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**RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA
AND ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION:**

**COMPREHENSIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF AND FOLLOW-UP TO
THE DURBAN DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION**

**Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of
African Descent on its fifth session**

(Geneva, 29 August-2 September 2005)*

Chairperson-Rapporteur: Mr. Peter Lesa Kasanda

Summary

At its fifth session, the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, examined the following themes: mainstreaming the situation of people of African descent in plans for achieving the Millennium Development Goals; the empowerment of women of African descent; the role of political parties in the integration of people of African descent into political life and decision-making processes. Overall, the experts shared the same view concerning: the difficulties in evaluating the extent of discrimination due to conceptual limitations and inadequacies in the collection of data; the necessity of developing and implementing positive measures aimed at accelerating the achievement of substantive equality of persons of African descent and especially that of women and girls of African descent; the creation of strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at the national level in order to assess progress made, the effectiveness of such measures and the identification of good practices. The Working Group adopted several recommendations on each theme. The Working Group also adopted a three-year programme of work and developed toward this end a set of modalities of action to further the implementation of the Working Group's mandate.

* The annexes are circulated as received, in the language of submission only.

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Introduction

1. The Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent held its fifth session from 29 August to 2 September 2005 at the United Nations Office at Geneva.
2. Dzidek Kedzia, Chief of the Research and Right to Development Branch, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), opened the session. The Working Group elected Peter Lesa Kasanda as its Chairperson-Rapporteur.
3. The present report reflects the general course of the debate.

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

4. During the fifth session, the Working Group held six public meetings and three private meetings. It was attended by the following members: Peter Lesa Kasanda (Chairperson-Rapporteur), Joe Frans, Georges Nicolas Jabbour, and Irina Moroianu-Zlatescu; observers for 47 States, 14 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and two intergovernmental organizations also attended. The list of participants and the agenda are contained in the annexes. All working papers submitted by the experts and participants are available at the Secretariat or can be found on the OHCHR web site:

www.ohchr.org/english/issues/racism/groups/african/4african.htm.

II. SUBSTANTIVE SUMMARY OF DELIBERATIONS

A. General statements

5. The Chief of the Research and Right to Development Branch of OHCHR, Dzidek Kedzia, delivered the opening address. He informed the experts and observers that Roberto Borges Martins had communicated his resignation from his appointment.
6. Mr. Kedzia commended the decision of the Working Group to undertake country visits in its capacity as a special procedure of the Commission on Human Rights. He referred to its first on-site visit in June 2005 to Belgium and said that country visits were useful to familiarize members of the Working Group with the actual situation of Afro-descendants in a particular country through access to first-hand information and discussions with the parties concerned, whether the Government, civil society or people of African descent.
7. The Chairperson-Rapporteur thanked OHCHR for the support given to the Working Group's mandate. He also thanked Mr. Borges Martins for his contribution to the Working Group and urged the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States to present in due time candidatures for the appointment of another expert. Mr. Frans was elected Vice-Chairperson-Rapporteur. The provisional agenda and the programme of work of the session were adopted without a vote.

8. In introducing item 5 of the agenda, the Chairperson submitted that people of African descent continued to be victims of racial discrimination and exclusion in many parts of the world, in particular as regards access to health, livelihood, social security, education and income-generating activities. In some instances, they are victims of “social cleansing”; they live in extreme poverty in urban slum areas. He recalled that the Working Group had so far pursued the implementation of its tasks through undertaking a substantial thematic analysis of issues of relevance for people of African descent, including measures to overcome social exclusion of people of African descent, as well as actions and policies fostering their participation in the basic political, economic and social functioning of the society in which they lived.

9. During the general debate, several Government observers shared information on activities and measures undertaken at the national level to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

10. The observer for Ethiopia, on behalf of the Group of African States emphasized that in spite of the various attempts the Group of African States, made by the international community to abolish practices and policies based on racist and xenophobic motivations, racial discrimination and racist stereotypes persisted. Under these circumstances, people of African descent had paid and continue to pay a high price. Ethiopia stressed how recommendations of the Working Group were considered an important background to building on a long process for an effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Very little had been done so far in the implementation of these recommendations, either at a national or international level. At the international level, more efforts were needed to reinvigorate the Durban follow-up process. As for the national level, the Working Group should recommend that Governments consider implementing as a matter of priority national plans of action, taking into account the necessity of enhancing the participation of people of African descent in all aspects of society, and of ensuring access to education and implementing policies empowering Afro-descendant women.

11. The observer for Ecuador highlighted the positive measures undertaken on behalf of people of African descent to enable them to enjoy, on an equal footing with all the citizens of the country, all human rights. Reference was also made to the 1998 National Plan for Human Rights containing specific provisions relating to Afro-descendants.

12. The observer for Mexico, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC), reiterated his support for the Working Group and reaffirmed his commitments to identifying an expert to propose as candidate for membership of the Working Group, following Mr. Borges Martins’ resignation. The observer reported on the adoption in 2003 of a federal law for the prevention and elimination of discrimination, which also provided for the creation of a National Council to Prevent Discrimination (CONAPRED). This body had the task of formulating and implementing policies and actions in the field of education and social communication to raise awareness on the phenomena of racism and xenophobia.

13. The observer for Belgium referred to the first country visit of the Working Group on its territory, which took place in June 2005. The experts interacted with several authorities of the executive branch. Meetings also took place with various authorities of the French-speaking and Flemish regions and communities. The delegation interacted with representatives of local authorities, the Centre for the Equality of Opportunities and Opposition to Racism, NGOs and

persons of African descent living in Belgium. The experts visited Brussels, Liège, Namur and Mechelen. Belgium adopted the Principles for a Federal Plan of action against racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia in July 2004 and a 10-point national plan of action to fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, as a follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action.

14. Mr. Frans underlined that the country visit to Belgium was of great importance to the Working Group. He acknowledged the cooperation, openness and goodwill of the Belgian authorities and encouraged other States to offer the same kind of cooperation to the mechanism. He referred to the existing problem faced in collecting statistical data on people of African descent, in particular in Europe, and the ongoing political dialogue on the issue of collecting disaggregated ethnic data. Ms. Moroianu Zlatescu and Mr. Jabbour also commended the importance of said visit.

15. The observer for Brazil referred to the reasons that brought Mr. Martins, the member of the Working Group, to resign and stressed that they should not raise any doubt about his commitment and support for the Working Group. Brazil, as a country with some 80 million citizens of African descent, reiterated its full support for the Working Group.

16. The observer for Chile commented on the importance of ensuring the participation of NGOs and United Nations agencies and offices in the sessions of the mechanism. He expressed the appreciation of his delegation for the working papers submitted by the members of the Working Group and suggested that, for future sessions, those documents should be circulated in advance so as to enable observers for States and NGOs to be prepared and to give more active and substantial inputs to discussions.

17. The observer for the Holy See recalled the importance of not forgetting about old forms of discrimination such as those against people of African descent, which have been so long-lasting and so widespread as to be defined as pandemic. He submitted that discrimination was always linked to the visibility of recognition of differences and, where difference is very visible, as for people of African descent, the likelihood of discrimination is higher. People of African descent are often victims of double or multiple discrimination.

18. One observer for an NGO said that, when referring to the parameters for the implementation of rights and to specific plans and activities to ameliorate the situation of people of African descent, there was always the necessity to bear in mind the global dimension of the problems. Another commented on the limited number of NGOs participating in the session, reiterated the problem of lack of funding.

19. The Chairperson stressed that discrimination, exclusion and inequality reflected socially constructed identities and interests which, depending on the circumstances, operated along the lines of sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. People of African descent found themselves in a situation of poverty and disempowerment in many parts of the world where they were victims of stigma and discrimination and often exposed to multiple forms of discrimination. He then referred to the visit the Working Group undertook to Belgium, where it was able to identify areas where people of African descent found themselves in a disempowered situation vis-à-vis the mainstream

community and in a position to establish a sincere and frank dialogue with governmental authorities on those areas of concern.

B. Thematic analysis and discussion: Measures to facilitate the participation of people of African descent in all political, economic, social and cultural aspects of society and in the advancement and economic development of their countries

20. The Chairperson introduced agenda item 6 by defining social exclusion as the inability of an individual to participate in the basic political, social and economic functioning of the society in which he or she lived. In order to identify strategies, policies, actions to overcome social exclusion and to foster integration and participation of people of African descent, it was important to identify and address the root causes of their social exclusion: their invisibility in official statistics; their status of poverty and disempowerment; their being victims of stigma and discrimination; and the multiple discrimination to which they are often exposed. The ingredients to foster effective measures to facilitate the participation of people of African descent in society could be broadly identified as establishing and/or reinforcing national human rights frameworks to address and remedy discrimination; addressing the multiple causes and consequences of exclusion through inclusive social and economic policies. The key elements of that approach included the necessity of comprehensive interventions which confronted the multiple aspects characterizing exclusion: disaggregating data by categories that defined the disempowered group; strengthening the organizational and advocacy capacity of the excluded group; designing anti-poverty interventions that sought to increase the economic assets of the excluded group and to change social practices, attitudes and beliefs towards it.

21. Mr. Frans expressed his deep concern about the recent housing fires in Paris. He voiced his worry about the housing conditions that led to the fires resulting in the unnecessary deaths of people of African descent - 27 deaths in April 2005, 17 deaths during the month of August, and seven deaths on 30 August. He recalled the Working Group's recommendations on housing, adopted at its fourth session, and stressed that housing development should be an integrated part of poverty reduction and good governance strategies.

Item 6 (a) Mainstreaming the situation of people of African descent in plans for achieving the Millennium Development Goals

22. In introducing item 6 (a) of the agenda, the Chairperson recalled that the World Conference against Racism took place one year after the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. These two important initiatives focused attention on the need to overcome poverty and to achieve development in the new millennium. He submitted that particular attention was to be given to cross-cutting issues such as non-discrimination, social inclusion and participation to ensure that their attainment was pursued through a rights-based approach and to guarantee that the needs and rights of people of African descent were respected in strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. While each country was devising its own strategy to implement the Millennium Declaration and to achieve its goals, suggestions had been put forward in several forums that country reports on the Goals and processes take into account statistical information disaggregated by sex and ethnicity. As such, the situation of

people of African descent could be made more visible and easily available and could inform policy-making.

23. Mr. Kasanda recalled that the Working Group had stressed the fact that people of African descent were largely invisible because they were often absent or excluded from domestic data collection, statistical analysis and programming, as well as from national public life and the media. The collection of disaggregated data was a crucial exercise to understand patterns of inequality. The recording of achievement of the Goals, if not based on disaggregated results, could mask groups that were missing out.

24. Mr. Kasanda submitted that for each of the Millennium Development Goals, a specific analysis based upon the situation of people of African descent could help improve social inclusion and development interventions. Strategies to mainstream the situation of people of African descent into plans for achieving the Goals would have to take into account the following questions: the advantages of achieving the Goals with the inclusion of ethnic groups; how to focus on and to identify disadvantaged groups in a society without creating any stigma; and how to ensure that ethnic communities supported the plans for the achievement of the Goals. He recalled that the process towards the attainment of the Goals involved all concerned stakeholders: States, NGOs, people of African descent and national human rights Institutions. Each of these actors had a role and should have a say in the monitoring and evaluating of development strategies towards the achievement of the Goals.

25. Mr. John McArthur, Deputy Director of the United Nations Millennium Project, made a presentation by video-link from New York on the role of the Millennium Development Goals in combating discrimination. He raised the question as to how to meet the targets and how to incorporate the Goals into planning perspectives for 2015, while addressing systematic inequalities. While there are a number of global strategic partnerships for development, there is not yet a goal-oriented system. The Goals needed to be translated into operational and practical goals and there was the necessity of coordinating core practical successes at the national and international levels. The issue at stake was that of taking seriously the goals, to turn them into concrete actions. Each country was empowered to achieve these goals, however, it was important to identify the constraints on the ground and develop means to overcome them.

26. The country level is the key playing field for achieving the Millennium Development Goals through processes leading to community empowerment strategies and the active participation of civil society and marginalized groups, so as to achieve "universal access". He also discussed the importance of indicators to measure the impact of policies and actions aimed at achieving the Goals, which he linked to the question of investments and planning. He discussed the role of the United Nations in this regard and elaborated on the key role to be played by United Nations Country Teams, through a participatory approach involving civil society and the international financial institutions, in ensuring that the Goals were translated into the empowerment of those countries that were disempowered at the international level.

27. Ms. Edna Maria Santos Roland, a member of the Group of independent eminent experts, submitted that the Millennium Declaration was specially focused on policies and measures to enhance the development indicators of the general population of a given country and, at the global level, to reduce the inequalities between developed countries and developing countries and economies in transition. One year before the World Conference against Racism, the

Millennium Declaration did not give special attention to the fact that those inequalities might refer to ethnic and racial differences. However, there was no contradiction between the Millennium Declaration and the Durban agenda, as they were based on common fundamental values: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility. The Millennium Declaration emphasized the issues of development and eradication of poverty, protection of the environment, human rights, democracy and good governance. All these issues were also considered in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. The issue of racism and discrimination was mentioned specifically in paragraph 25 of the Millennium Declaration.

28. She referred also to the work undertaken by the United Nations Millennium Project for translating the established targets of the Millennium Declaration into the related indicators. Much work had been done regarding the targets related to poverty, education and health; however, other issues concerning human rights, including the reduction of racial inequality, had not yet been operationalized into global indicators, as the Millennium Declaration did not establish specific targets for them.

29. When discussing ways to mainstream the situation of people of African descent into plans for achieving the Millennium Development Goals as a contribution to stimulating the inclusion of the issue in country reports and the general debate on the Goals, Ms. Roland said that the established targets for the Goals should consider the existing racial/ethnic inequalities in such a way that specific and higher targets be established for the Afro-descendent population in order to reduce inequality at the same time.

30. Mr. Eric Boone, member of the National Board of Directors of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, presented a paper on strategies to mainstream the situation of people of African descent in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. He argued that, while the expectations and hopes of the international community with regard to the application and the achievement of the Goals were varied, sincere concern surrounded the strategies used to achieve the Goals. This concern was acutely felt among people of African descent living in the diaspora.

31. Mr. Boone asserted that it had been urged in several forums that, in implementing the Millennium Development Goals for minority populations, States should promote affirmative action and special measures necessary for poverty reduction and reducing the corresponding disparities in health, education and housing. In fashioning such affirmative-action programs, serious thought and consideration should be given to assure that these programmes were effectively targeted to affect the lives of the most disadvantaged. For example, in the United States of America it had been found that the more advantaged minorities benefited disproportionately from affirmative-action programs as they were in the best position to compete with other individuals or groups for higher-paying jobs, college admissions, and promotions. In line with this, while the middle class was the fastest-growing segment of the African-American population, it had been discovered that the greatest growth actually occurred in the top 40 per cent, while growth in the bottom 60 per cent stagnated if not declined.

32. However, while disparate in impact, Mr. Boone considered affirmative-action programmes necessary to dismantle the existing system of racial inequality. He submitted that such policies and measures should be coupled with economic, political and educational reform to assure greater access to the least advantaged, and not only the most advantaged, racial minorities.

In case of government's adversity to enacting affirmative-action measures, a cross-issues approach might more readily yield the desired results and partial realization of the Goals.

Item 6 (b) Empowerment of women of African descent

33. Ms. Moroianu Zlatescu presented a working paper entitled "The empowerment of women of African descent". The empowerment of women of African descent was to be examined within the larger context of equality and non-discrimination, in a zone comprising gender equality, the rights of persons belonging to a minority, equality of chances and treatment in terms of political rights. The promotion of participation of women of African descent in public life depended on their economic independence, their access to culture and education.

34. Ms Moroianu Zlatescu said that, although discrimination against women in general should be combated, that which is directed against women of African descent should be given greater attention in light of the multiple forms of discrimination from which they suffered. There was a need for additional affirmative action programmes in various areas, and in particular in the field of education, in order to increase opportunity for women. Increased efforts should be made to guarantee access to primary and secondary education; a "new education" implying the elaboration of pedagogical and social strategies targeted for disadvantaged segments of the population, should be formulated. Intercultural education should be included in school curricula.

35. Mr. Kasanda presented a paper entitled "Empowerment of women of African descent". He submitted that Afro-descendants were too often at the very bottom of a complex social structure developed over several centuries which had given rise to multiracial and multi-ethnic societies marked by patterns of unequal economic and social relationships. Generally, women had great difficulty fully realizing their political, economic, social and cultural rights for various reasons. These included financial constraints, biased governance methods that tended to favour men over women gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes and practices. However, women of African descent faced additional burdens and barriers: multiple discrimination in employment; domestic work, in which many Afro-descendent women were engaged, was considered to have no market value; and the intersection of race and poverty, which could have a serious detrimental impact on their reproductive rights.

36. Mr. Kasanda discussed the meaning which could be attached to the term "empowerment" as related to that of "control". He said that the ability of women of African descent to make their own decisions led to choices and the ability to influence public decisions. Once empowered, women could achieve the promise contained in the letter and spirit of article 3 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights relative to equality between men and women. Equality was not achieved merely by enacting laws and by adopting policies and practices that were gender-neutral; equality was achieved by paying attention to the effects that laws and practices might have on women. He also discussed the importance of data to measure achievements brought on by affirmative-action measures. He stressed the necessity of enhancing women's economic autonomy as a tool of empowerment. He also highlighted the importance of education as a tool for empowering women.

37. Mr. Kasanda highlighted the importance of encouraging the full and equal participation of Afro-descendant women in decision-making and policy development. States should promote the advancement of women and adopt measures that enable Afro-descendant women to play an

active role in the design and implementation of policies and programmes that affect their lives. Benchmarks and/or empowerment indicators should be developed to measure and monitor progress and ensure that gains were not eroded or lost over time.

38. Sihaka Tsemo, Head of the OHCHR Regional Office for Southern Africa, also spoke on the empowerment of women of African descent. She discussed the lack of visibility of the contribution of women of African descent to history. She highlighted the various forms of discrimination from which women of African descent suffer, and the challenges they were exposed to - land issues, access to natural resources, self-determination. She recalled the Millennium Declaration, which specifically acknowledged the plight of Africa and of people of African descent and said that the advancement of gender equality among people of African descent was necessary to combat poverty, hunger and diseases.

39. Ms. Tsemo highlighted the need for States to undertake additional measures in translating into action the recommendations of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. There is the need to collect appropriate data to ensure that women of African descent were targeted as a specific group which had specific needs; to develop affirmative-action policies and programmes for women of African descent; and to implement gender-sensitive policies. Governments should adopt and strengthen their legislative measures prohibiting and eliminating discrimination against, inter alia, women of African descent and should ensure their implementation. Civil society also played an important role in lobbying on behalf of women of African descent to ensure that they were at the centre of any development approach.

40. Albertine Tshibilondi Ngoyi of the Brussels Centre of African Studies discussed the situation of women of African descent living in the diaspora through the example of Belgium. She suggested that intensification of investments in training, information and awareness-raising, inter-cultural understanding, employment and the formation of associations of women of African descent, were tools for the elimination of discrimination against women of African descent and for their empowerment. She insisted on education and training as preconditions for the empowerment of women of African descent.

41. An observer for an NGO commented that one of the ways of empowering women of African descent was to enhance efforts in the fight against poverty so as to foster inclusion. Another submitted that structural racism was linked mainly to poverty and stressed the importance of data collection disaggregated by sex and race so as to identify the most disadvantaged groups in societies and to target them through appropriate policies. Various observers for States stressed the importance of collecting statistical data to identify social inequalities and their links with gender and ethnicity.

42. An observer for one State discussed the importance of gender mainstreaming in actions, programmes and policies aimed at fighting racial discrimination. He recommended the adoption by Governments of plans of action with a gender dimension, the elaboration of gender-specific guidelines and indicators and the use of gender-disaggregated data. He further stressed the importance of periodic reviews of programmes to assess progress made in addressing racism and gender inequalities at the national level. The desirability of supporting anti-racism awareness-raising activities and training was also discussed.

43. An observer for a State stressed the importance of introducing an ethnical perspective in plans for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and of elaborating participation indicators and indicators of results to measure the impact of national programmes. Another observer for a State said that the Working Group needed to recommend practical solutions for the empowerment of women of African descent and strategies to mainstream the situation of people of African descent into national plans to achieve the Goals and to avoid repetitions in its discussions. Other observers for States stressed the importance of continuing to discuss issues already dealt with by the mechanism so as to stress their importance and the need for action to be taken at the national level.

44. The Chairperson commented that the Working Group already made recommendations on the issue of ethnic data collection and until the problem of the invisibility of people of African descent was solved, the issue would continue to be discussed. Mr. Frans stated that to be repetitive was also a means to ensure that messages got through. He echoed the view that the implementation of the Durban Programme of Action had not been really effective so far and also that recommendations made by the follow-up mechanisms had been largely disregarded by States.

45. Edna Santos Roland proposed a list of practical measures aimed at improving the situation of people of African descent. States should concentrate their investments for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in communities of primarily African descent in order to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality, reduce child mortality, reduce maternal mortality, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases and ensure environmental sustainability. She also submitted that States should establish targets to reduce the racial inequalities affecting their population of African descent regarding the issues tackled by the Goals.

Item 6 (c) The role of political parties in the integration of people of African descent in the political life and in decision-making processes

46. In introducing agenda item 6 (c), the Chairperson recalled the key role that politicians and political parties could play in combating racism and racial discrimination by shaping and leading public opinion, and in fostering the integration of people of African descent into political life and decision-making processes. Political parties had to be encouraged to take concrete steps to promote solidarity, tolerance and respect and to explain issues to the general public in such a way as to increase understanding and the acceptance of difference. They possessed the tools to foster actions to increase the voice, and policy influence of excluded groups in national agendas, to change stereotypes, promote solidarity and social cohesion. People of African descent needed to expand their leadership capacities, membership and links with national organizations, and request the creation of ad hoc policy dialogue mechanisms to voice their concerns.

47. Mr. Frans presented his paper, entitled “The ability of mainstream Western European political parties and politicians to integrate people of African descent in political life and in decision-making processes: the impact of racist and extreme right-wing parties”. He asserted that political decisions and political parties affected the lives of people of African descent living in Western Europe. The presence of extreme right-wing parties in electoral politics had an impact on mainstream political parties and their policies and the political responses towards this phenomenon must be multifaceted and inclusive. The participation of people of African descent

in political organizations and their representation was a prerequisite for a successful campaign for equal rights for all.

48. Racism and extreme right-wing activities existed and were gaining ground in Europe. Extreme right-wing parties had an effect on mainstream political parties and their policies. It was within the mainstream parliamentary parties that there was the need to focus on combating racism. Mr. Frans underlined the need for political parties to ensure the representation of people of African descent in various political decision-making processes, to encourage diversity, to express visions and carry out policies aimed at creating a society that was inclusive and that put the problems of discrimination and prejudice high on the political agenda. He stressed the need to engage in dialogue and to network with the diaspora of people of African descent globally to exchange experiences and ideas, to share strategies and to support each other.

49. Mr. Jabbour presented a paper entitled "People of African descent in politics". He elaborated on the role that people of African descent were playing in politics. He made historical references to eminent black politicians in a variety of non-African countries. He then referred to the case of the United States of America and mentioned studies on Afro-descendants' representation in the American legislative bodies, which should serve as a model for similar studies in other countries, especially in countries that had long-standing parliamentary traditions. Several issues warranted discussion regarding people of African descent in politics: one was how to identify people of African descent. He highlighted two methods, which had their own limitations and for which further enquiry was needed: self-identification and physical characteristics.

50. He discussed appointment and election to political positions. Political positions could be attained by appointment, but political appointment carried with it the suspicion that it was a "showcase," or a case of affirmative action. While it could be a real natural outgrowth of race-blindness, suspicion might linger that it was a public relations stunt. Elections were a better criterion to examine race-consciousness in its proper context. When a voter elected a person to a position of political responsibility, there was an underlying assumption that he or she would in some way impact the voters' affairs. One did not elect a person whom he or she discriminated against, but whom he or she discriminated for. Data needed to be collected on appointments to political position. But real research had to be undertaken on elections, especially to legislative bodies.

51. He submitted that further research was needed on the appraisal of a quota system for people of African descent and the factors that tended to improve their representation in a free and competitive election process. A point for further research could be compiling available pronouncements on the political situation of people of African descent delivered by presidents and presidential candidates in countries where there was a substantial Afro-descendant population. The Working Group needed to establish organic links with the centres of research for people of African descent in politics and contacts with the most prominent personalities of African descent in politics.

52. Dr. Obiora Chinedu Okafor, Associate Professor, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University, Toronto, presented a paper entitled "Reflections on the role of political parties in the integration of people of African descent in the political life and decision-making processes of States". He reflected on the efforts deployed by political parties and other actors in addressing

the negative political, social or economic effects of racial inequality on people of African descent. He discussed the necessity for relevant political parties in many countries to adopt racial affirmative policies and programmes and stressed the importance for such parties to establish internal but relatively independent machineries to monitor and further the implementation of such policies or programmes.

53. He discussed the disenfranchisement of voters of African descent on the basis of their failure to register and their consequent absence from the voting rolls and considered such a factor as one that had historically grounded their political marginalization in some Diaspora countries. One way of ameliorating this problem would be for the relevant election commissions to automatically register every adult citizen, while allowing those who do not wish to be on that roll to opt-out in person. Such an approach could be of benefit to the struggle to integrate Afro-descendants in the political life of many Diaspora countries. Political parties should therefore be urged to support such automatic voter registration programmes. The improvement in the participation of people of African descent in political life could be brought about through measures such as the implementation of anti-racism educational activities, the establishment of electoral systems based on proportional representation as well as the adoption of policies and programmes to redress the incidence of political exclusion.

54. Some observers for NGOs pointed out that the political parties bear a crucial responsibility in promoting the political participation of people of African descent. An observer for a State argued that the current priority of the Working Group should be the study of the causes behind the discrimination against people of African descent as well as of the contribution made by them to the development of their respective communities. He also referred to the crucial role played by political parties with regard to the inclusion of people of African descent in political life. Ms. Roland provided information about the meeting of the caucus of Afro-parliamentarians from the Latin America and Caribbean region in San José, Costa Rica, which aimed at exploring the possibility of creating a black congress of the Americas. Another observer for a State referred to the role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in the context of the inclusion of people of African descent in political life.

C. Possible modalities of action for ensuring an effective follow-up to the Working Group's recommendations

55. In introducing the discussion of agenda item 7, the Chairperson presented a programme of work of the Working Group to further the implementation of its mandate (see annex III). He explained that the Working Group had so far organized its work through holding annual sessions around specific themes relevant to the situation of people of African descent, while consistently relying on the provisions contained in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, to propose measures and recommendations to the Commission. For three years the mechanism had adopted a thematic analytical focus. In June 2005, the Working Group conducted its first country visit. The mechanism had decided to reorganize the content of its future agenda to reflect findings from country visits, complemented with data provided by States, national human rights institutions, intergovernmental organizations and different civil society actors on specific issues, thereby allowing for thorough examination of particular areas of concern by combining the lessons learned from such visits with discussions. The Working Group also decided to operationalize its analytical approach with active engagement in the development of guidelines

on good practices to assist Governments and other actors involved in programmes aimed at the social inclusion of people of African descent.

56. Taking the groundbreaking example of the last visit to Belgium, Mr. Jabbour considered country visits to be instrumental for examining the implementation of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of people of African descent; learning about relevant programmes and policies and their effectiveness and/or shortcomings; identifying good practices in the realization of the provisions of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action as they related to the social inclusion of people of African descent; interacting with civil society organizations and communities of people of African descent and assessing first-hand their situation; and recommending further specific measures for improving the situation of Afro-descendants.

57. Ms. Moroianu Zlatescu stressed the shortcomings and gaps in the implementation process of the Durban anti-discrimination agenda and underlined the need to form a broad coalition with Governments, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and research and academic institutions in order to promote equal opportunity.

58. Mr. Frans stressed the importance of country visits as a way of identifying and disseminating good practices. The Working Group should move from an analytical phase to a more operational one. He presented the replies of Member States to a questionnaire elaborated by the Working Group during its third session. He thanked the 12 States that had sent replies to the questionnaire for their cooperation and highlighted the fact that some States provided detailed information that could potentially serve as promising practices in dealing with some of the issues involving people of African descent. A striking pattern emerging from States' responses is the lack of relevant and comparable data on race and ethnicity as well as the rarity of specific legal and institutional frameworks.

59. An observer for a State made a comment on the need to interpret the mandate of the Working Group broadly, as intended by the Commission on Human Rights in resolution 2003/30. Some observers highlighted the importance for the Working Group of coordinating its on-site visits with the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

60. One observer commented on the fact that future annual sessions of the Working Group would be focused on the result of country visits and pointed out the necessity of keeping the thematic, research and analytical agenda of the Working Group. Mr. Frans replied to such a comment by explaining that country visits will only inform the annual session, which will remain thematic in nature. Indeed, good practices collected during country visits will inform the discussion during the annual sessions and instigate a deeper debate on how these practices could be adopted and adapted in policies of other countries.

61. In a declaration made on the behalf of the Group of African, Ethiopia expressed the appreciation of the African Group to the experts of the States Working Group and the panellists for their well researched and informative papers and recommended that the Working Group concentrate on the identification of good practices, through country visits, with the aim of disseminating them as widely as possible.

III. OTHER MATTERS

62. The Working Group held three private meetings, during which the possibility of drafting a three-year programme of work was discussed and agreed upon. The Working Group also decided that such a programme of work would be annexed to the present report.

63. The Working Group held a private meeting with NGOs at which measures to intensify cooperation between the mechanism and civil society organizations were discussed. A private meeting was also held with representatives of the five regional groups. Armenia, Ethiopia, Ireland, Mexico, Romania and the Republic of Korea participated in the meeting on behalf of their respective regional groups. The delegates of Brazil and of the Syrian Arab Republic were also present. The representatives suggested that the Working Group enhance its cooperation links with other anti-discrimination mechanisms set up before and after the World Conference. They added that the Working Group should focus further on practical ways of implementing the recommendations of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. General Conclusions

64. The Working Group believes that all States should implement measures to promote understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups.

65. The Working Group stresses the need to collect reliable and disaggregated statistical data in order to study and assess regularly the situation of individuals and groups of individuals who are victims of racism, including people of African descent. In this regard, the Working Group will establish closer contacts with UNESCO, especially within the context of the ongoing project entitled "Development of indicators on racism and discrimination in the city".

66. The Working Group highlights the need for States to fully take into account the gender-related dimensions of racial discrimination, enhance efforts to integrate gender perspectives and incorporate gender-sensitive programmes in their implementation of the Durban Programme of Action.

67. The Working Group reiterates the need for States to ensure that the development and implementation of positive measures aimed at accelerating the achievement of substantive equality of persons of African descent, and especially that of women and girls of African descent, are accompanied by strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at the national level in order to assess progress made, the effectiveness of such measures and the identification of good practices.

68. The Working Group is of the view that organizations such as the Council of Europe, through its European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), should commission a

study, which could assess, including through the collection and analysis of data, the poor living conditions of people of African descent living in Europe and recommend strategies to alleviate the adverse conditions they face. This strategy and such a study should be undertaken by other organizations with similar mandates in other regions of the world, such as the Organization of American States, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

69. The Working Group believes that active participation of NGOs at the sessions of the Working Group is essential for the effective implementation of the Durban Programme of Action. The Working Group reiterates its recommendation that a special fund be established to facilitate the participation of NGOs with particular interest in the competence of the Working Group.

B. General Recommendations

70. Considering that four years have elapsed since the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the Working Group recommends the organization of a “Durban +5” activity, which would offer the opportunity to evaluate the implementation of the provisions contained in the documents, particularly by examining the implementation of national plans of action and regional progress. The Working Group considers that OHCHR could provide assistance in this endeavour.

71. The Working Group urges States to abide by their obligations under relevant treaties and instruments to promote and fulfil the equal rights of all without distinction as to race, colour, sex, language, religion and other grounds.

72. States are strongly encouraged to inform the Working Group through OHCHR, on their activities regarding the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, particularly with respect to people of African descent.

C. Measures to facilitate the participation of people of African descent in all political, economic, social and cultural aspects of society and in the advancement and economic development of their countries

1. Conclusions

73. The Working Group highlights the importance attached to continuous analysis by States as to the causes and consequences of social and economic problems linked to poverty and discrimination, which particularly affect people of African descent.

74. The Working Group reiterates the need for States to give priority to improving and funding systems to collect reliable disaggregated data to monitor and evaluate the social and economic situation of people of African descent, with the view to formulating and implementing legislation, policies, practices and other measures aimed at improving their living conditions.

75. The Working Group considers that the effective implementation of the Millennium Development Goals can address many of the central challenges connected with racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and lead to equal opportunities for many groups discriminated against, including people of African descent.

76. The Working Group emphasizes that the formulation and implementation of all measures, in particular those benefiting people of African descent, require their participation.

2. Recommendations

(a) Mainstreaming the situation of people of African descent in plans for achieving the Millennium Developing Goals.

77. In implementing the Goals, States are urged to take into consideration the contents of paragraphs 1 and 5, respectively, of the Durban Programme of Action, which recommend, inter alia, measures for the eradication of poverty particularly in those areas in which victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance predominantly live, and to consider positively concentrating additional investments in health-care systems, education, public health, electricity, drinking water and environmental control, as well as other affirmative - or positive-action initiatives, in communities of primarily African descent.

78. In implementing the Goals financial and development institutions, operational programmes and special agencies of the United Nations are urged to take into consideration the contents of paragraph 8 of the Durban Programme of Action, which recommends, inter alia, that they assign particular priority and allocate sufficient funding, within their areas of competence and budgets, to improving the situation of Africans and people of African descent, while devoting special attention to the needs of these populations in developing countries.

79. Considering the conditions of extreme poverty in which a majority of people of African descent live in both developing and developed countries, the Working Group urges States in cooperation with civil society to develop strategies to implement the Millennium Development Goals with respect to all people of African descent, regardless of the country in which they live.

80. In the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, States should focus on measures that can address extreme poverty and remove the obstacles impeding the enjoyment of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights by people of African descent.

81. In planning, designing, monitoring and evaluating development strategies as part of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, States, the United Nations system and other relevant actors including international financial institutions should make use of a rights-based approach.

82. States, the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations should support the efforts of people of African descent at the local level in developing strategies to build and implement their vision for achieving sustainable development, which will contribute to reversing the effects of discrimination. In this connection, States are urged to adopt and implement the positive measures necessary for securing equal access of people of African descent to opportunities that will contribute to poverty reduction and lead to the empowerment of communities.

83. In the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, States, in cooperation with civil society, should ensure that people of African descent are empowered to participate and contribute effectively in planning, designing, monitoring and evaluating strategies that may have a greater impact in improving their lives.

84. The impact of the implementation of Millennium Development Goals on people of African descent should be assessed and reported in country progress reports and other relevant reports by States and the United Nations system.

85. States, the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations should analyse disaggregated data on people of African descent in partnership with such people, with a view to better understanding the causes underpinning their lack of equal access to opportunities, and the good practices that can help overcome the obstacles to their empowerment.

86. In defining their strategies toward reaching the Millennium Development Goals, States should consider establishing targets to reduce existing racial inequalities affecting the empowerment of people of African descent

(b) Empowerment of women of African descent

87. The Working Group urges States to collect data disaggregated by race and sex in order to develop reliable economic, social and cultural evaluations on issues that specifically affect women of African descent, in order to formulate and implement programmes to combat gender and racial discrimination and assess progress made in this regard.

88. States should adopt special measures such as positive action, preferential treatment or quota systems to address the multiple and aggravated forms of discrimination, disadvantages, obstacles and difficulties faced by women of African descent and advance women's integration in fields such as education, economics and politics.

89. States should integrate a gender perspective into all relevant programmes and activities against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

90. States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector should consult and involve women of African descent, through a participatory and inclusive approach, in the processes and decisions related to the elaboration and implementation of programmes and plans aimed at their social development.

91. States, international organizations, NGOs and the private sector should promote sustainable and integrated programmes to ensure equality of access to, and the participation in and contribution of women of African descent to, inter alia, the fields of education, health, employment, and participation in public life with a view to fostering the contribution of women of African descent to decision-making processes.

92. States should facilitate access to credit and subsidies for projects, designed to empower women of African descent.

93. States should improve protection for women and children of African descent who are victims of violence, including domestic and sexual violence.

(c) The role of political parties in the integration of people of African descent in the political life and in decision-making processes

94. The Working Group believes that it is crucial that States collect disaggregated data on the political participation of people of African descent, such as the rate of participation in voting in presidential and parliamentary elections, at State and local levels, enrolment in political parties, presence in legislative bodies and political posts they occupy with a view to determine their level of participation in political life.

95. The Working Group encourages States to develop initiatives aimed at combating discrimination and facilitating the participation of people of African descent in the political life and decision-making processes in the countries in which they live where their communities are under-represented.

96. States are urged to adopt measures facilitating the effective participation of all persons, including people of African descent, in a free and democratic society governed by the rule of law.

97. The Working Group recognizes the need for States to develop mandatory anti-discrimination training and sensitization programmes promoting multiculturalism and diversity for Government officials with the goal of raising awareness, enhancing understanding among cultures and encouraging tolerance for the representation and participation of people of African descent in political and decision-making processes at the national level.

98. The procedures for the election of political representatives should be fair, transparent and equitable and open to the participation of people of African descent, including where appropriate through a strategy that could serve to improve the representation of people of African descent at all levels in political life, judicial appointments and other public activities.

99. States should ensure that political parties establish internal diversity commissions and/or ombudspersons to monitor the implementation of their positive measures within the context of political representation of and by people of African descent.

100. The Working Group recommends that States promote educational programmes within primary and secondary schools on the mechanics of voting within their territories

(such as providing instruction on the use of a polling machine or voting via absentee ballot) to encourage voting by a greater number of people of African descent.

101. The Working Group urges States to ensure the mainstreaming by political parties of racial discrimination in national political debates and programmes, and to place a particular focus on people of African descent in countries where they live.

ANNEXES

Annex I

Agenda

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of the Vice-Chairperson-Rapporteur.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Organization of work.
5. General statements: exchange of information on participants' implementation activities and debate on issues of general interest to the implementation process.
6. Thematic analysis: discussion on and analysis of the following issues: Measures to facilitate the participation of people of African descent in all political, economic, social and cultural aspects of society and in the advancement and economic development of their countries:
 - (a) Mainstreaming the situation of people of African descent in plans for achieving the - Millennium Development Goals ;
 - (b) Empowerment of women of African descent;
 - (c) The role of political parties in the integration of people of African descent in the political life and in decision-making processes.
7. Possible modalities of action for ensuring an effective follow-up to the Working Group's recommendations.
8. Adoption of conclusions and recommendations.
9. Other matters.
10. Closing of the session.

Annex II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. Members

Mr. Peter Lesa Kasanda (Chairperson-Rapporteur)

Mr. Joe Frans

Mr. Georges Nicolas Jabbour

Ms. Irina Moroianu-Zlatescu

B. States Members of the United Nations represented by observers

Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Ghana, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Honduras, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Republic of Korea, Panama, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, South Africa, Sudan, Switzerland, Turkey, Venezuela, Zimbabwe.

C. Non-member States represented by observers

Holy See

D. Intergovernmental organizations

African Union, International Organization for Migration

E. United Nations

Department of Public Information, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

F. Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

African Canadian Legal Clinic, African Society of International and Comparative Law, Amnesty International, Association of World Citizens, Fraternité Notre Dame, Interfaith International, International Association against Torture, International Service for Human Rights

**G. Non-governmental organizations not in consultative status
with the Economic and Social Council**

Association pour le développement Rural, la protection de l'environnement et de l'artisanat
DERPREA, Espacio Afro-Americano, Our Rights, Proceso de Comunidades Negras de
Colombia, Culture of Afro-Indigenous Solidarity, Red Afro-Venezolana

H. Panellists and presenters

Mr. Eric Everett Boone, Ms. AlbertineTshibilondi Ngoyi, Mr. Obiora Chinedu Okafor, Ms. Edna
Maria Santos Roland, Ms. Sihaka Tsemo.

Annex III

Future modalities of action of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent – programme of work

I. The mandate of the Working Group on People of African Descent

1. Paragraph 7 of the Durban Programme of Action requested the “Commission on Human Rights to consider establishing a working group or other mechanism of the United Nations to study the problems of racial discrimination faced by people of African descent living in the African diaspora and make proposals for the elimination of racial discrimination against people of African descent. As a follow-up to this recommendation, the Commission on Human Rights established the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, composed of five members.

2. The mandate of the Working Group is spelled out in Commission on Human Rights resolution 2002/68, paragraph 8, and further expanded in resolution 2003/30, paragraphs 24-25. According to these two resolutions respectively, the Group is expected to:

- (a) Study the problems of racial discrimination faced by people of African descent living in the Diaspora and to this end gather all relevant information from Governments, non-governmental organizations and other relevant sources, including through holding public meetings with them;
- (b) Propose measures to ensure full and effective access to the justice system by people of African descent;
- (c) Submit recommendations on the design, implementation and enforcement of effective measures to eliminate racial profiling of people of African descent;
- (d) Elaborate short-medium-and long-term proposals for the elimination of racial discrimination against people of African descent, bearing in mind the need for close collaboration with international and development institutions and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system to promote the human rights of people of African descent, inter alia through:
 - (i) Improving the human rights situation of people of African descent by devoting special attention to their needs, inter alia through the preparation of specific programmes of action;
 - (ii) Designing special projects, in collaboration with people of African descent, to support their initiatives at the community level and to facilitate the exchange of information and technical know-how between these populations and experts in these areas;
 - (iii) Developing programmes intended for people of African descent, allocating additional investments to health systems, education, housing, electricity, drinking

water and environmental control measures and promoting equal opportunities in employment, as well as other affirmative or positive-action initiatives, within the human rights framework;

- (e) Make proposals on the elimination of racial discrimination against Africans and people of African descent in all parts of the world;
- (f) Address all the issues concerning the well-being of Africans and people of African descent contained in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

II. Objectives

3. In light of the content of relevant documents addressing the mandate of the Working Group, such as the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights, reports of the Working Group, as well as discussions at previous sessions, the Working Group is to follow the implementation of its agenda through:

- (a) Promoting tolerance, pluralism and respect for diversity to combat prejudice that leads to racial discrimination toward people of African descent;
- (b) Assisting people of African descent in overcoming social exclusion;
- (c) Fostering the development of capacity-building programmes to promote and achieve equality of opportunity for people of African descent.

III. Methodology

4. The Working Group intends to implement its programme of work by:

- (a) Using the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action as a framework for action to eliminate racial discrimination and related intolerance affecting people of African descent;
- (b) Using a multidisciplinary approach when considering the situation of people of African descent;
- (c) Relying on a broad perspective encompassing local, national, regional and international experience in examining and making recommendations which can address the needs and well-being of Africans and people of African descent in all parts of the world;
- (d) Drawing on expertise and benefiting from collaborative efforts with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Working Group on Minorities of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including regular exchange of information on anti-discrimination

measures being adopted and the implementation of recommendations benefiting people of African descent;

- (e) Enhancing functional linkages with the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and with the Group of Independent Eminent Experts to foster a common and streamlined Durban follow-up agenda.

IV. Modalities of Action

- 5. The methods of work developed by the Working Group include the following:
 - (a) Annual sessions based on a thematic approach to discuss specific subjects/topics relevant to the situation of people of African descent and Africans in all parts of the world;
 - (b) Country visits upon the invitation of Governments, in order to facilitate in-depth understanding of the situation of people of African descent in various regions of the world, and to collect and promote good practices.

A. Annual sessions

6. The Working Group will continue holding its annual sessions around specific themes relevant to the situation of people of African descent, while consistently relying on the provisions contained in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

7. The good practices collected during country visits will inform the discussion during the annual sessions and establish the platform for a more comprehensive debate on how these practices could be adopted and replicated in policies of other countries.

8. The Working Group will complement information gathered first-hand through on-site visits with data provided by States, intergovernmental organizations, national human rights institutions and different civil-society actors on specific issues, measures and programmes concerning people of African descent.

B. Country visits

9. The focus of the visits will combine an all-encompassing approach with a “core theme” approach.

10. An all-encompassing approach would allow for a holistic analysis of the situation of people of African descent in a given country. A “core-theme” approach founded on a thematic focus while undertaking country visits could also enable the Working Group to identify patterns, policies and programmes in specific areas, their effectiveness and/or shortcomings, and enable the mechanism to identify and discuss good practices. In this regard, the Working Group has decided not only to consider general manifestations of racism, racial discrimination and

xenophobia faced by people of African descent, but also to pay particular attention to manifestations that are linked to the themes discussed during annual sessions.

11. The choice of country to visit will be based on factors such as the relative number of people of African descent living in the given country, the existence and degree of effectiveness of specific programmes/policies designed to address the discriminatory treatment faced by people of African descent. Such a choice will also be informed by relevant information received on the situation of people of African descent from Governments, non-governmental organizations or other pertinent sources.

V. Focus for the years 2006-2008

12. During the years 2006 to 2008, the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent will focus on the following.

A. Promoting respect for the human rights of people of African descent

13. **Advocacy:** The Working Group intends to engage with Governments, international organizations and institutions, non-governmental organizations and other actors, as appropriate, in dialogue to raise awareness and encourage the implementation of measures to enhance the protection of the human rights of people of African descent. This will be done through its annual sessions, which will thematically cluster issues concerning people of African descent and, when suitable, by organizing meetings with those actors, and through country visits.

14. **Promotion:** The Working Group will encourage the adoption and implementation of programmes aimed at combating discrimination against people of African descent, including through the identification of and recommendations on specific measures; contribute to developing guidelines on good practices in this regard to assist Governments, civil society organizations and other actors involved in developing and implementing programmes aimed at the social and political inclusion of people of African descent.

15. **Dissemination:** The Working Group will engage in the collection, assessment and dissemination of good practices in specific areas, which could constitute useful tools to address problems faced by people of African descent, including through country visits;

B. Dialogue with Governments, non-governmental organizations and other actors

16. **Undertaking country missions:** The Working Group will undertake one or two country visits per year to gather information on the situation of people of African descent and on different policies and programmes and their effectiveness and/or shortcomings, and to develop recommendations for resolving ongoing problems.

17. **Partnerships with civil society:** The Working Group will identify steps to intensify cooperation with non-governmental organizations and civil society organisations to support their efforts in promoting and protecting the rights of people of African descent. Collaborative links

could include support for the development of studies and reports on the situation of Afro-descendants in all parts of the world, the organization of awareness-raising initiatives and outreach campaigns.

18. **Give a voice to people of African descent:** The Working Group will develop efforts to promote the participation of people of African descent in the relevant processes at the country and international level. Towards this end, the Working Group will hold consultations with people of African descent, both during country visits and on other occasions, to gather their views and exchange information, including about the relevant international standards and processes.
