



# International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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## Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 110th session

### Summary record (partial)\* of the 2982nd meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 7 August 2023, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Shepherd

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\* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

### **Opening of the session**

1. **The Chair** declared open the 110th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

2. **Mr. Thioye** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)) said that 2023 marked both the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the thirtieth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, in which States had reaffirmed their commitment to human rights, proclaimed the indivisibility and interdependence of human rights and called for the promotion and the protection of the rights of groups such as minorities, Indigenous Peoples, refugees and asylum-seekers, stateless persons and internally displaced persons. As the Committee was aware, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action represented a global consensus following decades of politicization and discord in approaches to human rights. Today, however, the commitments undertaken in Vienna were far from having been fulfilled. Many countries were witnessing a push-back against human rights, equality and non-discrimination, manifested in the rise and spread of racist hate speech and hate crimes; increasing marginalization; entrenched systemic racism; and racial profiling and excessive use of force by law enforcement authorities against members of racial, ethnic and national minorities.

3. The situation of migrants posed a major challenge, as a multifaceted migration crisis exposed them to host of human rights violations and abuses. Migrants were often received in inadequate conditions and they faced appalling acts of racial discrimination and violence, including rejection, xenophobia, hate speech by politicians and the media, sexual exploitation and even killings. Women and girls were particularly vulnerable. In too many countries, migrants had been scapegoated and portrayed as a security threat. He therefore encouraged to the Committee to continue to address all forms of racial discrimination against migrants, including in the context of humanitarian crises and post-conflict situations.

4. A second challenge related to the immediate and disproportionate impact of climate change on groups and communities whose way of life was intricately linked to the environment, especially Indigenous Peoples. At the recent sixteenth session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had observed that Indigenous Peoples were among the first and the worst affected by extreme weather, loss of biodiversity and dwindling natural resources, and that they were often pushed into vulnerable situations, despite or because of their close ties to the land. As the Committee had recognized under its early warning and urgent action procedure, climate change threatened a plethora of human rights, such as the rights to work, to health and to housing, and its disproportionate impact on certain groups exacerbated existing disparities.

5. Turning to recent developments in respect of anti-racism mechanisms supported by OHCHR, he said that the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent had attracted global interest since its establishment in 2021. Over 1,600 people had attended the Forum's first and second sessions, and more than 100 side events had been held. The Forum had been set up as a consultative platform with the goal of contributing to the elaboration of a United Nations declaration on the promotion, protection and full respect of the human rights of people of African descent. Two members of the Committee had made substantive contributions to the sessions of the Forum, and it was hoped that that such cooperation would continue, so that the Committee might lend its expertise to the development of the declaration.

6. The Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent had held its thirty-second session from 1 to 5 May 2023 in Geneva. The session had included a high-level event, "Memoirs of Durban by the Legends of Durban", in which panellists who had participated in the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance had discussed the Conference and global efforts since then to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. During the session, the Working Group had discussed how systemic racism, global economic structures and financial mechanisms affected the economic and financial empowerment of people of African descent, concluding

that racial inequality and multiple forms of racial discrimination fuelled poverty, economic inequality and violations of the human rights of people of African descent across the globe. The Working Group's recommendations included calls for the allocation of appropriate resources to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and for a second decade for people of African descent.

7. In October 2023, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights would present the third report on racial justice and equality for Africans and people of African descent at the fifty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council. The report would focus on the dismantling of systemic racism and the importance of the participation of Africans and people of African descent in public affairs as a driver for the advancement of their human rights. The International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement would also present a report to the Council, which would explore ways in which societies could close the trust deficit, strengthen institutional oversight and adopt alternative and complementary methods to policing and the use of force.

8. As part of its efforts to combat racism and racial discrimination, OHCHR had recently appointed anti-racial discrimination advisers to its regional offices in Bangkok, Beirut, Brussels, Pretoria and Santiago. They would provide thematic expertise on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to Governments, United Nations country teams and national stakeholders and would monitor, gather information and report on issues of racial discrimination and racial justice. In providing such expertise, the advisers would be informed by the Committee's reports, recommendations, concluding observations and general recommendations, and it was hoped that their work would contribute to the better understanding and implementation of the Convention.

9. OHCHR continued to support efforts to strengthen the treaty body system. It had recently prepared a comprehensive working paper on options for the implementation of the conclusions of the Chairs of the treaty bodies at their thirty-fourth meeting ([A/77/228](#), paras. 55 and 56). The paper was intended to be a guide for the creation of an efficient, fit-for-purpose, cost-effective, coherent and sustainable treaty body system. At their thirty-fifth meeting, held from 29 May to 2 June 2023 in New York, the Chairs had adopted conclusions on the working paper, in which they agreed that the proposed options for the introduction of an eight-year predictable review calendar were in line with the conclusions adopted at their thirty-fourth meeting. They had also confirmed that the introduction of the eight-year calendar and the further digitalization of the treaty bodies' work could only be implemented if Member States agreed to provide the necessary human, technical and financial resources. The Chairs had also agreed to establish a coordination mechanism for the harmonization of working methods.

10. **The Chair** said that she was grateful for the update on the work undertaken in relation to the Committee's mandate. For the Committee, it was frustrating to note that, despite its efforts, violations of the Convention continued to occur, notably racial profiling, the killing of young black men and racialized decision-making in relation to migrants and refugees. During the session, the Committee would seek the support of States parties and other entities and mechanisms for its efforts to protect the rights of marginalized peoples, considering that all stakeholders in the Convention shared a common desire to create a world in which racism, racial discrimination and related intolerance played no part.

#### **Adoption of the agenda ([CERD/C/110/1](#))**

11. *The agenda was adopted.*

*The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 10.25 a.m.*