



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

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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
Ninety-second session

Summary record (partial)* of the 2517th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 24 April 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Crickley

Contents

Opening of the session

Opening statement by the Chief, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
Section, Human Rights Council and Treaty Mechanisms Division

Adoption of the agenda

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

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

Opening of the session

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

Opening statement by the Chief, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Section, Human Rights Council and Treaty Mechanisms Division

2. **Mr. Walker** (Secretariat) said that the current session of the Committee was taking place during a period of significant turmoil, with an unprecedented number of movements of migrants and refugees globally. Millions of refugees were forced by conflict, violence and persecution to flee their homes and take great risks in search of safety, only to be subjected to racist and derogatory hate speech and violence from the communities to which they turned. Even more egregiously, such violence was spurred by a number of politicians and leaders, who used their platforms to manipulate the fear of their constituents, creating division and arousing hostility towards minority groups, including migrants and refugees. The rights and dignity of all persons must be upheld, and leaders should work responsibly for respect and recognition of the human rights of all. The work of the United Nations treaty bodies and that of the Committee in particular played a pivotal role in that regard.

3. The Committee had been very active since the previous session: its Chair had moderated the general debate on racism at the March 2017 session of the Human Rights Council and had also been a keynote speaker at the commemorative plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 21 March 2017. Such occasions allowed the Committee to raise awareness of its work, including its concluding observations, decisions on communications and legal interpretations, and to connect with civil society and national human rights institutions.

4. On 19 September 2016, the General Assembly had adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which expressed the political will of world leaders to protect the rights of refugees and migrants, save lives and share responsibility for large movements of refugees and migrants all over the globe. Member States had committed to: launching negotiations leading to the adoption of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration at an intergovernmental conference to be held in 2018; developing guidelines on the treatment of migrants in vulnerable situations; and achieving a more equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world's refugees. In similar vein, on 26 August 2016, the Committee had issued a statement in connection with the United Nations Summit for Refugees and Migrants, appealing to member States and intergovernmental organizations to ensure that solutions aimed at addressing large movements of refugees and migrants were grounded in and guided by existing international human rights norms and standards, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

5. He drew attention to the fact that the Committee had begun using social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, to connect with stakeholders outside Geneva at its November 2016 informal meeting with non-governmental organizations. Such initiatives were welcome, as they ensured that the work of the Committee was shared with and influenced by a global audience, including young persons and civil society members. The webcasting of the Committee's meetings was also a significant step forward and had been used for awareness-raising and capacity-building at national level.

6. **The Chair** said that in the current global context, patronization, pity and prejudice appeared to be the order of the day, with an increased focus on security. Scaremongering with regard to minorities and migrants had become widespread, and the fears of the majority were often pitted against the rights of the minority.

7. **Mr. Calí Tzay** said that the large movements of migrants and refugees required significant attention, as they could give rise to many cases of racial discrimination. He welcomed the paperless initiative launched by the Secretary-General in an effort to save paper and prevent further ecocide, stressing that the Committee's efforts in that regard were but a drop in the ocean, but a necessary drop nonetheless.

8. **Mr. Kemal** inquired whether the Committee would have an opportunity to address its implementation of the paperless initiative during its discussion on working methods.

9. **Mr. Murillo Martínez** joined Mr. Cali Tzay in welcoming the paperless initiative and stressed the importance of protecting natural resources. He asked whether the Committee could strengthen its dialogue and collaboration with relevant non-government actors with a view to more effectively addressing the issues covered by the Convention.

10. **Mr. Amir** said that the Committee must bear in mind that Internet access was limited in certain regions of the world for technical and other reasons. It must therefore ensure that information regarding its work was accessible by other means.

11. **Mr. Lindgren Alves** requested paper copies of the statement made by the Chair at the recent session of the Human Rights Council and of the reports submitted by Armenia, Finland and the Republic of Moldova under article 9 (1) of the Convention.

12. **The Chair** said that the Committee would further discuss its implementation of the paperless initiative, as well as concerns about limited Internet access, at its next meeting and strive to implement the policy in a manner that met the needs of all Committee members. She welcomed efforts to enhance the Committee's dialogue and work with other actors.

Adoption of the agenda (CERD/C/92/1)

13. *The agenda was adopted.*

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 10.55 a.m.