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## Human Rights Council

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### Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development

## Workshop on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights

### Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights\*

#### *Summary*

In its resolution 34/17, the Human Rights Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to hold, in 2019, a workshop on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights, including a thematic discussion on the role of regional arrangements in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and in the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

The Human Rights Council also requested the High Commissioner to present to it, at its forty-third session, a report containing a summary of the discussions held at the workshop and the progress towards the implementation of resolution 34/17. The present report provides a summary of the workshop, which was held in Geneva on 21 and 22 October 2019.

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\* The present document was submitted late to the conference services without the explanation required under paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 53/208 B.



## I. Introduction

1. In its resolutions 6/20, 12/15, 18/14, 24/19 and 30/3, the Human Rights Council recognized the important role played by regional, subregional and interregional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights and requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to hold international workshops to put forward concrete proposals on ways of strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) therefore organized such workshops in November 2008 (A/HRC/11/3), May 2010 (A/HRC/15/56), December 2012 (A/HRC/23/18), October 2014 (A/HRC/28/31) and October 2016 (A/HRC/34/23).

2. In its resolution 34/17, the Human Rights Council again requested the High Commissioner to hold, in 2019, a workshop on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights, including a discussion on their role in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and in the implementation of the commitments in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. The Council also requested the High Commissioner to present to it, at its forty-third session, a report containing a summary of the discussions held at the workshop and the progress towards the implementation of resolution 34/17.

3. OHCHR therefore held a workshop in Geneva on 21 and 22 October 2019.<sup>1</sup> The aim of the workshop was to develop specific proposals for joint action by the United Nations, regional human rights mechanisms, national institutions and civil society to combat racism. It focused on sharing information on best practices, lessons learned and new possible forms of cooperation.

4. Panel discussions followed by interactive discussions were held during the workshop. The first panel focused on taking stock of developments in cooperation between United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms since 2016, including challenges, implementation gaps and lessons learned. The second panel discussed international and regional legal frameworks and mechanisms for protection against racism and discrimination. The third panel reflected on the link between the right to development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. The fourth panel looked at groups in focus, namely people of African and Asian descent, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees and Roma, among others. The fifth panel focused on national mechanisms for promotion, protection and monitoring in the fields of employment, health, policing and education. The present report summarizes the discussions held by the panels, including their conclusions and recommendations.

5. Participants included experts and representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations human rights treaty bodies, the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, the Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the East African Court of Justice, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the Council of Europe, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Arab Human Rights Committee and other regional, national and civil society organizations. On 23 October 2019, regional mechanisms' focal points for cooperation held their annual meeting to discuss the follow-up to recommendations of previous workshops and to coordinate joint activities.

6. Ahead of the workshop, OHCHR organized two regional consultations: one with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, held in Washington, D.C., on 7 and 8 December 2018, and another with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on 26 April 2019. Those consultations focused on best practices, lessons learned and areas of cooperation between regional mechanisms and the United Nations on combating racism. They informed the agenda for the workshop on regional arrangements held in October 2019. In Paris on 26 and 27 September 2019

<sup>1</sup> The programme of work is available from [www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/NHRI/Pages/Cooperation.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/NHRI/Pages/Cooperation.aspx).

OHCHR participated in a meeting of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance to learn from experiences in combating racism and discrimination in Europe.

7. Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 34/17, an eight-week programme was developed by the National Institutions and Regional Mechanisms Section of OHCHR. Eight staff from regional mechanisms have already benefited from the programme, which started in June 2019.

8. The main aim of the programme is to enable staff of the secretariats of regional mechanisms to gain experience within the United Nations human rights system. Participants received briefings on the work of the United Nations human rights mechanisms, attended sessions of the Human Rights Council, the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review and the treaty bodies. They also worked in various sections of OHCHR, during which time they shared their expertise related to the functioning of regional mechanisms with OHCHR staff.

## **II. Progress in cooperation between United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms since 2016**

9. In accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 34/17, the first session of the workshop was devoted to taking stock of developments since the workshop on regional arrangements held in 2016. Participants highlighted challenges and shared best practices in implementing the recommendations arising from that workshop and highlighted key human rights developments in their respective regions. The Deputy United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ambassador of Belgium to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva opened the workshop and were followed by speakers from the various regional human rights mechanisms.

### **A. Challenges**

10. Representatives of regional mechanisms highlighted non-compliance with their decisions as a major common challenge. Concerning cooperation among regional mechanisms, participants highlighted the need for better coordination, particularly in the context of financial constraints, and also the need to undertake joint activities and to ensure an efficient exchange of information and best practices.

11. The representative of the ECOWAS Court of Justice noted that the Court's engagement with civil society and human rights defenders to enhance the visibility of its decisions had generated more active advocacy aimed at encouraging member States to implement the Court's decisions.

12. The ECOWAS Court of Justice had signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation with the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. The memorandum includes an action plan for the exchange of documents, jurisprudence and staff, joint capacity-building and resource mobilization for projects.

13. In April 2019, the ECOWAS Court of Justice organized its first judicial dialogue with the judges of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in follow-up to the one organized by the African Court in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, in February and March 2018. The dialogue provided the judges of both Courts with the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences concerning their mandate.

### **B. Good practices, including cooperation**

14. The ECOWAS Court of Justice had established the West African Judges Association and had institutionalized a forum for dialogue and exchange of ideas between judges and legal practitioners from various member States and the Court. Forum participants would also discuss and analyse the application of international human rights norms in national justice systems.

15. The representative of the East African Court of Justice reported that, after participating in the OHCHR programme for regional human rights mechanisms held from

June to August 2019, he had developed a project entitled “mainstreaming human rights in all policies and programmes of the East African Community and East African Court of Justice for a sustainable and prosperous Community”.

16. The representative of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights noted that in July 2018 a working-level meeting had been held among representatives of the Inter-American Court, the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the European Court of Human Rights to promote dialogue and cooperation and to address common challenges. The Presidents of the three Courts had signed the Declaration of San José with the aim of establishing a permanent biannual forum for institutional dialogue among regional courts and to facilitate exchanges on case law and legal developments.

17. Judges of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights reported that they had visited the Court of Justice of the European Union, the European Committee of Social Rights and the Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights to share experiences on monitoring compliance with and fulfilment of judgments issued by the Courts.

18. The representative of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights noted that the United Nations Secretary-General had met with the Court’s members in July 2018. The President of Costa Rica and the Presidents and several members of the European Court of Human Rights and the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights had also attended the meeting.

19. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights had also been visited, in 2016, by members of the Human Rights Committee, to discuss common procedural and substantive issues. Moreover, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had provided two advisory opinions, one on child migrants and one on the right to asylum.

20. The representative of the Committee against Torture reported that the Committee had created a space for dialogue with regional courts and that in 2017 and 2018 it had participated in fruitful discussions with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on reparation measures, non-refoulement and monitoring compliance with judgments and decisions. In 2018, the Working Group on Enforced Disappearances had made a submission to the Inter-American Court regarding a contentious case.

21. The representative of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights reported that the Commission had participated regularly in the sessions of the Human Rights Council and provided information in the context of the universal periodic review.

22. The representative of the Caribbean Court of Justice reported that the Court had established gender equality protocols and conducted gender-sensitivity trainings to address gender bias in adjudication.

23. The representative of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights highlighted that, since the Commission’s establishment in 2009, the United Nations system had been directly engaged with it on a broad range of human rights issues, including sustainable development, women and children’s rights, business and human rights, disability rights and environmental rights.

24. The representative of the Arab Human Rights Committee reported that the Committee had provided substantive input during the drafting, in May 2019, of a legally binding instrument on the right to development.

### **C. Combating racism**

25. The representative of the Arab Human Rights Committee referred to the contribution made by the Committee to the process of drafting a general recommendation on preventing and combating racial profiling initiated in 2019 by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

26. The representative of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights noted that the 2018 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, held in Warsaw from 10 to 21 September, focused on combating racism and xenophobia, on promoting tolerance and mutual understanding, and on the situation of Roma and Sinti, and that the 2019 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, held in Warsaw from 16 to 27

September, focused on promoting fundamental freedoms, tolerance and non-discrimination. United Nations special procedures mandate holders and treaty body experts had participated in some of the meetings.

27. It was also noted that OHCHR had participated as co-trainer in a session for activists addressing racism and xenophobia against people of African descent held by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Warsaw on 12 and 13 September 2018.

## **D. Recommendations**

28. Participants recommended:

- (a) Strengthening the coordination of activities, intensifying discussions at all levels – both vertically and horizontally and among all actors (Governments, civil society organizations and communities), and using a human rights-based approach to address the situation of marginalized groups;
- (b) Encouraging Governments to adopt legislation to combat racial discrimination and xenophobia and to utilize the Sustainable Development Goals as a framework for promoting and protecting human rights at the national level;
- (c) Creating databases to monitor the implementation of recommendations made by regional and international human rights mechanisms at the national level.

## **III. Combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance**

### **A. International and regional legal frameworks and mechanisms for protection against racism and discrimination, and cooperation among regional and United Nations mechanisms, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations**

29. The discussion focused on the mandate and work of several international and regional mechanisms and organizations, including the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, the League of Arab States and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

30. Panellists highlighted the main areas of their mandates and their activities aimed at protecting against and preventing racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, and described how they cooperated and undertook joint activities, including with Governments, national human rights institutions, equality bodies and civil society organizations.

31. Participants raised emerging concerns related to the persistent lack of disaggregated data on the situation of specific groups particularly affected by racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia. Efforts had to be made to ensure that the universal periodic review, the special procedures and the treaty bodies continued to recognize the situation of those specific groups in the context of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

### **B. Good practices**

32. Panellists highlighted the role played by national human rights institutions in promoting consultation and dialogue among different stakeholders, including civil society organizations and governmental bodies. They also highlighted the importance of cooperation between equality bodies and regional and international human rights mechanisms during country visits, fact-finding missions and other relevant activities, including public statements and training programmes.

### **C. Challenges**

33. Participants noted that the recommendations issued by regional and international human rights mechanisms related to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action were insufficiently implemented. Several participants highlighted the specific challenge posed by States being involved in harmful practices, including through their police forces, threatening the rights of people of African descent and human rights defenders.

34. Participants observed the emergence of racism based on identity and religion and the normalization of hate speech and nationalism in politics. Some expressed concern that such trends may hinder international peace and security, as well as the economy. In that context, participants underscored the need for effective national institutions capable of investigating allegations of racism and discrimination and providing compensation to victims.

### **D. Recommendations for enhanced cooperation**

35. In order to enhance cooperation between international and regional mechanisms and organizations, the panellists suggested:

(a) Establishing a core group of national human rights institutions and regional mechanisms to facilitate the sharing of information and expertise in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

(b) Enhancing the engagement of human rights defenders and other stakeholders with international and regional human rights mechanisms and reinvigorating partnerships on preventive efforts, including by fostering the social inclusion of all groups as a conflict prevention measure;

(c) Building the capacity of national stakeholders to collect and disaggregate data and indicators with regard to specific groups with a view to measuring progress towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

36. Moreover, the United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms should systematically exchange information with experts conducting country visits, field missions and research at the national level and foster cooperation among stakeholders to effectively combat racism.

37. Concerning legal and institutional frameworks, participants recommended advocating for the adoption of national legal frameworks and mechanisms that deal with issues related to racial discrimination, racism and xenophobia, including measures to combat hate speech in the media.

## **IV. Critical link between the right to development and the sustainable development goals**

38. The speakers highlighted issues related to discrimination and the principle of leaving no one behind. In that regard, they stressed their concern about the lack of disaggregated data and statistics, including by race, ethnicity, migratory status, gender, age, disability, geographic location, income and other relevant characteristics, to support monitoring of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

39. Participants noted the need to take urgent steps to improve the quality, coverage and availability of disaggregated data to ensure that no one is left behind. They highlighted actions taken with the involvement of their institutions to tackle such issues, including the collection of specific statistics and the development of programmes, collaboration with financial institutions to develop programmes for people of African descent and cooperation with United Nations specialized agencies, OHCHR and national human rights institutions. Some institutions had held dialogues and published materials on the link between human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals.

## A. Good practices

40. The speakers identified a number of good practices and examples. For instance, it was flagged that OHCHR and the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions were cooperating to harmonize their messages on discrimination and xenophobia at international forums, to have a greater impact on policymakers, and that OHCHR had developed statistics and programmes for people of African descent in the Bahamas.

41. Reference was made to the operational guidelines being developed by the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on how to effectively protect people of African descent through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

## B. Challenges

42. Participants emphasized the lack of disaggregated data and statistics as a fundamental barrier to monitoring progress towards the implementation of commitments of States and recommendations of regional human rights mechanisms. The persistence of structural and systemic obstacles hampered the fight against racism, discrimination, apartheid and other forms of domination, thereby obstructing progress in realizing the right to development.

## C. Recommendations

43. The Speakers proposed recommendations that could be implemented at the national and regional levels to strengthen the link between the right to development and the Sustainable Development Goals, noting that the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the Goals were mutually reinforcing and guaranteed the principles of non-discrimination and equality. Specifically, they recommended:

(a) Recognizing the right to development as an inalienable human right and tackling discrimination impeding the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) Addressing structural discrimination against people of African descent and indigenous peoples in order to bridge those gaps impeding the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) Urging Governments, civil society organizations and regional and international human rights mechanisms to share good practices and experiences on programmes developed for people of African descent (which is part of the mandate of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent);

(d) Urging human rights treaty bodies to make recommendations that refer to the Sustainable Development Goals and that States may include in national action plans and/or legislation;

(e) Urging the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and regional banks to consider projects and programmes that promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples;

(f) Using non-discrimination as a criterion for the attainment of each Sustainable Development Goal and target without distinction of any kind, such as age, race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, descent, property, birth or other status;

(g) Disaggregating data and statistics by race, ethnicity, migratory status, gender, age, disability, geographic location and income in order to better monitor the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

## **V. Cooperation in relation to specific groups in focus: minorities, migrants and refugees, people of African descent and indigenous peoples**

44. Participants noted that South-North migration within the African continent had been given more global attention than South-South migration, and that about 36 million persons were on the move within Africa, although that number could be considerably higher.

45. The close working relationship between the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent was underscored, and it was recommended that the two continue to collaborate and that they exchange more information when preparing their respective reports.

46. The speakers noted that, despite the existing regional human rights frameworks, the rights of ethnic minorities had not been fully realized in Europe. For instance, despite the recommendation contained in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action to adopt national action plans against racism, only a few of States members of the European Union had done so. Moreover, the adoption of such plans had not explicitly resulted in the recognition of people of African descent as victims of racism and racial discrimination.

47. A member of the African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child explained that the Committee monitored the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. He added that the Committee upheld high standards for children of internally displaced people, asylum seekers, children born to undocumented parents or to parents who overstayed their visa, and other undocumented children. He referred to a study by the Committee on children on the move within the African continent, in which it was underscored that such children should be given priority protection given their vulnerability.

48. The Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples described her work, which included country visits and communications to private companies with cross-border operations affecting indigenous communities. She referred to her reports on environmental conservation, climate change, land rights, self-governance of indigenous peoples and traditional justice systems. The Special Rapporteur noted that, in some countries in Latin America, institutional racism clearly impeded access to public services, especially the judiciary, for indigenous peoples, while available statistics did not reflect such socioeconomic gaps or discrimination.

### **A. Good practices**

49. Participants pointed out that the majority of States members of the European Union had ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and that the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights were binding. They also noted that several countries had collected data on people of African descent and that in 2017 Germany had adopted a new national plan of action against racism, mentioning people of African descent.<sup>2</sup>

50. The Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families paid particular attention to the efforts made by States in protecting the rights of children of foreign workers, especially within the African continent.

51. The Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples was reviewing draft laws on the protection of indigenous peoples and had submitted amicus briefs to the Constitutional Court of Peru. She had also cooperated with treaty bodies, including by

<sup>2</sup> The new national plan of action had been adopted after the first visit to Germany of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent in 2017. The visit generated country-wide mobilization of human rights defenders and community members who described the human rights situation of people of African descent to the Working Group in town hall meetings. Following the visit, politicians and State institutions started to discuss the human rights situation of people of African descent and measures to address them.



sharing information and reinforcing recommendations with a view to prompting Governments to eliminate discriminatory legislation, policies and practices.

## **B. Challenges and lessons learned**

52. Participants noted that African migrants were usually stigmatized and subjected to discrimination and ill-treatment in places where they had settled and were often prevented from moving freely.

53. Participants noted with concern the lack of a procedure for refugee determination and the discriminatory practices in that regard. They deplored the fact that African minors were not given special attention and were merely included in the general category of migrants, that they did not enjoy psychosocial support and that they rarely benefited from integration programmes. The lack of procedures to facilitate family reunification was also emphasized.

54. Participants stressed that migrant children, including undocumented children and the children of undocumented parents, were particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, which pointed to the need for stronger cross-border protection mechanisms.

55. It was observed that although many European countries had adopted measures to prevent and combat racism and racial discrimination, such prejudice persisted. For instance, people of African descent did not enjoy equal employment opportunities despite non-racist employment advertisements.

56. Participants noted that, within the European Union, the human rights situation of people of African descent had only been addressed relatively recently and possibly as a direct consequence of the International Decade for People of African Descent and the engagement of civil society. The development of new standards had resulted from the interaction between a multitude of international, regional and national actors, including civil society, all of whom had provided specific expertise in the elaboration of resolutions and recommendations.

57. Participants flagged the reluctance of some African States to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. They highlighted the fact that African indigenous communities lived in precarious conditions and experienced discrimination and stigma for their lifestyles or backgrounds. Operations of the private sector leading to deforestation were outlined as having had a negative impact on indigenous communities.

## **C. Recommendations**

58. Participants recommended that:

(a) All States Members of the United Nations disaggregate data on people of African descent within their respective jurisdictions;

(b) The Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and national human rights institutions play a significant role to promote States' compliance with the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, to prevent intolerance and xenophobia; encourage the signing and ratification of international human rights treaties, including the Convention; and ensure that States uphold their obligations under the treaties to which they are party;

(c) A special envoy function be established within the African continent to address the concerns of African migrants and, in particular, to ensure States' compliance with the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, both aimed at providing effective protection to migrants;

(d) The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families hold meetings in various locations in the field and on site with regional human

rights mechanisms and civil society organizations so as to become more visible to the people they serve and have fewer meetings at headquarters;

(e) International and regional mechanisms for the protection of children advocate for the adoption of non-detention measures for migrant children;

(f) National human rights institutions use their affiliation with the African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child to engage with it to enhance the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant children;

(g) All mechanisms cooperate to enhance access to information on indigenous peoples' rights, including in hard and soft law, treaties and other legal instruments, declarations and principles, resolutions of intergovernmental bodies, and their application in specific countries and cases;

(h) Access to information on human rights, including mechanisms for redress, be guaranteed and provided freely and equally in accessible formats, including to persons with disabilities, and ensure that such information is searchable, shareable and available in various languages;

(i) Capacity-building on human rights for indigenous peoples be increased, including by creating and supporting fellowship programmes;

(j) The public be systematically educated on the prejudices and stereotypes underlying all forms of racism and xenophobia in order to promote tolerance, respect, open-mindedness and peace at all levels of society.

## **VI. Role of national mechanisms in combating racism, discrimination and xenophobia**

59. Panellists focused on national initiatives and mechanisms to combat racism, discrimination and xenophobia. They identified key human rights issues affecting migrants and indigenous peoples and presented information on interventions involving their institutions. They noted the importance of collaborating with Governments, among others, to formulate action plans for the protection of migrants and indigenous peoples.

### **A. Good practices**

60. Among the good practices that were highlighted to enhance knowledge of and respect for human rights, participants mentioned the dissemination of information and educational campaigns, as well as formal and informal collaboration between national stakeholders to develop programmes promoting dignity and combating human rights violations. The importance of condemning acts of racism and discrimination and holding perpetrators accountable was underscored, as was the need to encourage victims of discrimination to stand up for their rights.

### **B. Challenges**

61. Panellists expressed concern about the lack of political will to address racism, of disaggregated data and of dedicated resources. They noted that in some countries national action plans to combat racism had not been implemented owing to inadequate human and financial resources. They also expressed concern about the threats faced by human rights defenders.

### **C. Recommendations**

62. In order to advance the fight against racism, discrimination and intolerance, panellists recommended:

(a) Advocating for the strengthening of national laws against racism and the effective monitoring of cases involving hate speech, racism and xenophobia;

(b) Ensuring collaboration and cooperation between international and regional human rights mechanisms and national human rights institutions to support appropriate promotion and protection activities against racism;

(c) Providing national human rights institutions with adequate funding, including to strengthen the collection and analysis of relevant data;

(d) Advocating for public awareness campaigns, trainings and the vocal promotion of human rights, including through the condemnation of racist, discriminatory and xenophobic acts.

## VII. Conclusions

63. The workshop on enhancing cooperation between United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms generated valuable proposals and recommendations, in particular on enhancing collaboration to combat racism and discrimination.

64. Participants encouraged intergovernmental organizations and States to allocate financial and human resources to facilitate effective cooperation.

65. While recognizing the critical role played by OHCHR in advancing cooperation between international and regional human rights mechanisms, participants in the workshop noted that the ability of OHCHR to facilitate and coordinate cooperation was affected by financial and human resources constraints. It was observed that the report of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights contained useful recommendations for building the capacity of OHCHR to coordinate cooperation activities (A/HRC/39/58, paras. 58–60). Participants supported the recommendation that the current focal point function for regional mechanisms be strengthened by creating a special unit to elaborate criteria and methodological tools for evaluating and comparing regional mechanisms, determining their needs, compiling information on best practices and devising capacity-building benchmarks. Such a unit would also conduct a review of OHCHR activities regarding regional human rights mechanisms to date and would elaborate on how regional, subregional and international human rights systems could be integrated into an effective whole.

66. Participants considered the harmonization and application of human rights norms to be crucial for developing universal human rights jurisprudence, in particular on the issue of racism and racial discrimination. They stressed that continuous dialogue among international and regional mechanisms was key in that regard.

67. It was emphasized that the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference and the political declaration adopted by the General Assembly to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (see Assembly resolution 66/3) constituted a comprehensive framework to address, at the global level, the scourge of racism, with a focus on victims. The commitment set out in the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development to leave no one behind was also considered as an authoritative platform for States to ensure that the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals would be grounded in a human rights-based approach to combating discrimination and inequality.

68. Participants noted that contemporary forms of racism should be condemned, including mass media attacks on refugees and migrants. They noted that racial profiling by law enforcement in some countries and increasing levels of police violence against people of African descent created a climate of harassment and injustice.

69. Participants noted that racism affects prosperity, equality and participation and that, if unaddressed, inequality and discrimination may fuel violent conflict and war.

70. International, regional and national human rights mechanisms should work together to seek fulfilment of the promise of tangible recognition that human beings are all born free and equal in dignity and rights.

## VIII. Recommendations

71. United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms should share information on their decisions, recommendations, best practices, reports, activities, programmed visits and other relevant matters in a manner that is continuous, consistent and systematically channelled through the OHCHR focal points coordinator. The alignment of processes and cross-referencing should contribute to more robust and targeted decisions and recommendations and to reinforced advocacy and assistance for their implementation.

72. All international and regional mechanisms should advocate for States to comply with international and regional protection measures against racism and monitor the implementation of States' commitments under the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, including the adoption of legislation, policies, action plans and programmes to combat racism.

73. United Nations agencies and treaty bodies, regional mechanisms and national institutions should cooperate to collect disaggregated data on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; States should collect and publicize statistics disaggregated by race, ethnicity, migratory status, gender, descent, age, disability, geographic location, income and other relevant characteristics as a basis for monitoring and improving the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

74. Support should be provided to enable victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and particularly vulnerable groups to gain access to the international and regional human rights system and mechanisms.

75. The establishment of a core working group of national institutions and regional mechanisms composed of focal points on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance should be considered to institutionalize and strengthen cooperation and to facilitate the exchange of information and expertise between OHCHR, regional mechanisms and national institutions.

76. Cooperation between United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms, under the auspices of OHCHR, should be strengthened. OHCHR should be provided with more human and financial resources to coordinate interaction between United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms and to facilitate the work of the network of focal points.

77. The dedicated programme within OHCHR for regional mechanisms to gain experience within the United Nations human rights system should be continued. OHCHR staff should also be included in the programme in order to enable them to gain experience within regional human rights mechanisms.

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