



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 114th session

Summary record of the 3108th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 25 November 2024, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Balcerzak

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

Opening of the session

1. **The Chair** declared open the 114th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.
2. **Ms. Hamood** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)) said that the opening of the session coincided with the occasion of International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the launch of the annual UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign. The campaign called on duty bearers to take action around the priorities of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, promoting recommitment, accountability and resourcing. In that context, OHCHR would focus on the diverse forms of gender-based violence faced by women and girls in conflict settings, which could have a serious racial discrimination dimension.
3. In his address to the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had warned of intensifying and spreading conflicts, threats to international law and broad impunity. He had observed that a tide of hatred based on sex, race, religion, sexual orientation or other characteristics was fuelling discrimination, division and violence and threatening the promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and that it was precisely in the context of such crises that human rights offered effective solutions.
4. At the fifty-seventh session of the Human Rights Council, the High Commissioner had presented his fourth report on racial justice and equality for Africans and people of African descent ([A/HRC/57/67](#)). The report focused on key elements of intersectionality as an essential framework to combat systemic racism and confront legacies of enslavement and colonialism. Grounded in the obligations of States, notably under the Convention, and political commitments under the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the report drew on the concluding observations of the Committee and other treaty bodies, as well as data and lived experiences. It exposed the systemic racism and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by Africans and people of African descent in different regions; showed how groups and individuals experienced discrimination in different ways; and concluded with a recommendation that States should apply an intersectionality framework to address discrimination. The High Commissioner had also presented an oral update on racism in sport, pursuant to Council resolution 54/25 on a world of sports free from racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.
5. At the same session, the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent had presented a thematic report on fulfilling the economic, social and cultural rights of people of African descent in the age of digitalization, artificial intelligence and new and emerging technologies. The Permanent Forum on People of African Descent had reported on the outcomes of its third session, at which it had adopted recommendations to develop a comprehensive and coordinated agenda for global reparatory justice, global economic justice and sustainable development; to establish independent national, regional and local reparations committees and task forces to study and promote reparatory justice for people of African descent; to establish a global network for the study of Africans and people of African descent; and to protect and preserve African diasporic spiritual and traditional practices. The Forum had also called for a second international decade for people of African descent and for recognition of and redress for the injustices suffered by the people of Haiti.
6. The Council had considered the report of the Group of Independent Eminent Experts on the Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action on its ninth and tenth sessions ([A/HRC/57/72](#)), which covered themes such as the linkages between artificial intelligence and racism and anti-racism in education and public discourse. It had also considered the report of the International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement on the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Africans and people of African descent against excessive use of force and other human rights violations by law enforcement officers, which outlined the concrete steps needed to ensure access to justice, accountability and redress for such violations. In September 2024, representatives of the Committee and the Expert Mechanism

had held discussions on cooperation between the two entities, upcoming activities and priorities.

7. Also during its fifty-seventh session, the Council had adopted resolution 57/24 on education as a tool to prevent racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The resolution stressed the need for States parties to implement fully their obligations under the Convention, in particular those relating to the elimination of racial discrimination in the enjoyment of the right to education and training and the adoption of immediate and effective measures in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information.

8. At the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance had presented two reports: one on special measures ([A/79/316](#)) and one on combating the glorification of Nazism ([A/79/195](#)). In the first report, the Special Rapporteur noted the significant lack of understanding, awareness and adoption of special measures globally and reminded States that special measures were an integral component in addressing systemic racial inequalities. The Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples had presented a report on mobile Indigenous Peoples ([A/79/160](#)) that focused on the challenges they faced and the initiatives undertaken by States, Indigenous Peoples and other stakeholders to recognize and respect their rights. In August, the General Assembly had decided to proclaim 25 July as the International Day of Women and Girls of African Descent in order to commemorate the global struggle against enslavement and racism and highlight the contribution of women and girls of African descent to the development of societies.

9. The International Decade for People of African Descent was drawing to a close. The report of the Secretary-General on the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade ([A/79/290](#)) provided a final assessment of progress made since 2015. The report highlighted how the International Decade had helped to consolidate an international agenda for people of African descent, while emphasizing that much remained to be done to ensure that they could fully and effectively enjoy the benefits of sustainable development and all their human rights. On 8 November 2024, at a high-level meeting held in New York to mark the closure of the International Decade, the speakers had taken stock of progress and identified continuing and emerging challenges faced by people of African descent. Ms. McDougall had presented the Committee's assessment of States' efforts and remaining gaps in relation to legislative and institutional frameworks, the collection of reliable statistical data, participation, and the need for affirmative action and reparations. At the General Assembly, States were negotiating a resolution on a second international decade for people of African descent. The High Commissioner had called for an inclusive second international decade to sustain momentum and drive greater efforts and more decisive action to address both long-standing issues and contemporary challenges.

10. The Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action continued to make progress in developing the draft United Nations declaration on the promotion and full respect of the human rights of people of African descent. The Permanent Forum on People of African Descent was conducting regional consultations to inform the drafting process. The first consultation would be held in Barbados in December 2024.

11. OHCHR continued to hold consultations to inform its work to advance the agenda towards transformative change for racial justice and equality. Virtual and in-person consultations focusing on reparatory justice had been convened with persons of African descent from civil society, practitioners and other stakeholders from different regions.

12. The Office had also supported in-person and online meetings between the Committee and the other United Nations anti-racism mechanisms to facilitate deeper coordination and exchange of information. The anti-racism mechanisms had met with the President of the General Assembly and called on him to advocate for a second international decade for people of African descent, to organize discussions on the topic of reparations and to facilitate greater engagement of civil society in United Nations meetings.

13. The treaty body system continued to face significant challenges. In addition to chronic resource constraints, the United Nations liquidity crisis had hampered the planning and

implementation of the treaty bodies' work – a point that the Chairs had communicated forcefully during their meetings with Member States. OHCHR was doing its utmost to support the treaty bodies in fulfilling their mandates, including by highlighting the direct impact of resource limitations on human rights protection. Nevertheless, the difficult liquidity situation was likely to continue.

14. The treaty body strengthening process had reached a key moment with the recent adoption by the General Assembly of its biennial resolution on the human rights treaty body system. While the resolution did not explicitly endorse certain proposals of the Chairs, such as the eight-year predictable review cycle, it did contain a reference to a clear and regularized schedule for reporting and extensive language on videoconferencing. OHCHR would continue to engage with Chairs and experts, taking every opportunity to advance the work of strengthening the treaty body system.

15. **Ms. Shepherd** said that she was grateful to the representative of OHCHR for her comprehensive update. Given the concerns surrounding the liquidity crisis, she hoped that the Office would find strategies to maintain the strength of the treaty body system.

16. **Ms. McDougall** said that the Committee might discuss additional ways in which it could support the efforts of other anti-racism mechanisms and the Human Rights Council.

17. **Ms. Stavrinaki** said that the Committee often focused on intersectionality in its work. It was increasingly important to coordinate work on intersectionality with OHCHR and the other treaty bodies in order to develop a clearer approach, which could make a huge difference when addressing systemic discrimination.

18. **Mr. Amir** said that one significant recent development in the fight against racial discrimination had been the issuance by the International Criminal Court of warrants of arrest for Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu and Mr. Yoav Gallant in relation to crimes committed in the State of Palestine. He hoped that the Committee would join the Court in sending a clear message that no State was exempt from international law.

Adoption of the agenda (CERD/C/114/1)

19. *The agenda was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.