

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 55th SESSION

Presentation of the report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

27- 28 March 2024

Mr. Muhammadou M.O. Kah, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of The Gambia to UNOG, stated that during the 21st session, the Intergovernmental Working Group engaged in extensive discussions on global racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, emphasizing the crucial role of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action (DDPA) in promoting equality and non-discrimination. Recognizing the invisibility of people of African descent in policy-making processes and the need for data-driven approaches, the Group underscored the importance of collecting disaggregated information to address systemic racism effectively. Additionally, discussions highlighted the momentum for reparatory justice to tackle historical injustices and the contribution of the international decade for people of African descent in raising awareness of their vulnerable situation.

Furthermore, the Working Group recommended declaring a second international decade for people of African descent to consolidate past gains and address emerging threats, such as environmental degradation and resistance to affirmative action policies. Ongoing discussions on the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of people of African descent emphasized the necessity of a comprehensive framework to address systemic and historic racism. The Ambassador concluded by urging collective action to combat racism, xenophobia, and related intolerance, emphasizing the need for a strong commitment to eliminating these grave human rights violations.

Interactive dialogue

62 country delegations took the floor during the interactive dialogue. **Most countries** affirmed their commitment to actively participate in negotiations for a draft UN declaration on the human rights of people of African descent. While progress has been made, unresolved issues necessitate careful consideration before determining the next steps. Additionally, they advocated for a comprehensive approach to combat racism and streamline mechanisms, proposing detailed discussions and strategic planning. Furthermore, they expressed readiness to collaborate globally to promote tolerance, and diversity, and combat religious intolerance through existing frameworks such as the Istanbul process and the Rabat Plan of Action, emphasizing their importance in fostering human rights compliance worldwide.

Brazil emphasized the importance of the Durban Declaration in combating racism and discrimination, advocating for evidence-based policies to address systemic inequalities. It urged international support for the second international decade of persons of African descent to promote development and inclusion, fostering a world free of racism and intolerance. **Pakistan, Uganda, and the Maldives** condemned the surge in online hate speech, fuelled by political motives and advanced technologies. They called for decisive global action to address this issue, urging cooperation to prevent religious hatred and violence and promote interfaith harmony through legislative measures.

Egypt, Maldives, Korea, Tunisia, and Iran condemned Israel's actions in Palestine, citing its annexation plans and discriminatory policies, including the imposition of apartheid-like measures. **Uganda** emphasized the importance of commemorating the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, reaffirming its commitment to combat racism and discrimination while condemning the resurgence of ideologies like fascism and Nazism. **Cameroon** urged global action to combat racism and discrimination, emphasizing the need for education and dialogue to foster tolerance and respect. They reaffirmed their commitment to human rights and called for international cooperation to eradicate racism.

South Africa emphasized the ongoing challenges of racism and discrimination globally, calling for collective action to address these harmful practices effectively. Despite efforts to undermine the implementation of the DDPA, it reaffirmed its importance and stressed the need for its full implementation, along with adequate funding and international cooperation to combat racism and intolerance. **Malaysia** reiterated its steadfast support for the DDPA and condemns all forms of racism and discrimination, including Islamophobia.

Bangladesh strongly denounced all forms of racism and intolerance, particularly highlighting growing prejudices against Muslims and the plight of migrants facing social exclusion. Condemning Israel's actions in Gaza and the systemic discrimination against Rohingyas in Myanmar, it called for international engagement to uphold DDPA recommendations and end discriminatory practices. It emphasized prevention, justice, and equality as essential steps toward a future free from discrimination, advocating for collaboration on national development aspirations. **Korea** stated that despite over 20 years since the US's accession to the CERD, no significant improvements have been made to ensure the rights of non-white people, as highlighted by UN experts. **Palestine** reflected on Desmond Tutu's comparison of Palestinian suffering to apartheid in South Africa, highlighting decades of oppression and ethnic cleansing by the colonial power.

The **EU** rejected the statement made by the so-called administration in territories temporarily controlled by Russia, affirming Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It condemned Russia's aggression and illegal annexation attempts in Crimea and other regions, urging it to refrain from allowing such interventions in international forums.

Most **NGOs** highlighted the pervasive discrimination based on skin color, ethnic origin, and cultural heritage in many countries, which not only violates individuals' inherent values but also perpetuates cycles of inequality, depriving them of fundamental rights. Systemic racism entrenched within institutions hinders access to employment, education, and legal recourse, exacerbating inequalities and perpetuating poverty and despair within marginalized communities. Attention was drawn particularly to the plight of the Uyghur population in China, facing repression, arbitrary detention, forced labor, and cultural suppression due to their ethnic and religious identity. NGOs reaffirmed their commitment to combating racial discrimination, xenophobia, and systemic racism globally, urging the international community to take decisive action.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (62 country delegations):

Brazil (on behalf of a group of countries), Gambia (on behalf of the African Group), Pakistan (on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), European Union, Egypt (on behalf of the Arab Group), Uganda (on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Bolivia (on behalf of a group of countries), Venezuela (on behalf of a group of countries), Germany, France, United States of America, Luxembourg, Cameroon, Malawi, Morocco, Cuba, Maldives, South Africa, Ghana, Malaysia, Brazil, Paraguay, China, Bangladesh, Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Honduras, Albania, Sudan, Eritrea, Benin, India, Ecuador, Israel, Egypt, Armenia, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Iran, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Jordan, Colombia, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Peru, Iraq, Venezuela, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Nigeria, Tunisia, Sierra Leone, State of Palestine, Ethiopia, Azerbaijan, Djibouti, Uganda, Botswana, Ukraine, Spain.

NHRIs and NGOs that took the floor during the Interactive dialogue (49):

Geneve Pour les Droits De l'Homme Formation Internationale, Tumuku Development and Cultural Union Tacudu, International Youth and Student Movement for The United Nations, Mouvement Contre le Racisme et pour l'Amitie entre les Peuples, Union of Northwest Human Rights Organisation, International Human Rights Association of American Minorities Ihraam, World Jewish Congress, European Union of Jewish Students, Institute for NGO Research, Institute for NGO Research, International Organization for the

Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, Human Rights and Democratic Participation Center Shams, Al Haq Law in the Service of Man, Action Sri Lanka, Legal Analysis and Research Public Union, Association Caritative Etudiante pour la Jeunesse, Human Rights Information and Training Center, United Nations Association of China, Christian Solidarity International Csi, China Ethnic Minorities Association for External Exchanges, Institut International pour les Droits et le Developpement, China Foundation for Human Rights Development, Sikh Human Rights Group, ARC, Centre Zagros pour les Droits de l'Homme, International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, International Service for Human Rights, Conectas Direitos Humanos, Geledes Instituto da Mulher Negra, Dialogue and Development Forum, Rencontre Africaine pour la Defense des Droits de l'Homme, Prahar, Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, African Green Foundation International, United for Human Rights, Institute for Reporters Freedom and Safety, Rajasthan Samgrah Kalyan Sansthan, Indigenous People of Africa Coordinating Committee, World Barua Organization Wbo, Americans for Democracy and Human Rights in Bahrain Inc, Mother of Hope Cameroon Common Initiative Group, Alsalam Foundation, Integrated Youth Empowerment Common Initiative Group I.Y.E. C.I.G., Human is Right, Community Human Rights and Advocacy Centre Chrac, Organisation Europeenne des Centres Islamiques Oeci, International Yazidis Foundation for the Prevention Of Genocide.

To watch the full meeting refer to the UN Web TV: [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).