

**CONCEPT NOTE**

**WORKSHOP ON ENHANCING COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND REGIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

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| **OBJECTIVE** | To enhance cooperation between regional mechanisms and international human rights mechanisms with the aim of developing concrete proposals of cooperation between International and regional human rights mechanisms in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and in the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action. |
| **PARTICIPANTS** | Experts from United Nations human rights mechanisms including current and former members of human rights treaty bodies and, special procedure mandate holders, representatives of regional and sub-regional human rights mechanisms, national human rights institutions, civil society organisations and academia .Member states, and government representatives may also participate. |
| **VENUE** | Palais de Nations, Geneva |
| **DATE** | 21-22 October 2019 |

1. **BACKGROUND**

In recognition of the vital role played by regional and sub-regional human rights mechanisms, the Human Rights Council (HRC) since 2007 requested OHCHR to bring together International and regional human rights mechanisms to exchange views on good practices and lessons learned with a view to enhancing cooperation between them[[1]](#footnote-1).

Subsequent to these resolutions, the previous workshops discussed:

1. Good practices, added value and challenges for RHRMs (2008);
2. Strengthening cooperation between the UN and regional arrangements to overcome obstacles to human rights promotion and protection at the regional level (2010);
3. Strengthening cooperation on information sharing, joint activities and follow up to recommendations from United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms with special focus on prevention of torture, women’s rights and children’s rights (2012);
4. Strengthening cooperation on economic social and cultural rights (2014); and
5. Enhancing cooperation between United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms, human rights defenders and civil society organisations (2016).

In 2017, the HRC[[2]](#footnote-2) requested OHCHR to hold workshop in 2019 to take stock of developments since the workshop of 2016, including a thematic discussion on the role of regional arrangements in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and in the implementation and commitment in the Durban Declaration and Program of Action[[3]](#footnote-3).

Prior to this workshop, OHCHR, in cooperation with respective regional human rights mechanisms held regional consultations in Washington DC with the Inter American Commission on Human Rights and in Banjul with the African Commission on Human and People Rights. The regional consultations focused on concrete and practical experience of regional mechanisms and shared information on best practices, lessons learned and areas of cooperation between regional mechanisms and the United Nations human rights mechanisms in the areas if racism.

The Consultations also provided an opportunity to discuss specific thematic areas, related to racism and discrimination that were prevalent in the respective regions, and come up with recommendations for thematic areas to discuss in the current workshop on regional arrangements.

1. **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**
2. To take stock of developments since the workshop of 2016
3. To share experiences, good practice and challenges on the role of regional arrangements in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance
4. Review progress and assess implementation of international and regional human rights instruments and mechanisms ,related to racism including the ICERD and, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action ;
5. Exchange of good practices at the national level; and discuss solutions and remedies
6. Identify new emerging and prevalent forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in the region;
7. To identify ways of cooperation between regional, UN mechanisms, society and national institutions
8. **METHODOLOGY**
9. **Participants**

The Workshop will bring together participants, from regional and sub-regional human rights mechanisms, presentative from the United Nations human rights system, NHRIs, civil society and academia as well as government/parliament representatives.

1. **Format**

Panel discussions will be held for 2 days followed by interactive discussions. A moderator will facilitate the discussions and will be assisted by rapporteurs.

1. **Topics**

**Cooperation and Partnerships** are an integral component of the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action. (DDPA). Assigning the primary responsibility of combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to States, the DDPA also calls for the active involvement of international and non-governmental organizations, political parties, national human rights institutions, the youth the private sector, the media and civil society especially on implementing DDPA.

Strategies to achieve full and effective equality through international, regional, and national cooperation, and an effective international legal framework, and the participation of a wide variety of actors, are vital in the struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Each panel discussion will ensure cooperation of all stakeholders is incorporated in the discussion.

Panels:

1. **Taking stock of developments in cooperation between United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms since 2016.** Discussions could focus on the following issues: What progress has been made in implementing the recommendations of the 2016 workshop? What were the challenges and implementation gaps? What are the key lessons learnt? What joint activities/initiatives have RHRMs and the UN conducted recently?
2. I**nternational and regional legal framework and mechanism for protection against racism and discrimination and how RHRMs and UN mechanisms cooperate in** particular, to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Participants will elaborate on the normative framework on racism, both international and regional including mechanisms such as the universal periodic review system, treaty monitoring bodies and special procedures. Specific areas of focus could include RHRMs providing information to stakeholder reports, and cooperation between the OHCHR and RHRMs on member states implementation of relevant recommendations.
3. Another area of focus would be making a **critical link between the right to development, and** the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, and the DDPA and Racism. Regional mechanisms would reflect on enhancing cooperation with UN mechanisms, civil society and national institutions in this interlinked area, with a view to advancing inclusive, equitable and sustainable development for all people, without discrimination in any form.

1. **Groups in focus**

The DDPA adopts a victim-oriented approach to problems of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Specific recommendations are formulated to combat discrimination against Africans and persons of African descent, Asians and persons of Asian descent, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, minorities, the Roma and other marginalized groups.Institutional racism that is still entrenched in States’ institutions and bodies may be observed in domestic policing and the administration of justice including in criminal systems. Participants will share information on human rights violations faced by these group and exchange good practices on the existing legislation, public policies and programs adopted that can boost and improve the living conditions of these groups particularly regarding social, economic and cultural rights and on implementation of recommendations from international human rights system

1. **National Mechanisms-promotion, protection, monitoring**

The DDPA emphasizes the importance of preventive and concerted action, especially in the field of education and awareness raising, and calls for the strengthening of human rights education; comprehensive national action plans to eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. It calls for the reinforcement of national institutions and it formulates concrete recommendations in the areas of national legislation and the administration of justice.

The DDPA further outlines measures to address discrimination in the fields of employment, health, policing, and education. It calls on States to adopt policies and programmes to counter incitement to racial hatred .It calls for the collection of disaggregated data, as well as additional research, as the basis for targeted actions.

This panel will reflect on the effectiveness of national measures around the world to combat racism, and elaborate on good practice and challenges.

1. **Remedies**

The DDPA urges States to adopt measures of affirmative or positive action to create equal opportunities for victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in the political, economic, social and cultural decision-making spheres.

The DDPA urges governments to provide effective remedies, recourse, redress and compensatory measures to victims and to ensure that victims have access to legal assistance so they can pursue such measures. It also recommends the creation of competent national bodies to adequately investigate racism.

Participants will share their experiences, good practices and challenges on this area how cooperation can be enhanced between regional mechanisms.

1. **EXPECTED OUTCOME**

A report of recommendations to further cooperation between all human rights mechanisms, this will be presented to member states at the Human Rights Council 43rd Session in March 2020.

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1. See the following UN Resolution and Decisions; (A/HRC/RES/6/20 of 2007; A/HRC/RES/12/15 of 2009; A/HRC/RES/18/14 of 29 September 2011; A/HRC/RES/24/19 of 8 October 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. HRC/RES/34/17 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Resolutions, http://www.un.org/en/durbanreview2009/resolutions.shtml [↑](#footnote-ref-3)