



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

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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
Ninety-third session

Summary record (partial)* of the 2547th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 31 July 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Crickley

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

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 p.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Chair** declared open the ninety-third session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Opening statement by the Director of the Human Rights Council and Treaty Mechanisms Division

2. **Mr. Abdelmoula** (Director, Human Rights Council and Treaty Mechanisms Division) said that many people throughout the world encountered serious problems on account of their origin, including race-based hostility and violence against those fleeing conflict and persecution; stubborn forms of institutional and systemic racism in areas such as law enforcement, access to justice, education, health, employment, land rights and housing; and racist hate speech and hate crimes. Alarming, a context had arisen in which diversity was increasingly perceived as a threat instead of a strength, while racism was being rehabilitated and legitimized in the name of security and nationalism. The Committee was in a position to combat those problems by impelling States to implement real solutions to racism, so that all people, regardless of their background, could fully exercise their human rights.

3. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had recently observed, many States parties to international human rights treaties did not comply with their reporting obligations — the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination had 61 States parties whose reports were more than five years overdue. Important steps had been taken to facilitate the submission of reports: a simplified reporting procedure had been offered to States whose periodic reports were 10 years overdue and subsequently to States whose reports were 5 years overdue. And during the Committee's ninety-second session, an informal meeting had been held with 70 States parties, many of whom had highlighted challenges such as reporting fatigue and lack of time for the implementation of recommendations. He encouraged the Committee to continue its consultations with States parties and to consider new and creative ways of reducing the number of overdue reports.

4. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/268 on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had recently launched a programme to support States parties in building capacity to implement their treaty obligations, which included training on reporting and on engaging with civil society and national human rights institutions. The programme had already yielded positive outcomes in terms of reporting compliance and the quality of constructive dialogues.

5. Follow-up to treaty body recommendations was essential to ensuring that reporting translated into real progress — particularly in the area of combating racial discrimination, which required changes in behaviour, attitude and beliefs — and could also make a significant contribution towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Conversely, the results obtained in implementing the Goals could inform the work of the treaty bodies. He had been pleased to note that various treaty bodies had begun to include references to the Goals in lists of issues prior to reporting and in their concluding observations, as well as integrating them into reporting guidelines. He invited the Committee to reflect on how to strengthen the interlinkages between its work and the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. At their recent annual meeting, the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies had discussed the General Assembly's upcoming review of the treaty body system and had proposed possible parameters for that review. They had also agreed that reform must improve the implementation of treaty body recommendations on the ground and that the treaty bodies should cooperate more, and in more fruitful ways, with other human rights mechanisms. He encouraged the Committee to consider how to ensure its work had an even greater impact on people's lives. For example, the development of links with national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up had the potential to become a key component in national human rights protection systems, by bringing international and regional human

rights norms and practices directly to the domestic level. In that regard, OHCHR had issued two publications on national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up — a practical guide and a study, respectively — and it continued to strengthen its resources and capacities with a view to providing more effective support for implementation on the ground, including through the provision of new tools such as an upgraded universal human rights index and a database of national recommendations. Moreover, since only 57 States parties had recognized the Committee's competence to receive communications under article 14 of the Convention, OHCHR would continue its efforts to raise awareness about the individual complaints procedure.

7. To conclude, he congratulated Mr. Amir, Mr. Bossuyt, Mr. Kut and Mr. Yeung Sik-Yuen on their re-election and noted the election of five new members whose terms would begin in 2018: Mr. Silvio José Albuquerque e Silva, Ms. Chinsung Chung, Ms. Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, Ms. Keiko Ko and Mr. Bakari Sidiki Diaby. The new members would allow the Committee to move towards gender parity, with women now accounting for 8 out of 18 members.

8. **The Chair** said that the extent to which States parties did not report to the Committee was sometimes overestimated in light of the two-year reporting cycle set forth in the Convention, which meant that the figures on non-reporting States sometimes appeared in an unfavourable light.

9. Although she had not detected, since the previous session, any improvement in the reality of racial discrimination that was experienced by many people around the world, she was hopeful that solidarity was growing among people who were disgusted by racism and who believed in a fairer world. In that regard, she had recently viewed a short film about the efforts of an undocumented Mexican woman who had encountered racism in the United States, but who had also received support from many people in her local community. She had also learned of cases in Europe where local people had supported those who had been racially profiled and had created conditions in which the victims of racism could live with dignity and respect. In Africa, too, there had been examples of minorities that had been supported by majority populations and by people in neighbouring countries.

10. One particular concern was the existence of a toxic global discourse, which had created a framework for rationalizing the securitization processes that had led to so much racial profiling, in particular of people perceived to be Muslims. Meanwhile, the legacy of slavery continued in the ongoing oppression of people of African descent, while abuses of power and short-sighted decision-making posed further challenges. Although the Committee welcomed simple, understandable statements and solutions, that did not mean it should adopt a simplistic, one-size-fits-all approach, since it was dealing with a complex and intersectional phenomenon that manifested itself in different forms at different times.

11. The Committee would have the time and opportunity during the forthcoming session to address matters of substance, to improve its internal structures and to secure the support that it needed in order to make a real impact. Acknowledging the need for the Committee to engage with other parts of the treaty body system, she highlighted the forthcoming joint meeting with the Committee against Torture and invited the members to consider other areas in which its work on racism and racial discrimination might be relevant, such as the ongoing work on the Sustainable Development Goals and the development of global compacts on refugees and migration.

Adoption of the agenda (CERD/C/93/1)

12. *The agenda was adopted.*

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 10.40 a.m.