

**Conference room paper of the GA side event on
Anti-Racism and Protection of Minorities in UN Programming
21 September 2023**

Lead: UNDP (Senior Advisor on Anti-Racism)

Co-organizers: UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, OHCHR, Minority Rights Group International, Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent, under the umbrella of the UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities

Date and venue: 21 September 2023, UN Women NY (approx. 40 attendees) + Zoom (115 participants)

Objective of side event: To share current efforts, good and promising practices, and innovative examples of programming which contribute to addressing racism and racial discrimination and to the protection of minorities at the country level, and to inspire further action in this regard. To examine what has worked and what more should be done to ensure the inclusion of groups affected by racial discrimination so that solutions are grounded in their lived experiences.

Methodology of this paper: This document is a record of all the statements, questions from the floor and responses that have been shared during the side event, with slight adaptation of spoken words to a written text style. A number of chat contributions are also reflected at the end.

WELCOME MESSAGE BY CATARINA CARVALHO, Chief, Intergovernmental Support Section, UN Women

Welcome everyone on behalf of UN Women! We are very pleased to host this timely meeting under the chapeau of the UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. There are more than 20 United Nations entities which belong to this Network, and we have our co-host speakers here today from UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP, and OHCHR, joined by our civil society collaborators, Minority Rights Group International and the Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent. I am personally encouraged by the renewed prioritization of racial justice at the UN System which I believe is more than timely. I have been around for quite some time, and I finally see a lot of work in this area, especially since 2020 with the anti-racism movement being reunited. Unfortunately, not for the good reasons but I am happy that we are focusing and working on this.

We have very important and critical anti-racism programmatic work ahead because, as we all know, the 2030 agenda is failing in many ways from race to gender, so this is an important moment of stock taking. It is an important mid-point time for us to assess where we are, to consider when gender is an issue and race is another one, and the two are interrelated.

We are very pleased at UN Women that we now invest into this work. We have dedicated colleagues, for example Muthoni Muriu who is our Senior Advisor for Diversity, Inclusion, and Shared Leadership, and Marie-Elena John, our Senior Racial Justice Lead. It is an important step for UN Women to push this agenda.

We all know that it is a long way to go, we see and know the numbers. But we are very encouraged that we know what is needed and how we gonna get there. We feel energized. I hope that this morning's conversations will be about some promising practices. I invite your active participation here and online

and I look forward to the rich presentations and your participation today. Thank you, and once again welcome to UN Women!

MODERATOR: PATRICIA DA SILVA, Programme Adviser, Initiative for People of African Descent, UNFPA

Thank you, Catarina, for that warm welcome! Good morning, good afternoon, good evening wherever you are in the world, and again welcome for those joining us both virtually and here present physically!

My name is Patricia da Silva, I am a Program Adviser and the Global Lead for the United Nations Population Fund's Initiative on People of African Descent. I would like to start by telling you that this event was meant to be moderated by our UNDP colleague and a former UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, who unfortunately, for reasons beyond her control, was not able to make it here to New York this week, so clearly, I have impossible shoes to fill. But fortunately we will have the opportunity to hear Rita at the end of our event. So again, I join Catarina in thanking Rita for all her efforts to put together this really important event which is organized under the chapeau of the United Nations Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. The Network unites over 20 UN Departments, Agencies, Programs and Funds to raise awareness, advocate for change, build capacity and tackle racial discrimination, including issues of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. We will hear more about the work of the Network from our speakers here.

As Catarina just alluded to it, since 2020, the UN efforts on anti-racism work has come under scrutiny. This has led to some introspection about our capacity and our commitment to protect people who face racism and racial discrimination both within our organization and in our programs. The UN General Secretary-General launched a campaign of dialogues and action against racism which ended with the establishment of the Task Force on Addressing Racism and Promoting Dignity for All in the United Nations. While the United Nations system strives to improve our respective organization's internal framework on diversity, equity, and inclusion, it is evident to all of us that work here that socioeconomic disparities compounded by systemic racism and discrimination widen the gap in accomplishing our vision on leaving no one behind and securing the sustainable Development Goals for all without discrimination. Indeed, a 2022 report from the Joint Inspection Unit underscores the urgent need to assess the systemic and structural dimensions of racism and racial discrimination that are embedded in programmatic and operational activities. We are here today with a sense of urgency. And we are also acutely aware that while some progress has been made, we still have a long way to go. And we have a huge task ahead of us. But we are also extremely determined. As Catarina just said, we are very determined and unwavering in our commitment to fight racism and promote the protection of minorities. So in this context, we appreciate that the political declaration - which was just adopted at the High Level Political Forum - commits to stepping up efforts to fight racism and all forms of of discrimination. This is a very important step in our collective efforts to protect and fulfill human rights and support sustainable development for all.

Today we will continue in our reflection of our work in fighting racism and discrimination. It is an opportunity to share current efforts, good and promising practices and innovative examples of programming which contribute to addressing racism and racial discrimination and to the protection of minorities. So we hope that this will inspire further action and contribute to accelerating our efforts in

this regard. We will examine what has worked and what more must be done to ensure that inclusion of groups affected by racial discrimination, so that solutions are grounded in their lived experiences.

Finally, some house rules: I will request our esteemed panelists to make their presentations in under six minutes. At the end of the presentation, the panelists will open the discussions for questions and answers both from people here in the room and from our friends and guests that have joined us virtually. For our virtual attendance, we encourage you to use the Zoom chat function to submit your questions and comments, and those questions will be passed to me, and I will ask our panelists to respond. For those who are here, just raise your hand and we will identify you, so the panelists can answer your questions.

Now to kick off, we will hear from our colleague from the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Hernan Vales, who leads the Indigenous Peoples and Minority Section at OHCHR which works on the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities, focusing on the implementation of their rights through support, research, and interagency cooperation. Hernan was unable to join us in person, so we will hear his pre-recorded remarks.

SPEAKER 1: HERNAN VALES, Chief of the Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Section, OHCHR (pre-recorded video message)

Good morning colleagues! I am very pleased to be able to address today's side event on behalf of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Network provides an inter-agency platform to address racial discrimination and the protection of minorities – as well as multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination - through awareness raising, through advocacy and through capacity building. The Network brings together more than 20 UN Departments, Agencies, Programmes and Funds. OHCHR acts as permanent co-Chair of the Network. During 2023, we are proud to join with the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide.

Today's event is timely and important: a core overall aim of the Network is above all to move and mobilize UN action on the ground to address racial discrimination and strengthen protection of minorities in programming and in practice. This aim faces entrenched challenges due to the fact that in many places addressing these fundamental human rights is hindered by political sensitivities. The extent of this problem is set in a 2021 research by the Network, which identified systemic under-attention to racial discrimination and protection of minorities in the UN's efforts at country level in a number of countries and regions.

As a result of action by the Network, I am happy to report that things are beginning to change. During 2021 and 2022, OHCHR supported financially UN country teams (UNCTs) to address racial discrimination and protection of minorities in Brazil, Cameroon, Dominican Republic, Kyrgyzstan, Lao, Madagascar, Nepal, Panama, Sri Lanka and Venezuela. In addition, we have provided extensive guidance to UNCTs on advancing work in these areas, including: a Checklist to Strengthen UN Work at Country Level to Combat Racial Discrimination and Advance Minority Rights, available in a number of languages; an online training package on Addressing Racial Discrimination and Strengthening Protection of Minorities, Indigenous Peoples and Other Population Groups in UN Programming Processes; a Guidance Note on Intersectionality, Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities; together with regular community-of-practice meetings

on particular aspects of anti-racism and minority inclusion, led by expert UN colleagues from relevant agencies. We invite you to see the UN Network website for these resources.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is at the forefront of efforts to address the twin scourges of racial discrimination and the exclusion of minorities. In addition to our support for mainstreaming anti-racism and minority protection work across the UN, done via the Network, several flagship efforts in this regard merit comment.

In December of last year, for example, OHCHR and the NGO Equal Rights Trust published “Protecting Minority Rights: A Practical Guide to Developing Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation”. The Guide aims to support anyone working to answer the call of the Secretary-General to strengthen anti-discrimination law at country level. During 2023 and 2024, we will work with UN country teams worldwide to advance the development, adoption and implementation of comprehensive anti-discrimination laws. This year, OHCHR has deployed regional advisers on combating racial discrimination and the protection of minorities, including people of African descent, in Bangkok, Beirut, Brussels and Santiago. We also support minority, indigenous and people of African descent human rights defenders as fellows and senior fellows, both at the UN headquarters and in UN field offices worldwide. This work aims to give minority human rights defenders the skills to use the UN human rights system effectively to advance inclusion agendas and to challenge human rights abuse. Also, since 2019, we have dedicated increasing focus on minority artists as human rights defenders, profiling the work of minority artists since last year. This list could go on.

United Nations efforts to end racial discrimination and to secure genuine minority inclusion are far from completed, however. Political, capacity, practical and resource challenges are daunting. Nevertheless, we are confident that working together, we can bring about real, durable positive change for peace, prosperity and inclusion, including for those most at risk of being left behind. Today’s event, which examines UN programming efforts in these areas, is an important step on that road. We very much look forward to the conclusions of today’s deliberations. Thank you!

MODERATOR: PATRICIA DA SILVA

Thank you, Hernan! Yes, our work is far from completed but it is heartwarming to hear that things are beginning to change. We thank OHCHR for their efforts and their important work of protecting human rights for minorities around the world. This is a perfect segway because I am now going to introduce my colleague, Emilie, an esteemed human rights advisor. Emilie Filmer-Wilson does a really great job providing leadership at UNFPA in capacity building and advisory support to UNFPA’s human rights efforts including to Leave No One Behind, and advances research on the nexus between women’s rights and sexual and reproductive health. Emilie will present some of UNFPA’s efforts in target programming, like our work on people of African descent for example, but also our efforts to create tools to mainstream the Leave No One Behind framework, including fighting racism and discrimination across UNFPA programming. Emilie, take it away.

SPEAKER 2: EMILIE FIRMER-WILSON, Human rights adviser and LNOB Lead, UNFPA

Thank you, Patricia! Thank you, colleagues! Firstly, let me start by thanking the Network for making this event possible and for inviting UNFPA, the UN Population Fund, to be here to share our work and our programming in this area. At UNFPA, we have an ambitious vision for leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind. Our work on anti-racism and on protection of minorities is integral to this work and to our ambitious vision.

Before I go into more specific details about our programming on anti-racism and protection minorities, I think it is important to give the broader context for our work on leaving no one behind and talk about the real challenges that we face as a UN entity in taking this work forward in a more transformative, meaningful way. Leaving no one behind has been at the forefront of our work at UNFPA for many years. Our previous and current strategic plans anchor leaving no one behind in a much more explicit way, which made it more an explicit priority for our work. But then, when we were reviewing our previous strategic plan and evaluating its results, we found that almost all our indicators related to leaving no one behind were off target and that we were not meeting that ambition. And there were some real challenges in the organization for working intentionally in this area. We wanted to better understand what those challenges were, so we did an internal assessment, and then worked to better strengthen our organizational response to leaving no one behind. We actually worked with Minority Rights Group together. We realized that we needed to make three fundamental shifts both in our understanding and in our approach.

The first shift is getting a clarity on what we mean by leaving no one behind. Because when we are asking what that means, a lot of people have very vague understandings. In our country offices, some of them may say, we are working on leaving no one behind, because we are working with women and girls. Our shift is saying: okay, women and girls are an important priority for us, but we need to look at the intersection of gender and other exclusionary factors, such as race or ethnicity, and how those intersect and create disadvantage. So the first shift is understanding leaving no one behind by looking at those intersections of gender and other factors.

Secondly, recognizing the power of exclusion: are these populations left behind or are they pushed behind? And understanding that often the case is that they are being pushed behind, changes the approach that you take, because it is not the case that they have just been forgotten or they were not able to make it to this meeting. But that there are actually powerful forces pushing and excluding these populations - and if we understand the power of exclusion, our interventions have to be more targeted and address those underlying structural issues. So shifting the understanding from “left behind” to “being pushed behind” needed a vision for UNFPA. Our vision is that those furthest behind enjoy sexual and reproductive health rights as UNFPA explicitly prioritizes addressing intersectional, persistent and extreme disadvantages, discrimination, and disempowerment.

How do we translate that ambitious vision into practice? At UNFPA, we have a key role in making the invisible visible. We know that a lot of the challenges in addressing discrimination and racism is that those populations are often invisible because the data is not counting them. We just organized an event on Sunday on leaving no one behind data and advocating that data should be disaggregated by race, by ethnicity, by religious minorities, so that we can better understand and target those populations that are furthest behind.

So this is advocacy work that we do at the global level. At the country level, we have a key role in working on national population data systems. In Kenya, for example, we were working with the National Statistics Office in the national census, advocating for more disaggregation, which led that the first time census

was disaggregated by more than one indigenous populations. In Brazil, we supported the national census, to better cover the Quilombo people in the national census. And it was not just covering the Quilombo populations but using a methodology that was culturally acceptable and respectable of the Quilombo people. In Brazil, we also assisted in developing a distinct census for indigenous populations, and it was really interesting to see the difference between last time in 2010 and now in 2023, as there was an increase of 80% in indigenous populations. It was not because those populations have grown hugely. It is just that they were better counted. So being able to count and make those populations visible is critical which we then use for our advocacy.

I am proud to share an assessment that we just released at the beginning of the summer on maternal health of women and girls of African descent in the Americas. Using the data we had, we found that there was systematic racism and sexism that led to women of African descent having systematically poorer maternal health outcomes. We looked at what those structural causes are, including lack of data, because we were only able to use data from 9 countries, that was all that was available for us to analyze. We did something similar with UN Women and UNICEF on indigenous women and maternal health. And there we were really shocked by the lack of data, only 8 countries of the total examined 90 had disaggregated data that we could use. From 90 countries, only half of them had disaggregated data by ethnicity and only 8 by indigeneity. So there is a huge gap in data, and this is a priority for us, to make the invisible visible. We also have to address then the systematic structural issues that lead to that exclusion.

We are taking more targeted programming and we work on recognizing the disproportionate burden on Africans and African-Descent Women and Girls. In support of the implementation of the program of activities of the International Decade of People of African Descent, we rolled out in 2019 a dedicated program aimed at advancing rights and justice of people of African descent, which Patricia very ably leads within the organization. One of the aims is to work on advocacy, programming, and different communication initiatives within the organization and outside, and partnership with different organizations representing persons of African descent is critical to advancing that work. We found that in our country offices, we were not systematically identifying who was furthest behind in the context of our three transformative results, which are maternal health, family planning, and gender-based violence so we have introduced a tool for all of our countries. We came up with eight core factors that are critical in putting persons and groups at risk being left behind, and we ask our country offices to systematically analyze how those factors are impacting our three transformative results. One of the biggest challenges remaining is how to prioritize when working with limited resources and this tool helps in asking key questions in order to prioritize. What is the political environment? What are other organizations doing in this area? Do we have the partnerships with civil society organizations that can help us reach those groups? It has been important for us to do this work more intentionally, systematically and based on clear priorities within the organization. We have just started, and we look forward to becoming more experienced and rolling out further.

All of this work has an important human rights dimension, and engagement with international human rights mechanisms is key. Our family planning colleagues have developed country profiles on countries related to uptake of family planning and we realized that one of the the big challenges is the qualitative information to help identify inequalities. This is where we introduce the recommendations of human rights mechanisms that often identify groups that are furthest behind, for example in the context of child marriage in Roma populations in Eastern Europe. Those recommendations provide a really helpful advocacy tool for us to negotiate a space with our national partners. This is not always easy to do, but with the authority of human rights norms we can do so with more confidence and in a more strategic way.

Lastly, let me end by saying that even though in this meeting we focus on external programming, what happens internally is also extremely important, and we cannot separate the two. At UNFPA, we have a new People Strategy which brings in inclusion and diversity as an essential part to it. We also have introduced the first young professional program for young professionals of African descent to be in our organization. And that is really important for messaging and for our own expertise to have more people with lived experiences of exclusion, who can represent these issues in a more powerful way. Leadership is also key and the fact that our Executive Director is a woman of colour brings an extremely powerful message for us and for young people who want to work with UNFPA and shows how seriously we work both internally and externally on racism and protection of minorities.

MODERATOR: PATRICIA DA SILVA

Thank you, Emilie! I would like to amplify a couple of points. On the idea of intentionality, things do not happen if we do not put our clear intention into making meaningful and transformative change. As Emilie mentioned, we had an event on data on Sunday, highlighting the lack of data disaggregated, including based on gender, race and ethnicity. We continue to advocate for the disaggregation of data.

I would like to pass the floor to our colleague from the United Nations Development Programme. Ms. Revai Makanje Aalbaek serves as the Senior Advisor for Justice and Security at UNDP. She brings over 20 years of expertise in human rights and the protection of vulnerable groups. Great to have you!

SPEAKER 3: REVAI MAKANJE AALBAEK, Senior Advisor on Justice and Security, UNDP

Thank you so much for having us, and I am truly delighted on behalf of UNDP to be part of this event! I would like to take this opportunity to share some of the institutional shifts that we are making in UNDP as part of our renewed efforts and energy to reinvigorate our investments on anti-racism, protection of minorities, and anti-discrimination.

First of all, I would like to start by acknowledging that we are at a critical juncture. Right now, when we look at the SDG report released in July, I think evidence is clear that we are backtracking on a number of indicators under the SDGs and some of the progress has stalled significantly. And while we are at this particular point of acknowledging the challenges we are facing, it is also an opportune time for us to consider how to best galvanize global, national, and local energy to turn the tide on the negative trends that we are seeing at the current moment.

We also need to acknowledge in many ways the multiple and intersecting crises that drive some of the challenges that we are facing, such as climate change, climate emergency, the social, economic, and political impact of COVID-19, or the economic crisis that we are facing globally. When you think about all of these factors, think also about how much all of this has affected everybody globally, especially racialized minorities, and those whom we pledged in 2015 not to leave behind. Thinking about the bleak picture and how it can be turned around, I am pleased to share with you some of the innovative and strategic changes that UNDP has been leading globally in terms of galvanizing this important work.

First of all, there are two directions of change that we are working with. The first one has been internally, and here I want to acknowledge the point that Emilie raised, because indeed, how we organize ourselves

internally as institutions is also part of driving the change externally. Under the leadership of our Administrator, the head of UNDP, in 2020 we reinvigorated the conversation around racism within UNDP with the aim of creating a more diverse and more inclusive workforce. It was the beginning of showing the importance of the political commitment to make this work much more important and much more meaningful, and also visible within the work of UNDP. Additionally, there was also the establishment of an Advisory Group on Anti-racism and Anti-Discrimination, which was again an additional layer of emphasizing the importance of making these changes.

The second direction of change for us, which we find much more critical and important, focuses on the actual programming and policy work of UNDP. UNDP operates in 170 countries in various contexts, in development, crisis and fragility contexts, where there are ongoing conflicts. UNDP's annual programme investment is close to 5 billion dollars annually. Within this context, let's think about the opportunities that exist when it comes to creating the potential investments around anti-racism and anti-discrimination. Under the leadership of Rita, our Senior Advisor on Anti-Racism and anti-discrimination who is unfortunately not with us physically in the room today, but is present online, a comprehensive assessment exercise was done on UNDP's entire programming. She examined where are the investments on anti-racism, protection of minorities, and where are the gaps, and what are some of the opportunities that exist for us to be able to push forward this work in a much more strategic, intentional manner. The word intentional has a critical and important meaning for UNDP and also of a great importance is accountability. It is not just about putting words in a document but ensuring that there are accountability mechanisms to ensure that implementation happens.

With that said, not everything came out with a bleak picture, but we were able to highlight quite a number of interesting nuggets of work that are being done. I am going to highlight some of these few transformative shifts that have been happening for us. The first one is the Strategic Plan 2022-2025, where UNDP's political, programmatic and policy commitment in the context of anti-racism, the protection of human rights and anti-discrimination is clear with specific indicators. It measures the efforts of the whole institution, to be held accountable not only by the populations in the 170 countries we serve, but also by the Executive Board regarding the utilization of the resources that we receive and invest in the different countries.

At the programmatic level, interesting examples came through. For example, in Bangladesh, our human rights programming is dedicated to strengthening national partners to better protect the rights of ethnic minorities with a specific focus on reducing some of the structural inequalities and challenges. Our work in Iraq is highly complex - I think the rest of the other UN agencies operating in this space can testify to that - but we have worked much more intentionally to invest in supporting minority communities around security sector and justice reforms to ensure that those who are left behind are integrated in the work that is being done on access to justice and community security. A justice and legal information project was implemented in Vietnam ensuring that legal information materials are translated into ethnic minority languages. In order to promote access to information and to ensure legal awareness, up to 90% of ethnic minority participation was secured in some projects. There are many other examples that I could cite which highlighted impactful opportunities and ways of engaging. An important initiative at UNDP is the Small Grants Project with an objective to invest at the community level which is one of the key instruments at UNDP has to reach minority communities.

Regarding leaving no one behind, UNDP was recently evaluated on its performance, and we managed to get insightful evidence on what we are doing right, and what we need to improve. We acknowledge that we are at a point of reflection and look into areas where we need improvement.

Another issue of importance is with regards knowledge, evidence, and data. UNDP worked with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, published a global multi-dimensional index report called “Unmasking disparities by ethnicity, caste and gender” in 2021 which was instrumental in showing some of the key disparities while at the same time emphasizing on the key points of what needs to be done. The Human Development Report UNDP produced in 2022 highlighted some of the paradox of how in this 21st century much has changed in the positive, but a lot has not happened regarding the issue of security and protection of the rights of racialized minorities, and spotlighted some of the key challenges on how much we need to improve our efforts to do better. We have the instruments to enable us to be much more intentional, to be held accountable, and I think it is critical that we are able to do this.

I will conclude by citing the words of our UNDP Administrator, Achim Steiner: “To eradicate poverty, we must eradicate racial injustice and inequality. To this end, anti-racism efforts are central to UNDP’s support across the globe.” Thank you!

MODERATOR: PATRICIA DA SILVA

Thank you for sharing your experiences! Indeed, I think it is important for us to remember the compounded impact of the megatrends, including climate and other conflicts that you mentioned on those that are already left behind and marginalized. That is a very important point.

So now joining us virtually is Anastasia Divinskaya. Anastasia has been UN Women's Country Representative in Brazil since 2019, and previously served as country representative in Ukraine and Timor Leste, with a career spanning over 20 years. She is an expert in human rights, gender equality and financing for gender equality, having also served in UN Women and UNDP in Kyrgyzstan. Anastasia, it is great to have you.

SPEAKER 4: ANASTASIA DIVINSKAYA, Country Representative, Brazil, UN Women

Good morning, everyone! It is a pleasure to join you for this very important side event, and to share the experience of UN Women in applying the intersectional approach to our country programming with practical examples on how we operationalize this commitment at the country office. I prepared a brief presentation which I am sharing now.

Intersectional framework for programme action

Axes of inequality & discrimination	Manifested in:	Affected groups
RACE GENDER ETHNICITY SOGI RELIGIOUS IDENTITY REGIONAL (Northeast) SOCIAL & ECONOMIC Status DISABILITY HIV STATUS NATIONALITY URBAN/RURAL ROLE AS (W)HRD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social exclusion and marginalization ▪ Extreme economic inequality ▪ Gender-based violence ▪ Killings, rapes due to illegal invasions in indigenous lands ▪ Religious racism and extreme violence ▪ Police violence (black youth) ▪ Limited/no access to health care, housing, schooling ▪ Education gaps ▪ Exclusion from decision making bodies and processes ▪ Environmental degradation/deforestation impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Black women, quilombolas ▪ Indigenous women and girls ▪ Indigenous in reclaimed and "protected" territories ▪ Women spiritual leaders in indigenous traditional religions ▪ Women in communities of African-based religions ▪ Human rights defenders (women, environment defenders) ▪ LGBTQIA+ ▪ Women and girls with disabilities ▪ People living with HIV ▪ Migrants and refugees ▪ People living in Northeast ▪ Black youth (urban, favelas)

Racism, religious extremism and gender-based violence against Guarani and Kaiowá indigenous women and girls:
strategies, policy response and ongoing project



Connecting women, defending rights project

Axes of inequality & discrimination	Manifested in:	Affected groups
RACE GENDER ETHNICITY SOGI RELIGIOUS IDENTITY REGIONAL (Northeast) SOCIAL & ECONOMIC Status DISABILITY HIV STATUS NATIONALITY URBAN/RURAL ROLE AS (W)HRD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social exclusion and marginalization ▪ Extreme economic inequality ▪ Gender-based violence ▪ Killings, rapes due to illegal invasions in indigenous lands ▪ Religious racism and extreme violence ▪ Police violence (black youth) ▪ Limited/no access to health care, housing, schooling ▪ Education gaps ▪ Exclusion from decision making bodies and processes ▪ Differentiated impact of COVID ▪ Environmental degradation/deforestation impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Black women, quilombolas ▪ Indigenous women and girls ▪ Indigenous in reclaimed and "protected" territories ▪ Women spiritual leaders in indigenous traditional religions ▪ Women in communities of African-based religions ▪ Human rights defenders (women, environment defenders etc) ▪ LGBTQIA+ ▪ Women and girls with disabilities ▪ People living with HIV ▪ Venezuelan and other migrants and refugees ▪ People living in Northeast ▪ Black youth (urban, favelas)

Strategies:

1. Social mobilization, awareness raising and advocacy
2. Data generation: community mapping of violence; testimonies; human rights monitoring documentation
3. Submissions to HR Special Procedures (SRs, CERD, UPR)
4. Evidence-based advocacy by Guarani and Kaiowá women
5. Political mobilization and integration of violence against indigenous women in mainstream indigenous rights movement
6. Advocacy with the executive and legislative branches
7. Policy advice to the government and Congress

Key results:

1. Strong community support to the causes of intersectional discrimination and violence against women and girls
2. Guarani and Kaiowá women – the 1st to raise and include intersectional discrimination and violence in mainstream indigenous movement
3. Guarani and Kaiowá data and evidence – a reference for specialized policy making on prevention and response to violence against indigenous women and girls
4. **2023:** Policy and institutional shifts: shelters for indigenous women in all 6 biomes of Brazil; travelling ombudsman; national consultations for public policies

In Brazil, we proudly claim that our country program is not only human rights-based, which is a standard programmatic tool, but we also systematically apply the intersectional analysis for strategic program, project planning, integrated policy and normative advice, capacity development, social mobilization and advocacy. Today, I would like to share with you the methodology, the strategies, and the tools we apply and some snapshot of the results.

What you see at the screen is our simple intersectionality framework, which we use to guide our day-to-day program planning. It is very simplistic as you can see but what is important is that it is a live document which is constantly updated based on the new data which we have. Such data is produced by human rights mechanisms, through concluding observations, recommendations, special procedures, as well as based on our own studies and those by civil society and academia. We apply this systematically and coherently across the entire country program planning and across the newly developed projects and programs which we implement. What does it do for us and for our practical implementation of the program?

First of all, it guides us in our analysis. It helps to understand how this intersecting discrimination hinders development and the realization of human rights of the specific groups in the areas of our work at the country office level and it also informs our decisions about the choices we make about the programmatic focus, about the cooperation with various duty bearers in all three branches of power, as well as the choice in our partnerships with rights holders and civil society.

I will explain to you how we apply this instrument through one of our projects, which is called Connecting Women Defending Rights. This project was launched to protect the rights of women human rights defenders, during the very gloomy period of political marginalization of gender equality and human rights during the previous administration. It is our flagship program that we are very proud of. We started the implementation of this project applying the same intersectionality framework to identify the main grounds of discrimination faced by our primary beneficiaries and partners. And the intersection of race, gender, ethnicity, religious identity, and their role as women human rights defenders brought us to the conclusion about through analysis of how this intersecting discrimination manifest itself? Who would be our primary stakeholders and beneficiaries?

So those in our programming are the indigenous women from the Guarani and Kaiowá communities who live in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul which borders with Paraguay. This is the State with the second largest indigenous population in entire Brazil and with the highest numbers of killings and murders of indigenous peoples, highest suicide rates, as well as the highest rates of incarceration of, indigenous population and of indigenous peoples being deprived of their freedom in the entire country. Historically the Guarani and Kaiowá have been victims of the State sponsored, so-called expansion to the West, having been deprived of their traditional lands for the benefit of the soy, orange and cattle breeding agriculture. At the moment, the Guarani and Kaiowá people live in the so-called retaken territories and struggle with traditional agriculture, because due to decades of exploitation of their traditional lands of soy and other types of agriculture, the soil is depleted. Moreover, these settlements are subject to frequent attacks, shooting, and arsenals, allegedly committed by the nearby farmers and criminal gangs. This is the overall perspective and the context in which we implement the projects. And again, this background of the general violation of human rights of Guarani and Kaiowá people. Women and girls experience widespread intersectional discrimination and various forms of violence based on their ethnicity, gender, race, and religious identity. Guarani and Kaiowá people are highly spiritual people with most communities having their prayer houses and religious leaders. Their female religious leaders have been the targets of attacks and have been experiencing the tremendous increase in violence and murders. Predominantly those are caused by the advance of the Evangelical Church and the new Pentecostal religions that frequently poses forms of threat, hate speech, act of public humiliation, physical violence, stigmatization of their traditional women's religious role in the community. Preaches in those churches is intolerant towards indigenous spirituality and demonize and discredit Guarani and Kaiowá traditional spirituality.

So that is the general context and the entry point based on the intersectional analysis which we conducted, which led us to the development of strategies and program formulation to address deeply rooted structural inequalities, racism, religious intolerance, religious extremism, and what we call the religious racism, as well as the systemic acts of violence against women spiritual leaders and human rights defenders in these communities. Also lack of official data at the federal, community, or State level, as well as the absence of policies which would be dedicated to the issues of human rights, indigenous women and violence against them. So there was ground and a starting point for our partnership with the indigenous women's organizations and a core strategy was applied in our planning and implementation. We started with social mobilization, awareness raising and capacity building of Kaiowá and Guarani women and surrounding communities. We applied a whole community approach with international indigenous human rights frameworks, State obligations, rights holders and duty bearers, building their capacity to advocate for their own rights.

For us, absence of data was one of the key issues and therefore data generation was one of the strategies which we applied. I am very proud that we managed to pilot an innovative way of documentation and

mapping of cases of violence engaging religious leaders and women from these communities themselves. This is how we ended with three editions of the mapping and this May we released the first dossier about the racism and religious intolerance perpetrated against these women. These documents now serve as a reference for the political mobilization and for evidence-based advocacy. But they are also applied by the government for their decision making. As a result of this project, Kaiowá and Guarani women managed to integrate the issues of violence against women in the priorities of the mainstream indigenous rights movement and indigenous women's rights in Brazil which was never there before.

As regards political mobilization, we facilitated engagement with the Congress and with the government, and in 2023, with the new administration. We have finally seen a policy and institutional shift, such as the commitment of the government to establish the first ever shelters for indigenous women in the history of Brazil. Moreover, in all six biomes there were hearings organized by a travelling Ombudsman around all and other means of consulting women and engaging them in public policy making. With this I am thanking you for attention, and over to you.

MODERATOR: PATRICIA DA SILVA

Thank you, Anastasia, and UN Women for the work that you are doing! Thank you also for highlighting the importance of an intersectional approach and that multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination contributing to leaving them behind.

I am really pleased now to introduce the Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent, which is a global coordination and engagement mechanism for the stakeholder group of communities discriminated on work and descent. It supports the 2030 Agenda under the core model of Leave No One Behind, and it engages in coordinating indigenous and marginalized communities, united by a central structure and shared values, vision and mission. Allow me to introduce three very important and notable speakers from its member organizations who are here to deliver a joint statement on behalf of the Global Forum.

Vercilene Dias is the Legal Advisor of the Confederation of National Association of Quilombola in Brazil. Simona Torotcoi represents ERGO, the European Roma Grassroots Organization, and is from Romania. Beena Pallical is a Dalit woman leader and currently General Secretary of the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights. They will read a statement together on behalf of the organization. Welcome all and thank you again for being here!

SPEAKER 5: SIMONA TOROTCOI, European Roma Grassroots Organization Network

Thank you very much! I will start on behalf of our Global Forum. First of all, thank you for the opportunity to speak today, we are very happy to present the voice of civil society.

So what is the Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWDs)? We represent communities across the world that face a similar type of discrimination, we are Roma from Europe, Dalits from South Asia, Burako from Japan, Quilombola from Latin America and Brazil, and Haratines from West Africa. These communities face similar struggles of discrimination, together we are about 270 million.

But allow me to share with you more about what is this discrimination based on work and descent. To have a good understanding, I will quote from the Draft Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination Based on Work and Descent, according to which, discrimination based on work and descent means any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on inherited status, such as caste, including present and ancestral occupation, family, community or social origin, name, birth, place of residence, dialect, and accent that has the purpose or effect to nullify or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise, or an equal footing of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life. This type of discrimination is typically associated with the notion of purity and pollution, and practices of untouchability, and is deeply rooted in societies and cultures where this discrimination is practiced.

We represent these communities, and it is clearly based on evidence and the research that we have done so far that we are among the most marginalized and excluded. I want to share with you some of the experiences of Roma women, as a Roma woman myself. We experience intersectional discrimination and oppression because of this overlapping social construct. But also we can see that this type of discrimination that affects women belonging to communities discriminated on work and descent, including Roma, has very specific manifestations. In Europe, in many countries, when Roma women go to family practice centers or hospitals, they are kept waiting, ignored, not given the attention that they deserve, or they are even sometimes rejected by the health personnel. Roma girls are segregated in schools and discriminated against, and therefore their risk of dropping out of school is really high. Many Roma women are mostly present in an informal sector in jobs, such as scrap or paper collecting, flower selling, and cleaning. We need decent jobs, not only for Roma, but for all communities discriminated on work and descent.

The main challenge that we are facing is mainly the lack of presence of CDWD women in key policy documents and frameworks. Therefore, we encourage the UN system and its agencies to recognize women from communities discriminated on work and descent, and to adopt an intersectional approach in all its forms and policies both within the UN, but also in their programs, maybe by establishing a working group in order to examine the status and current gaps in the protection of CDWD women. I will give the floor to Beena.

SPEAKER 6: BEENA PALLICAL, General Secretary, National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights

Thanks, Simona, and thank you to all the co-panelist and the organizers for giving me this opportunity! Simona talked about the larger CDWD communities, so I will focus on the Dalit community because I come from the Dalit community.

A couple of years ago, a young girl went to the field to help her mother collect firewood. She was a young Dalit girl who was then gang raped and killed and later the state colluded with the dominant caste community, whose members committed this, and cremated her body without the consent or permission from her family. This became a huge issue globally as well. It happened in Hathras and I think many of you must have read about it.

This is a daily occurrence where violence and exclusion continues to plague this. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, there are about 50,000 cases registered every year committed by the dominant castes on Dalit communities. And it is not just violence we are facing. It is also exclusion from services,

exclusion from technology. For example, now we are on Zoom, but there are many people in the Dalit community who do not own smart phones. During COVID, the entire country went into online mode, and it was great that in India classes could be held online. But the fact of the matter is that Dalits could not attend one year of classes because they did not have access to technology.

I would like to offer two recommendations. The first one is that we need to ensure for actions to actually become reality, we need budgetary provisions. This means that we have to put money into action and implementation. Second, that we need to have people discriminated on work and descent, including Dalits, at the table when we are formulating policies. Thank you!

SPEAKER 7: VERCILENE DIAS, Legal Advisor of Connect Confederation of National Association of Quilombola in Brazil (statement delivered in Portuguese, interpreted by Thais Scharfenberg)

Thank you very much! I will talk about the Quilombola communities in Brazil. My organization, National Coordination for the Articulation of Rural Black Communities, CONAQ, was created 27 years ago, specifically to fight for the rights of Quilombola communities and against racism affecting this community. Today in Brazil, we have around 6,000 communities in all national territory. It was the first time that the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics carried out a census of Brazil and counted our communities. Despite being a mixed organization, but with many specificities and diverse demands, CONAQ felt the need to create a group and specific collectives to better act on the demands, such as the Women's Collective, among others.

So the first reason to create this specific women's group was the increase in violence and murders of Quilombola women. In 2019, CONAQ did a survey specifically on these types of murders and very violent practices. And one fact that shocked everyone was that we had a 35% increase in murders of Quilombola women leaders, as well as the brutality of the violence. The second was the violence and exploitation of child labor and sexual exploitation of Quilombola girls, who left their communities to study in neighboring municipalities and became targets of violence. Due to the lack of schools in the communities, many Quilombola girls have to leave their communities to study, living with wealthier families in the municipalities surrounding their communities, where they are exploited, both as workers and sexually.

Mãe Bernadete, Quilombola leader and National Coordinator of CONAQ, was the most recent victim of racism. She was a leader who fought for women's rights, especially for the regularization of Quilombo lands. She was brutally executed in her Quilombo Pitanga de Palmares in Simões Filho, in the metropolitan region of Salvador, in the state of Bahia, with 17 shots, 12 of them to the face, even though she was under state protection, as she was included in the Program for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Brazil. We still have no response from the government about her murder.

The GFOD Forum is a really important space for highlighting issues of racism and discrimination against Quilombola communities, both nationally and internationally. There are regulations that recognize the rights of the Quilombola population in Brazil, of course, but we can see that racism is something that is deeply rooted in Brazilian society, including in government structures. Thank you very much!

MODERATOR: PATRICIA DA SILVA

Thank you Vercilene, Simona and Beena for delivering these important and extremely powerful statements! I liked this idea of putting the money where the action is. This idea of investing in the communities that are indeed doing the work, and the inclusive policy making. I mean, it is kind of obvious but I feel like we need to keep on repeating it. One last point that I really want to highlight is one that came from all of you: this staggering statistic on how marginalized women from racialized communities are disproportionately affected by sexual violence, exploitation, and even femicide. We really need to rally, to continue and accelerate our efforts to fight this, because this is just not acceptable at all.

Joshua is our next speaker, who is the Co-Director of Minority Rights Group International, an organization with almost 300 partners in 60 countries. It campaigns to ensure that disadvantaged minorities and indigenous peoples, often the poorest of the poor, can make their voices heard. Take it away.

SPEAKER 8: JOSHUA CASTELLINO, Co-Director of Minority Rights Group International

Thank you very much, Patricia, distinguished colleagues and panelists! It is a real honor to be here with you today, and I want to pay special testimony to Rita, who unfortunately could not be with us, but you will hear her later, I hope. You should follow her on LinkedIn and Instagram, and all the usual places where she is very active in the fight against racial discrimination.

Colleagues, in 1945, a few buildings away, a few streets away, the UN met to take on the mantle of decolonization. It was an impressive mantle, because colonization and subjugation was the ultimate racist project. It was not the only one - of course European colonization was not the only type of colonization we have had - but European colonization created the financial architecture for a society that was based on extraction, that still persists today.

Here we are, 75 years later, and I would suggest to you that we have not decolonized. What we have done instead is passed power on from European colonizers to other dominant groups within lines drawn on maps where no European foot had ever trod. The consequence of this is that we have in our society entrenched structural discrimination that keeps certain groups and individuals, based on their identity and on whatever lineage you might think of - ethnicity, race, gender, status, nationality, and among them women in particular - in a structural, subjugated position, unable to access the fruits of human rights that civil society has negotiated collectively.

This is the challenge that we face today. But the challenge has been exacerbated by another quite significant element that has entered our society, and that is hate. Hate, that is driven from political forces, that tries to unite people in creating an artificial majority by picking on a scapegoat in order to put them down and gain political power.

Many of those States now sit in the General Assembly across the road from where we are and talk about an anti-racial discrimination policy. So are they the right people to be able to address this? Or is their power base so deeply connected with their own dominant and gendered perspective of the world in which they have sought and gained their power.

We will not be able to eliminate any kind of discrimination if we rely on state parties that have at their heart an agenda of hate that seeks to divide populations. It has been a pleasure and an honor to work with the anti-discrimination network at the United Nations, to work with people like Emilie and others,

who we have on the panel today, and many others who understand that at the root cause of this discrimination we have here is the continued spreading of hate, with the view to subjugating populations that are far from sites of power.

The human rights vision offers us a chance to make a difference, a chance that is based on respecting the inherent rights and dignity of every individual. And as you heard from our colleagues here, especially my sisters from civil society organizations, this is not a discrimination that happens by accident, and this is not a discrimination that happens only to individuals. It is experienced in a group and it is experienced triply, or quadruply by women who are at the forefront of the hate that is permeating our societies.

So the choice we have today is to strengthen the networks we have, to create preventative networks that are based on data that understand where the populations are, who are being actively marginalized. Emilie's point is an important one: the leave no one behind principle suggests that there is a bus that arrives and a whole bunch of people are trying to get on the bus, and we have to make sure that nobody is left off the bus. But colleagues, there are monitors who are monitoring the queue for people who want to get on the bus and actively removing people from getting on the bus. These are communities being pushed further behind, and so no amount of accidental attempts to reach them will really work. But we have to take that agenda even further to generate the protection mechanisms that we need in our society to ensure that the agenda of hate will not win. We have to also ensure that we monitor this at the highest level.

I leave you with the suggestion that there are three layers to this particular fight. First of all, at the macro level, to recognize that the violence being perpetrated today is still driven by commercial interests that ignore climate change and continue on an extractive and exploitative economic basis that creates our financial architecture. Many of the people and communities and violations we talk about are simply fodder in the way of a machinery that is profit-based. So we have to fight that at a macro level as individuals. We also want and support the work that the United Nations is doing, sitting in a sense alongside, but also above our sovereign States, in holding those States account to the fact that we need to build a world where the inherent dignity and worth of every individual is respected.

But the job also falls to each of us to contest where discrimination occurs. There is a very simple antidote to the provision of hate and the dissemination of hate. It is empathy. It is putting yourself in the place of the community or the individual who are most vulnerable in our society, seeing the world from their perspective and understanding the barriers that prevent them from accessing rights.

We can do this. Other people have done this before us. The space that we got at the United Nations was based on the work of movements who are determined to eliminate the scourge of racism from our societies. Please don't be fooled into thinking that we have achieved that. The work is still there, and it is up to us to do it. We cannot rely on states only, we cannot rely on UN agencies only, but we have to all participate in holding society to account, because, unless we respect the inherent dignity and worth of every individual, we simply have a new club of privilege, and we cannot tolerate that. Thank you.

MODERATOR: PATRICIA DA SILVA

Thank you, Joshua! At the heart is the continued spreading of hate but both as individuals and collectively, we have a role to play to change the status quo.

Now we get to open the floor for questions, both from the room and for our friends that have joined us virtually. We are a little behind schedule so please make your questions really concise. I will start with the gentleman right there. Thank you.

PARTICIPANT 1. FROM THE ROOM

I have two questions, I will be very brief. One is that you just mentioned a new club of privilege. Does it mean us or are you talking about someone else? Second is for UNDP, you talked about the Small Grants Project. Who are getting it? Dalits, marginalized people, Janajati ethnic people, LGBTQI or who? Thank you!

PARTICIPANT 2. FROM THE ROOM

Hello, my name is Uliane Appolinario, and I work with Emilie at UNFPA. I am not sure if the UN Woman representative in Brazil is still online but maybe my colleagues from Brazil could also respond to my questions or comment. I am from Brazil and I was wondering during the presentation about how is it to work with local authorities in Brazil, particularly regarding the indigenous populations. I hear that there are a lot of UN organizations working with indigenous leaders and right now we have a different scenario in Brazil, where we have a federal government that is encouraging, taking action towards protection of the indigenous land. But I know that at the local level things are really different. Especially like in the State that was mentioned by the UN Women representative, Mato Grosso do Sul, which is a very violent state, and I had colleagues who worked there received dead threats. We used to call this State like “the land of no one”, because the indigenous population and those who work with the communities are never safe because there is a lot of violence coming from this State. So it would be really interesting to hear if anything changed from last year to this year, regarding the work with like local authorities. The other comment that I have is that I really would like to congratulate my colleague from Brazil for this activism and inclusion of Quilombolas in the census. When I look at this, I feel so proud. But at the same time I feel like it is really just happening now? And regarding Afro-Descendant people, I am also one of them, we are not minority. Brazil is the country in South America that received the highest number of Africans in the period of the slavery. And we are not minority in Brazil, we are the majority. I would like also to congratulate our panelists for the wonderful presentations. Thank you!

PARTICIPANT 3. FROM THE ROOM

My name is Paul Divakar, I am with the Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent. It is really exciting to hear these excellent presentations and the whole aspect of exclusion not being accidental, but people are being pushed down. And we see this as a glass ceiling. We talk about anti-racism and inclusion, but there is a big ceiling between the lip and the cup when it comes to communities, especially like castes, Quilombola, Roma, Gypsy, Sinti, and there are several others. And those who are not visibilized in many countries, especially in Africa, within the same descent. And then you have still the layer of caste. Research is there but how do we make anti-racism and anti-discrimination programming reach the communities? I think that is the a question that we will have to look at. I congratulate to you because we are moving closer. And I really congratulate Rita and others who have

visibilized some of these communities very boldly to help to get to the point where they are also actively engaged in these programs, which is very critical. Thank you very much.

MODERATOR: PATRICIA DA SILVA

Thank you, Paul. I will now ask our panelists to answer the questions. And see if we still have time to take questions from our friends online as well.

RESPONSE 1: JOSHUA CASTELLINO, Co-Director of Minority Rights Group International

I am happy to answer the question directed to me. So are we privileged? Yes, we are. Privilege is a relative term and many are privileged. But human rights is not a relative term. Human rights is something that we understand in its civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. People who are in New York City today and this week are certainly privileged. The question is, to what extent can that be a position through which you can undermine the systematic privileging of certain groups? And I think that those of us who have opportunities and platforms like this have to make that privilege count in undermining the structure that keep certain societies and individuals subjugated.

RESPONSE 2: REVAI MAKANJE AALBAEK, Senior Advisor on Justice and Security, UNDP

Thank you for the question regarding the Global Environment Facility where UNDP has been programming for many years across the globe through the Small Grants Project. I will share with you the link to the website where you will be able to see some of the disaggregation of the resources that are provided to communities. Because it is a small grants project, it is aimed at working with grassroots levels, with communities, and more importantly, supporting those that have no access to financial services. Data from 2016 to 2022 reflects that around 6994 indigenous leaders and communities participated in the various activities of the Small Grants Project and this has been done across 19 countries. But again, it is a very intentional programming and exercise to reach the grassroots, to empower and work with those most left behind.

RESPONSE 3: ANASTASIA DIVINSKAYA, Country Representative, Brazil, UN Women

I would like to share this response with our dear partners from CONAQ: I am very happy to be here with you, our fellows and partners from CONAQ. I am going to start answering the question regarding indigenous women and girls and please continue and complete it about Afro-descendant women.

I would like to answer the question which relates to indigenous population and the work with local authorities. Working with local authorities is natural for all the UN agencies. I believe when our activities are rooted in the communities, we cannot work in isolation with the rights holders only but we work also with duty bearers. The question was also how much the situation has changed compared to the last year. I would like to say that there are advances, such as establishment of the indigenous and racial equality machineries in the form of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples and Racial Equality at the federal level and the establishment of the secretaries on indigenous affairs and racial equality at the State and municipal

levels. But the situation cannot be easily resolved because we are dealing with the legacy of 500 years of oppression, colonial legacy and military dictatorship in Brazil. Within the period of one year, it is impossible to compensate. But we are happy to see that these advances have taken place. And from the side of the United Nations and UN Women, we give credit to the persistence and continuity of the work of the civil society organizations and networks such as ANMIGA, the largest indigenous network or CONAQ, which is the largest network of Quilombola women in Brazil. We do see the changes, not yet at the impact level, but these are vital changes in institutions setting, legal and policy making, and for transformative changes in the lives of indigenous and Afro-descendant women and girls in the country.

RESPONSE 4: VERCILENE DIAS, Legal Advisor of Connect Confederation of National Association of Quilombola in Brazil (statement delivered in Portuguese, interpreted by Thais Scharfenberg)

It is important to highlight that we have public policies but the change does not happen if the movements and organizations like CONAQ do not act. We have the creation of this new ministry in Brazil, which is very positive but what we really need is investment. Because if we do not have investment and a planned budget, we cannot reach the communities. And this is what really has to be done.

MODERATOR: PATRICIA DA SILVA

Thank you, everyone! I'm not sure if Paul's question was answered which was also reflected in a question online, about the issue of including other marginalized and racialized groups because there is a larger group of communities being marginalized. We will also have one last question from our online participant: "What is your process to concretely incorporate political analysis in your work? Can you please be specific in your answer as people often refer to it generally, but operationally it ends up being absent".

RESPONSE 4: EMILIE FIRMER-WILSON, Human rights adviser and LNOB Lead, UNFPA

So the first question was about meaningful participation. To reach affected groups is indeed a challenge. And UN organizations tend to be big bureaucracies and unfortunately, our administrative modalities are not always conducive in helping us have financial and other forms of partnerships with smaller grassroots organisations.

At UNFPA, within our strategic plan, we have a dedicated indicator for the first time on supporting feminists movements and women-led organizations. We wanted to get those representing the furthest behind and not as implementing partners but as voices of change. But then we discovered our own challenges because our own programming and partnership modalities make it hard to work with these small organisations. So we have released a new partnership framework that is providing us with much more flexibility to work at the local level with smaller grassroots organizations that are movements of change, movements of representation. So the first step was to change our own bureaucratic procedures, to make them more flexible to enable more diverse partnerships.

RESPONSE 5: JOSHUA CASTELLINO, Co-Director of Minority Rights Group International

I can address the question about political analysis. At Minority Rights Group International, we work on a number of different elements that essentially bring the political analysis. For example, looking at the extent to which the State itself is dominated by majoritarian groups, pulling apart the coalitions that are being built on hate. Also seeking accountability for processes to change international institutions, attitudes towards ethnic, religious, linguistic, racialized minorities, indigenous peoples, and many others. While also emphasizing and considering how women from all of these communities face discrimination both within their communities from a masculine system, and also externally as minority women.

Essentially a large part of what we do is political. And if it is the politics that has to change then it is the political will that has to be shifted. We have to bring such analysis to a vast majority of people to build the kind of empathy that we need, if we are to envisage the society we want to live in.

CLOSING REMARKS: RITA IZSÁK-NDIAYE (online), Senior Advisor on Anti-Racism, UNDP

Thank you so much! I am so happy and overwhelmed by all these testimonies and statements, this is a very enriching meeting. It would be impossible for me to summarize what we had discussed so I would rather reflect a little bit on the way forward. You have already mentioned the need of intentionality, resources and commitment, and in line with Joshua's last thoughts, I would like to bring in allyship and courage. We need to acknowledge that when addressing racism, especially at a high level and sometimes at very political levels, one needs to build up courage because we are talking about racist systems and set-ups, structural, systemic, and institutionalized forms of racism. Which means that very often the structures we deal with are composed of the societies' elites who are not necessarily the people who will understand where we come from and what we want to achieve. So we should be encouraged to expand our networks and build allies and I believe that allies are in governments, in parliaments, in NGOs, at the UN system, as well is in the business sector or in security forces. We need to expand allyship and build our collective strength and forces and come forward together so we can address racism where it is embedded and where it all originates. I believe today's meeting was one of those steps when we came together with a desire to work together in the future, build this together, and to push this agenda forward. I am very happy that we started this journey and I know we will continue. I am looking forward to be working with you all.

And a practical information: we are planning to keep a record of all these statements in a conference room report so nothing will be lost from today's rich discussion. The chats were monitored so all the questions are there too. Unfortunately, we did not have enough time for everything to be answered but we will continue this conversation. Please let us know if you want to receive the updates in the future and we will be in touch with you. Thank you so much to all of you! Once again, it was such an uplifting event, and I am so very glad that we made this happen.

ANNEX 1.

SELECTED CHATS (omitting full names as well as courtesies, personal remarks, private contact sharing etc.)

P. C. A.: Many greetings All. My name is P. C. A. Volunteer Senior Advocacy Coordinator to Her Excellency Alice A Nkom. Her Excellency Nkom is the inaugural Vice Chair of the United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent (PFPAD). Kindly You might be aware of the inaugural PFPAD report which will be presented at by the inaugural Chairperson of the 54th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council and the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Links to said report is below.

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/comenetia_ahrc5468-activity-7107086676157427712-HHvN?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android. Said report will be presented by inaugural PFPAD Chairperson at the said sessions. With gratitude, Portia

C. C.: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/minorities/un-network-racial-discrimination-and-protection-minorities>, Intersectionality Guidance Note: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/minorities/30th-anniversary/2022-09-22/GuidanceNoteonIntersectionality.pdf>, Anti-Discrimination Law Guide: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/minorities/minority-rights-equality-and-anti-discrimination-law>

J. B.: Hello my name is Dr. J. B., Assistant Professor at the University of Miami. I study the effect of intersectional stress on overall health among marginalized populations. My comment is related to the issue of state racism and discrimination in France. While the French government emphasizes the principles of universalism and equality under the law, some individuals and advocacy groups argue that systemic racism and discrimination persist in various aspects of French society, including law enforcement, education, employment, and access to housing and healthcare. Do you have any data on the situation in France?

C. L.: Thank you to all speakers. The UN has done excellent work in supporting Indigenous Peoples and People of African Descent, but other ethno-cultural and religious minorities are being left behind by the UN. For example, the majority of UN Agencies have never spoken at the UN Forum on Minority Issues, the main platform for minority protection. They do not systematically report on their actions, unlike at the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. What can we do to change that? How can we make UN agencies more accountable to other minorities? An anti-racism lens is important but it does not capture other aspects of minority rights, which are also crucial for inclusion.

S. B.: Hello, everyone! This is S. B., PhD candidate and part-time professor at the University of Ottawa in Canada. First, thank you for organizing this important event! Two questions: (a) Are there available data about the share of racial, ethnic and linguistic, Indigenous minorities among the staff of the UN agencies / entities / etc? (b) Are there data about institutionalized forms of minority co-decision-making in the UN agencies / entities / etc - like Advisory Board, joint steering committees, etc?

Y. W.: Dear panelists, and dear Patricia. Thank you so much for mentioning the JIU report, which I am one of the team member who have worked on it. My question is: how can we be confident to ensure retaliation on actors who are advocating on Racism and Racial discrimination would not occur (both systematic on groups who advocate on this issue, and micro-level in office setting)? And how can we ensure staff within the UN system can have more confidence in addressing Racism and Racial discrimination? Won't Work on anti-Racial discrimination internally will ensure better programming externally? But is the UN system ready and comfortable to act yet?

F. Y.: hello everyone, F. Y. from Lebanon, as we all know the Mena region the majority is sini muslims, there is a big discrimination between men and women's rights, who can UN play an effective role in solving such problem?

M.G.: How are you working with faith communities in the different contexts where you operate?

R. C.: <https://www.clacso.org/el-impacto-de-la-pandemia-en-la-situacionde-las-mujeres-afrodescendientes-enbrasil-colombia-y-cuba/>

S. M.: It would be good to capitalize on the latest JIU report on UN System in regard to Mental Health especially stigma and there is an interesting connection between racism minorities agism and mental health

A. A. U.: I believe Racism and hate speech continue to plague our society, causing immense harm to individuals and communities. It is disheartening to witness the deep-rooted prejudices and discriminatory attitudes that still exist. We must recognize that there is a lot of work to be done in order to combat these issues effectively. Education and awareness play a crucial role in challenging and dismantling racism and hate speech. By promoting inclusivity, embracing diversity, and fostering empathy, we can start to create a more inclusive and tolerant society. It is essential to actively address the underlying biases and stereotypes that fuel racism and hate speech. Legislation should be put in place to hold individuals accountable for their harmful words and actions. Above all, we need to promote open and honest discussions, encourage empathy, and work towards building bridges of understanding and acceptance. It may be a challenging journey, but it is one we must embark on together to create a better future for all.

S. M.: it's very interesting the book from the Facebook whistle-blower Frances Haugan "the power of One" UN should talk to Facebook?? especially the non us content racism big time

M. S.: the intersectional approach and acknowledgement of privilege is such an important point. not appropriating causes but being allies is the way forward and I speak as a persecuted minority myself!