

**Report of Activities and Impact**

**2021**

1. **Executive Summary: Main Achievements**

During 2021, the United Nations Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities significantly expanded its field of action, pursuant to global concerns around racial justice and troubling impact of the COVID-19 impact in minority communities worldwide. In December 2020, pursuant to senior guidance from across the UN system at a [November 2020 High-Level meeting](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Minorities/Minutes_SeniorLevelMeeting.docx), the Network adopted [Network Work Plan 2021+](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Minorities/UN_Network_Racia_Discrimination_Protection_Minorities_Workplan2021.pdf) for the period 2021-2025.

The [Network Work Plan 2021+](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Minorities/UN_Network_Racia_Discrimination_Protection_Minorities_Workplan2021.pdf) has eight Pillars, each led by one or more UN entities, as follows: (1) Leave No One Behind (WHO); (2) Criminal Justice (UNODC); (3) Agenda for Protection (OHCHR); (4) Intersectionality (UNAIDS); (5) Communications (DGC and UNFPA); (6) Knowledge Hub (UNHCR); (7) UN Internal Diversity: currently inactive pending the outcome of the Secretary General’s Task Force on Addressing Racism at the UN. The Network is co-chaired in 2021 by OHCHR (permanent co-chair) and UNESCO (2021 co-chair). Activities and outputs continued to be honed at a series of Pillar meetings during the first months of 2021.

Among primary work outputs for 2021 are the following:

* In March, as part of events to commemorate the annual International Day against Racial Discrimination (March 21), the Network launched its [Checklist to strengthen UN work at country level to combat racial discrimination and advance minority rights](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Minorities/AnnotatedChecklist.pdf)**.**
* **In April, the Network contributed substantive views and** [inputs in detail on the Agenda for Protection plans under the Secretary General’s Call to Action on Human Rights](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Minorities/UN_Network_Racial_Discrimination_Minority_Rights.pdf)**. The submission provided by the Network makes the case for explicit but not exclusive naming of racial discrimination and protection of minorities in the planned architecture under the Agenda for Protection.**
* **In September, the Network held its first ever direct outreach and consultation meeting for and with the Member States, convening an event on the margins of the 48th Human Rights Council.** Argentina, Austria, Costa Rica, Fiji, Finland, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Portugal, Sierra Leone and Slovenia co-sponsored the event, and over 20 governments took part. Among other interventions, the Network was strongly urged to redouble its efforts around intersectionality.
* **In October, under WHO leadership and with the involvement of trainers and experts from** OASPG, OHCHR, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC**, the Network convened a month-long training course for UN Country Teams worldwide. 41 UN staff members from 13 UNCTs took part in the intensive training.**
* The Network participated in major UN and other events in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice during 2021, particularly the UN Crime Congress and organised a side-event at the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.
* **The Network exponentially expanded its membership, including to field colleagues, and under UNHCR leadership it strengthened its own data-basing and communications architecture. The Network now comprises circa 200 UN staff from over 20 agencies and entities.**[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Above all, acting on reinvigorated global concerns in these areas, the Network dramatically heightened the real and potential ability of UN agencies and entities to cooperate and collaborate to address racial discrimination and protection of minorities issues, thanks to the engaged efforts of many staff contributing time and energy, in may cases above and beyond their own work portfolios. In the process, a range of partnerships have been strengthened.**

1. **Network Pillar Work in Detail**

**Pillar 1: Leave No One Behind (LNOB Pillar)**

In March 2021, the Network launched it [Checklist to strengthen UN work at country level to combat racial discrimination and advance minority rights](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Minorities/AnnotatedChecklist.pdf)**. The Checklist was launched on 21 March International Day Against Racial Discrimination, and featured a** [video presentation](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q74L9g8s2Mo) **by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.**

**During May and June, the Network rolled out Arabic, French, Russian and Spanish versions of the Checklist, also not available on the** [Network website](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Minorities/Pages/UNNetworkRacialDiscriminationProtectionMinorities.aspx)**. The Network also began engaging UN Country Teams to use the Checklist. This has been done via direct discussions and webinars with UNCTs such as Indonesia; by incorporating the Checklist into larger training packages, such as a minority rights training in Moldova involving 55 government officials; as well as by embedding the checklist in analytical work going forward, such as a major inter-agency effort to examine human rights in Common Country Analysis documents and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, currently ongoing.**

In October, the LNOB Pillar convened a month-long, intensive training module on "Addressing Racial and Ethnicity-based Discrimination and Strengthening the Protection of Minorities, Indigenous Peoples and other Population Groups in UN Programming Processes", 4-28 October 2021. The overarching coordination was led by WHO, in collaboration with the members of this pillar, including ILO, OHCHR, OSAPG, UNDESA, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, and UNPFA. Eleven global facilitators representing the following entities volunteered to support the content production and design of the course: OASPG, OHCHR, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, and WHO. The training featured 8 plenary sessions and 4 working group sessions. A total of 41 technical staff from the following 13 UNCTs participated in the course: Albania, Botswana, Brazil, Central African Republic, China, Dominican Republic, Guyana, India, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, South Africa, and Ukraine. As of year-end, the Network is systematizing the materials produced by the training, with a view to undertaking actions in 2022 including: (1) placing the training materials online for general use; (2) preparing a training-of-trainers module, involving trainers and others involved in the 2021 training; and (3) establishing a community-of-practice for UNCT members who took part in the training.

Following up the October 2021 training, Network members took part in a November 2021 workshop convened by DCO to support UNCT advancement on Leave No One Behind, with a particular breakout group dedicated to addressing racial discrimination at the workshop. Several hundred people primarily from Resident Coordinator Offices worldwide took part in that event.

Following consultation in the Pillar and in the wider Network, the Network adopted a Template for UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to Gather Case Studies in combatting racial discrimination and strengthening protection of minorities from the UN country teams and humanitarian teams. The template is used to set out good practice examples for UN Country Teams and Humanitarian Teams.

Network members from OSAPG and OHCHR worked to supplement [human rights review of the UN Country Team’s Socio-Economic Response Plans to COVID-19](https://unitednations.sharepoint.com/sites/DCO-WG-UNSDG_CF/Shared%20Documents/COVID_SE/SERP-internal-review/Human%20Rights%20Review%20of%20UNCT%20COVID19%20SERPs_FINAL_10112020.pdf). The group undertook a geographically balanced analysis of Common Country Analysis documents and Cooperation Frameworks (CCAs and CFs) from the perspective of how they address racial discrimination and protection of minorities. The summary paper produced on the basis of this research is included here as Annex 1.

**Pillar 2: Agenda for Protection Pillar (Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in Times of Crisis/SG Call to Action for Human Rights/ Prevention):**

The Network provided a submission for colleagues working on the new UN protection architecture. The [submission](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Minorities/UN_Network_Racial_Discrimination_Minority_Rights.pdf) sets out reasons for directly and openly providing for measures to tackle racial discrimination and to strengthen the protection of minorities in the Agenda for Protection architecture provided pursuant to the Secretary General’s Call to Action on Human Rights.

**Pillar 3: Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in Criminal Justice**

In March 2021, the Network delivered a [Statement to the 14th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice: “Advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Minorities/Statement_Kyoto_Crime%20Congress.pdf)”.

In May 2021, the Network held a side event on the margins of the 2021 UN Crime Commission: “[**Stepping up the United Nations System’s Coordinated Response to Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities: Towards Effective, Inclusive and Equitable Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Systems**](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/CCPCJ/session/30_Session_2021/side_event_program_thu_20-05.html)**”.** Panelists included OHCHR officials working on the report pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 43/1, a member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) discussing the recently adopted CERD General Recommendation on racial profiling by law enforcement, as well as UN Network representatives discussing the work of the Network in the area of racial discrimination and criminal justice. Over 5000 participants took part in the event.

From May to November 2021, the Network developed a Mapping of international standards and UN guidance and tools on access to justice, criminal justice and racial discrimination and protection of minorities. The Pillar lead also advertised the work of the Network in a number of events such as the World Bank Law Justice and Development Week, the OSCE NHCM Conference on Conference to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of the publication of the Recommendations on Policing in Multi-Ethnic Societies and the Third session of the Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law on "Equal access to justice for all: a necessary element of democracy, rule of law and human rights protection".

**Pillar 4 Intersectionality**

The Intersectionality Pillar convened and agreed on goals for 2021, including building a resource library of materials on intersectionality, as well as developing a Guidance Note on Intersectionality, Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. A draft outline for the Guidance Note was developed and circulated to the Network for its June 15 meeting. The Network plans to adopted the Guidance Note in December 2021.

**Pillar 5: Communications and Campaigning**

DGC created and shared a Trello board for repository and calendar of events for use by the Network to share and store relevant content and have a access to a shared calendar of events. A range of communications activities are ongoing related in particular to the 20th anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action.

OHCHR designed a webpage, drafted and published the booklet “Fighting Racism and Discrimination: The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) at 20”, released a video commemorating the event, and posted a web story. DGC and OHCHR designed and launched a UN website dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the DDPA. The implemented activities also include the production of series of short videos, a curtain raiser video, which was used at the opening of the high-level event and various materials for the use of social media, which were shared on Trello. UNFPA also produced a video for the 20th anniversary of the DDPA.

DGC and OHCHR also collaborated on the design and launching of an UN website on Fight Racism which goes beyond the 20th anniversary of the DDPA. Relevant materials were also developed and placed on Trello board.

OHCHR also provided support to the Office of the President of the General Assembly, which was responsible for the organization of the high-level event for the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the DDPA. The high-level meeting, at the level of heads of States and Governments, was held at the General Assembly on the 22nd of September 2021 on the theme “Reparations, racial justice and equality for people of African descent.” The General Assembly adopted resolution 76/1 entitled “United against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance”, which includes the political declaration of the high-level meeting.

Prior to this meeting, the Human Rights Council, during its 46th session in March 2021, held a panel discussion on the theme “The state of play in the fight against racism and discrimination 20 years after the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action and the exacerbating effects the COVID-19 pandemic has had on these efforts”.

The high-level panel discussion gathered high-level representatives of United Nations agencies and funds, high-level representatives of Member States and other stakeholders to discuss progress made in efforts to eliminate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance 20 years after the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. The event also served as the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action by the Human Rights Council.

**Pillar 6: UN Diversity and the Policy Field: Internal/External Linkages**

The March Network meeting heard an update from members of the Secretary General’s Task Force on Addressing Racism and Promoting Dignity for All in the United Nations. The Network agreed that, in light of the existence of the Task Force, it will revisit its role in the area from September 2021, once the Task Force produces its report and recommendations for action.

**Pillar 7: Knowledge Hub**

In April 2021, the Network Knowledge Hub has initiated Network Teams channel and spaces, with a view to providing more accessible and user-friendly online meeting spaces and communications tools. The Network Teams channel also makes available document databasing for the Network. UNHCR colleagues have entered all of the Network email addresses into the Teams space, and carried out 2 information sessions on using Teams. Transition to Teams is ongoing, as not all of the UN agencies and entities in the Network currently use Teams.

The Knowledge Hub supported four events and 12 trainings organized between June and November 2022. In addition, a session on prevention of racism in the context of internal displacement was conducted with the Global Protection Cluster Human Rights Engagement Task Team in October 2022.

**Pillar 8: UN Network Development, Accountability and Branding**

The ***Network Co-Chairs*** (OHCHR and UNESCO) met bilaterally during 2021 on a monthly basis. Work during 2021 included:

* Recovering the UN Network logo and bring it back into use;
* Expanding the Network email list to circa 200 email addresses, including a major expansion to include field colleagues;
* Reconnecting with UN agencies not longer actively represented on the Network;
* Efforts to secure funding for the work of the Network;
* Convening and coordinating Network meetings and steerage, as well as work planning for the period 2022-2023.

On 21 September, the Network convened a side event on the margins of the 48th Human Rights Council to profile its work in support of the UN system to address racial discrimination and to strengthen minority rights in practice, showcasing achievements and prospects of further development, as well as to open discussion with the Member States and other interested actors, including civil society, the academia and the public-at-large as to possible synergies around its work planning for the period 2022-2023.  The event featured presentations by Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ilze Brands Kehris and UNESCO Assistant Director General Gabriela Ramos as Network 2021 co-chairs, as well as by UN Resident Coordinator in the Republic of Moldova Simon Springett, who brought to the table the perspective of a UN Country Team in the area of racial discrimination and/or protection of minorities. The UN entities leading the main action areas of the Network’s workplan (WHO, OHCHR, UNODC, DGC, UNFPA, UNAIDS and UNHCR) will be on hand to answer questions arising as to work in detail. The event is co-sponsored by the Permanent Representations of Argentina, Austria, Costa Rica, Fiji, Finland, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Portugal, Sierra Leone and Slovenia, and over 20 governments took part in the event. Governments taking the floor expressed clear support for the Network and stressed the importance of pursuing efficacy at the level of country, community and people worldwide, as well as in support of deepening work on intersectionality.

The Network website is now updated in detail, and includes public statements by the Network at various events, knowledge products produced by the Network, as well as the Network Work Plan 2021+, which achieved its final form in April, following convening of all of the Network Pillars to agree on plans in detail: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Minorities/Pages/UNNetworkRacialDiscriminationProtectionMinorities.aspx>

French, Russian and Spanish-language versions of the site have been similarly updated.

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The [United Nations Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Minorities/Pages/UNNetworkRacialDiscriminationProtectionMinorities.aspx) (“the Network”) was created by decision of the Secretary General at the 6 March 2012 meeting of the Policy Committee, with the main goal of providing a platform to address issues of racial discrimination and the protection of national or ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, including issues of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on gender, disability, age and other grounds. It enhances dialogue and cooperation between UN Departments, Agencies, Programmes and Funds to address these issues. The Network brings together more than 20 UN Departments, Agencies, Programmes and Funds. The [Network Workplan 2021+](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Minorities/UN_Network_Racia_Discrimination_Protection_Minorities_Workplan2021.pdf) has eight Pillars, each led by one or more UN entities, as follows:

1. Leave No One Behind: WHO Pillar Lead: gomezs@who.int
2. Criminal Justice: UNODC Pillar Lead: anna.giudice@un.org
3. Agenda for Protection: OHCHR Pillar Lead: ccahn@ohchr.org
4. Intersectionality: ILO Pillar Lead (from 1 January 2022): oelz@ilo.org.
5. Communications: DGC and UNFPA Pillar Leads: hagl@un.org and pdasilva@unfpa.org
6. Knowledge Hub: UNHCR Pillar Lead: svobodov@unhchr.org
7. UN Internal Diversity: currently inactive pending the outcome of the Secretary General’s Task Force on Addressing Racism at the UN
8. UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities Development Pillar: OHCHR and UNESCO Co-Chairs Pillar Leads (ccahn@ohchr.org, ccsaunders@ohchr.org, k.tararas@unesco.org and am.majlof@unesco.org)
1. Members include DESA, DGC, DOCO, DPA, DPKO, ILO, OCHA, OHCHR, OSAPG, PBSO, UNAIDS, UNAOC, UNDP, UNEP, UNHCR, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNITAR, UNESCO, UNODC, UN Women, WFP and WHO. OHCHR acts as permanent Co-Chair for the Network. The 2021 Co-Chair is UNESCO. Contacts for Pillar leads are included at the end of this report. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)