

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF PRE-SESSIONAL DURBAN REVIEW CONFERENCE PANEL DISCUSSION**

This morning, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay chaired a Durban Review Conference pre-session panel discussion entitled "United Against Racism". The panellists were Stephane Hessel, Member of the French Resistance, Holocaust Survivor and drafter of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Berthe Kayiesi, a survivor of the Rwandan Genocide; and Gay McDougall, the first holder of the post of Independent Expert on minority issues.

The High Commissioner said that she felt that she shared much with each of the three panellists in terms of personal experience and in terms of professional exposure. "All of us have overcome or have witnessed ostensibly different forms of racial discrimination and intolerance", she said, adding that combating such shameful practices was a task of the highest magnitude.

Speaking about the preparatory process for the Durban Review Conference, Ms. Pillay noted that they had endeavoured to rise above divergences in opinions and points of view to ensure that the anti-racism debate would take place, and hopefully progress, through a frank exchange which was open to a diverse spectrum of voices.

Mr. Hessel said that in this afflicted world it was vital to work together to find again a momentum of hope and confidence between all members of the United Nation