



43RD SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Item:9 - Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

43rd session of the Human Rights Council – 16 June 2020

Background documentation:

- Report of the **United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights** on “*Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief*” [A/HRC/43/72](#)
- Report of the **Intergovernmental Working Group** on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action on its seventeenth session [A/HRC/43/73](#)
- Preliminary exchange of views on the preparations of the twentieth anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action [A/HRC/43/73/Add.1](#)

H.E. Mr. Refiloe Litjubo - Presentation of the report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action:

The Intergovernmental Working Group (IGWG) pays respect and honour to the **memory of George Floyd** and the many lives of **people of African descent** that have been victims of **institutional racism**. The whole world is mourning. The tragedy reminded us that abolishing of slavery did not end **discrimination, exploitation, and violence against people of African descent**.

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere”. The fight against racism is a problem that affects all of us. **No country is immune to the evil of racism**. All around the world, people were calling and mourning for their own George Floyd.

The IGWG also recalled that the **Covid-19 pandemic showed that racial discrimination affects millions of people**, especially ethnic minorities, which have been more affected by the pandemic.

During its last session, the IGWG concluded that **discrimination and xenophobia were clear outcomes of systematic and structural racism that reflects the legacy of trade and exploitation of African slaves**. Many women of African descent are disproportionately represented in the populations most affected by poverty. There is an urgent need to **end this systematic racism**.

In this regard, the **Durban Declaration and Program of Action (DDPA)** provides a solid foundation to combat racism, xenophobia, and intolerance. The working group discussed on measures to enhance the effectiveness of the follow-up mechanisms to the DDPA and to ensure better synergy and complementarities in the work of those mechanisms.

The IGWG also issued several recommendations to the UN members states in its report, such as:

- To establish **national legislative frameworks and national action plans against racism**.
- To cooperate fully and respond positively to requests for country visits by the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism and other human rights mechanisms.
- To increase efforts aimed at avoiding overlapping and/or the duplication of initiatives.
- To **respect all human rights of women and girls of African descent** and recognize the fundamental role they have played in national development processes and the urgent need to ensure that all their human rights are fully promoted, fulfilled and protected.

As this is a time of profound change, the DDPA must be placed at the top of the HRC agenda. In this regard, the IGWG welcomed the **Urgent Debate that will take place tomorrow**.

GENERAL DEBATE ON ITEM 9

58 states took the floor during the General Debate on Item 9. They commended the IGWG for their report and stressed the **paramount importance of the DDPA**. In general, states were satisfied with the work of the **Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)** and the **Special Rapporteur on racism**. It was also agreed by all states that racism, xenophobia, and discrimination were on the rise and that **hate speech was fuelling racist narratives all around the world**.

As the IGWG urges states to undertake adequate actions at the national level, many states presented their **national efforts in the fight against racism**. It was also mentioned several times that **global multilateral actions at the international level** must be taken to fight against racism, as it is a worldwide issue.

The Covid-19 pandemic and its effects on discrimination, xenophobia, hate speech and racial behaviours around the world was also a common issue raised by the states during the session.

Many states issued concerns about **how people of African descent were particularly targeted by racism today all around the world** (Burkina Faso, on behalf of the African Group; Libya; Bahrain; Namibia; Nigeria; Sudan; Angola; Tunisia; Lesotho)

Some states were concerned by **the rise of Islamophobia around the world** (Pakistan, on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; Indonesia; Afghanistan; Jordan; Turkey; Algeria, Libya).

Burkina Faso, on behalf of the African Group (the initiators of the urgent debate on racism) raised the importance of **celebrating the 20th anniversary of the DDPA next year in 2021**.

Several states deplored the **killing of George Floyd** and mentioned the **protest that erupted worldwide** in reaction to it (Pakistan; Venezuela; Sudan; Austria; Botswana; Sierra Leone; Iran; Syria; United Kingdom; Lesotho).

States that took the floor during the General Debate (58 states):

Human Rights Council members: Pakistan (*on behalf of the OIC*), Burkina Faso (on behalf of the African Group), Austria, Azerbaijan (*on behalf of the NAM*), India, Bahrain, Libya, Venezuela, Indonesia, Nepal, Sudan, Brazil (on behalf of the group countries of Latin America), Namibia, Nigeria, Sudan, Qatar, Angola, Bangladesh, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Observer states: Croatia (on behalf of the EU), State of Palestine (*on behalf of the group of Arab States*), Sweden (on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries), Iraq, Cuba, Tunisia, Russian Federation, Iran, Syrian Arab Republic, Algeria, Belarus, South Africa, United Kingdom, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, (on behalf of a group of states), Myanmar, China, France, Israel, Botswana, Ecuador, Sierra Leone, Jordan, Morocco, Azerbaijan (on behalf of NAM), Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, Lesotho.

Civil Society Organizations that took the floor during the General Debate (44 NGOs):

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (Joint Statement); International Youth and Student Movement for the UN; International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists; Global Action on Aging (Joint Statement); Commission africaine des promoteurs de la santé et des droits de l'homme; African Green Foundation International; World Jewish Congress; Sikh Human Rights Group; ADALAH - Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel (Joint statement); Global Institute for Water, Environment and Health; Institute International pour les Droits et le Développement; Sociedade Maranhense de Direitos Humanos; Sociedade Maranhense de Direitos Humanos; Global Welfare Association; Iraqi Development Organization; Mother of Hope Cameroon Common Initiative Group; Community Human Rights and Advocacy Centre; World Barua Organization; Association pour l'Intégration et le Développement Durable au Burundi; Centre for Organisation Research and Education; Centre for Gender Justice and Women Empowerment; Ingenieurs du Monde; United Nations Watch; EAFORD; Alsalam Foundation; Action of Human Movement (AHM); Association pour les Victimes Du Monde; European Centre for Law and Justice; Association Mauritanienne pour la promotion du droit; Conseil de jeunesse pluriculturelle (COJEP); Tamil Oli; Tourner La Page; Liberation; Association for the Protection of Women and Children's Rights; Organization for Defending Victims of Violence; Association pour l'Éducation et la Santé de la Femme et de l'Enfant; Guinee Humanitaire; International Career Support Association (Joint Statement IMADR; World Evangelical Alliance; Association Solidarité Internationale pour l'Afrique; Minority Rights Group)