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CBC Statement On U.S. Boycott of Durban Review Conference

Saturday, April 18, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressional Black Caucus Chair Barbara Lee (D-CA) and members of the CBC Taskforce on Foreign Relations issued the following statement in response to the Obama Administration’s decision to boycott the Durban Review Conference addressing racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia:

“We are deeply dismayed by the decision to boycott the Durban Review Conference, even after the final Outcome Statement was rewritten to accommodate the administration’s concerns.

“This decision is inconsistent with the administration’s policy of engaging with those we agree with and those we disagree with, expressed by President Obama during the G20 and on other recent occasions.

“The United States has a unique experience and history of combating racism and intolerance.

“As a result, the United States is well suited to play a leadership role in overcoming racism and related intolerances, which remain one of the great challenges facing many around the globe.

“By boycotting Durban, the U.S. is making it more difficult for it to play a leadership role on UN Human Rights Council as it states it plans to do. This is

a missed opportunity, plain and simple.

“Had the United States sent a high-level delegation reflecting the richness and diversity of our country, it would have sent a powerful message to the world that we’re ready to lead by example.

“Instead, the administration opted to boycott the conference, a decision that does not advance the cause of combating racism and intolerance, but rather sets the cause back.”

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