17 August 2021

**26th Session of the Advisory Committee**

**Institute for NGO Research Statement on**

**Racial Equality in the World**

**Delivered by Anne Herzberg**

Thank you.

We appreciate the Advisory Committee for its report. However, we take issue with the on-going reference to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and characterizations that this document should serve as the main source of normative and programmatic guidance.

For Jews, Durban is synonymous with antisemitic hatred and it is an on-going moral stain on the UN. The 2001 Durban Conference and its preparatory meetings were marked by the deliberate exclusion of Jews. Holocaust denial and Nazi imagery were key features of the conference. Mass demonstrations in the streets threatened Jews with violence. The United States and Israel refused to be part of this hate fest. Only last minute scrambling by former High Commissioner Mary Robinson and officials from the EU prevented a mass walkout of the rest of the Western democratic states.

The 2009 Durban follow up conference was similarly marred. Inexplicably, Iranian President Mahmud Ahmedinejad was given a keynote speaking slot which he exploited to call for the elimination of Israel and genocide against the Jewish people.

For this reason, 14 countries boycotted Durban II, and to date, 11 countries and counting are boycotting the events scheduled for September twenty-second. These countries include France, Canada, Australia, Germany, the UK, Hungary, Austria, the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Israel, and the US. More countries of conscience should join them.

Racism is an on-going scourge and combatting it must be at the center of any human rights framework. This framework, however, cannot be built on antisemitism. Moving forward, we urge the Advisory Committee to work towards building a new program and plan of action – one that is not premised on exclusion and hatred of Jews.

Thank you.