principled stand in being among the 40 member States of the UN that voted against the Declaration and Programme of Action for Durban 2.

However Australia then voted in favour of the proposed UN Budget for the biennium 2008-2009, including some \$US 7 million funding for Durban 2, which by opposing the Declaration and Programme of Action, Australia had earlier objected to.

You will know that the UN Human Rights Council has been authorised to prepare for Durban 2. , A 20-nation Durban 2 Committee, which includes many human rights violators and which is chaired by Libya, vice-chaired by Cuba and includes Iran, Pakistan and Indonesia, is responsible for preparing and overseeing the proceedings for Durban 2.

The first preparatory meeting for Durban 2 was held in 2007, at short notice which had the effect of limiting attendance of authorised delegates. We now understand that the second Durban 2 preparatory meeting is due to take place in Geneva on 21-30 April 2008, which coincides with the Jewish Passover, and the third Durban 2 preparatory meeting has been called for October 2008 co-inciding with the Jewish Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). The exact dates for the Durban 2 conference early in 2009, are not yet known.

However, if the dates of the second and third preparatory meetings are not changed, then the accredited representatives of Jewish communities, Jewish organizations with ECOSOC status, and many Jewish members of accredited non-Jewish organizations and government bodies, will be unable to attend either or both of those meetings in 2008. This is in effect a denial of the human rights of Jews to take part in UN meetings.

We fear that in view of the composition of the Durban 2 committee, and what might be seen as a deliberate attempt to exclude Jewish representatives from the preparatory meetings in 2008, Durban 2 is even more likely to become a re run of Durban 1, namely a vehicle for antisemitic incitement and for the demonisation and deligitimisation of Zionism and Israel.

We therefore would be grateful if you and the Australian Ambassador to the UN would urge the UN Durban 2 Committee and the UN Human Rights Commissioner Louise Arbour, to have the dates of the preparatory meetings in 2008 moved and the date set for the conference early in 2009, to dates which will enable Jewish representatives to attend and contribute. Failing the dates being changed to enable all accredited /recognized representatives to attend, we urge the Australian Government and its representatives at the UN, to as a matter of principle, take all steps available to it to prevent Durban 2 and its preparatory meetings from taking place.

We would appreciate an early opportunity to explain and expound on the ECAJ position and to present you with a Durban kit for your information.

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to your positive response."