**37th session of the Human Rights Council**

**Commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

**Debate on promoting tolerance, inclusion, unity and respect for diversity   
in the context of combating racial discrimination**

*Concept note (as of 16 March 2018)*

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| **Date**  **and venue:** | **Monday 19 March 2018, 9 - 11 a.m., Palais des Nations,** [**Room XX**](http://www.unog.ch/80256EE60057CB67/(httpRooms)/4C2700FCE9684AD780256EF9005A65FE?OpenDocument&unid=BAE3AF717207A5AF80256EF80049C552)**, Geneva**  *(will be broadcast live and archived on* [*http://webtv.un.org*](http://webtv.un.org)*)* | |
| **Objectives:** | The debate will aim at:   * Sharing good practices on measures undertaken by various stakeholders to promote tolerance, inclusion, unity and respect for diversity, including in the context of migration and the challenges posed by the rise of extremist political parties and movements; * Generating action-oriented recommendations. | |
| **Chair:** | **H.E. Mr. Vojislav Šuc,** President of the Human Rights Council | |
| **Opening**  **statement:** | **Mr. Adam Abdelmoula**, Director of the Human Rights Council and Treaty Mechanisms Division, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights | |
| **Panellists:** | * **Mr. Sello Hatang**, Chief Executive, Nelson Mandela Foundation * **H.E. Mr. Foo Kok Jwee**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Singapore to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva * **Ms. Fatou Diome**, writer * **Mr. Nicolás Marugán**, Member of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination | |
| **Outcome:** | An informal summary of the discussion will be prepared. | |
| **Mandate:** | In its resolution 72/157, the General Assembly requested the President of the Human Rights Council to continue to convene annual commemorative meetings of the Council during the commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Assembly further decided that the theme of this year’s debate would be on promoting tolerance, inclusion, unity and respect for diversity in the context of combating racial discrimination. | |
| **Format:** | The duration of the debate will be strictly limited to two hours. A maximum of one hour will be set aside for the podium, including opening statements, moderator comments, if any, panellist presentations, and their responses to questions and concluding remarks. Speaking time limits for the panellists and guests, if any, will be calculated based on the maximum one hour limit for the podium.  States and observers, including national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), intervening from the floor will also have a maximum of one hour. Each speaker will have two minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions. The list of speakers for the discussion will be established at the beginning of the panel and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups will be moved to the beginning of the list.  The practice of having two slots for Member and observer States (2x12), NHRIs (2x1) and NGOs (2x2) will be maintained but the possibility for panellists to intervene in-between will depend entirely on the time used at the start of the panel.  Interpretation will be provided in the six United Nations official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish). | |
| **Background:** | As underlined in Human Rights Council resolution 36/24 “From rhetoric to reality: a global call for concrete action against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance”, many years have passed since the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, and its objectives still remain to be fulfilled. The Council noted in this regard the increasing incidents of racially motivated hatred in all its forms and manifestations, some of which taking violent forms with concomitant racial profiling. The Council further warned about the resurgent violent manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.  This year’s theme, “promoting tolerance, inclusion, unity, and respect for diversity in the context of combating racial discrimination”, focuses on concepts that speak to the notion of empowerment and refer to the need to effectively involve all women and men, girls and boys in all spheres of life. These concepts convey the idea that people should be enabled to construct informed opinions, have a voice, and be given effective opportunities to shape the course of their lives. That is why in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action all actors are urged to build an international order based on inclusion, justice, equality and equity, human dignity, mutual understanding and promotion of and respect for cultural diversity and universal human rights, and to reject all doctrines of exclusion based on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.  The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) constitute in this regard a solid basis for all societies to foster inclusion and equality and guarantee the respect for human rights for all, with a view to “leaving no one behind”, in particular by envisaging “a world of universal respect for equality and non-discrimination” between and within countries, including gender equality, by reaffirming the responsibilities of all States to “respect, protect and promote human rights, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national and social origin, property, birth, disability or other status.”  Combating marginalization passes imperatively through empowering all human beings to claim and exercise their rights, and through acceptance of diversity as an asset and rejection of discrimination in all its forms.  One commitment of the 2030 Agenda relates to the role of local authorities in fostering inclusive development and promoting diversity in its different forms and manifestations. Forging cities that are more multi-ethnic, multicultural, and respectful of diversity of identities is a pre-requisite to combating stereotypes, discrimination, tensions, and mistreatment, in particular against migrants and refugees. That is why cities and their authorities are well placed to develop and implement effective responses, and to complement the actions and decisions of the central government and other relevant stakeholders, in particular in areas such as gender equality, access to decent jobs, full participation in cultural, civic, and political life and equitable provision of quality public services. The New Urban Agenda adopted by the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) (Quito, 17-20 October 2016) reinforces the role of the local level in promoting social inclusion. | |
| **Background**  **documents:** | * [General Assembly resolution 72/157](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/72/157) of 19 December 2017 entitled “A global call for concrete action for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action”; * [General Assembly resolution 70/1](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1) of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”; * [Human Rights Council resolution 36/24](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/36/24) of 29 September 2017 entitled “From rhetoric to reality: a global call for concrete action against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related Intolerance”; * [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1) (General Assembly resolution 71/1 of 19 September 2016); * Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the promotion and protection of the human rights of migrants in the context of large movements [(A/HRC/33/67) and OHCHR web page with inputs thereto](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Migration/Pages/LargeMovements.aspx)); * [OHCHR Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders (2014)](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Migration/OHCHR_Recommended_Principles_Guidelines.pdf); * [Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, General Recommendation No. 35 on combating racist hate speech (2013);](http://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2fPPRiCAqhKb7yhssyNNtgI51ma08CMa6o7Bglz8iG4SuOjovEP%2bcqr8joDoVEbW%2bQ1MoWdOTNEV99v6FZp9aSSA1nZya6gtpTo2JUBMI0%2boOmjAwk%2b2xJW%2bC8e) * [Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 34 on Article 19: Freedoms of opinion and expression](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/GC34.pdf) * [Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (2001)](https://www.un.org/WCAR/durban.pdf); * Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the expert workshops on the prohibition of incitement to national, racial or religious hatred [(A/HRC/22/17/Add.4)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/HRC/22/17/Add.4); * Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Mutuma Ruteere ([A/HRC/29/46](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/29/46)); * Report of the Special Rapporteur on the [promotion](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/71/384) and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while [countering](http://www.undocs.org/A/HRC/4/26) terrorism, Ben Emmerson ([A/71/384](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/71/384)); * New Urban Agenda, outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) (Quito, 17-20 October 2016), [General Assembly resolution 71/256, annex](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/256). |