



# Fighting Racism and Discrimination: The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action at 20



UNITED NATIONS  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER



DURBAN  
DECLARATION  
AND PROGRAMME  
OF ACTION  
20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

## INTRODUCTION

**“Systemic racial discrimination extends beyond any expression of individual hatred... It results from bias in multiple systems and institutions of public policy, which separately and together perpetuate and reinforce barriers to equality... All of us need to call out and openly condemn all messages – especially political messages or discourses – which disseminate ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, or which incite racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance”**

*UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, MICHELLE BACHELET*

Twenty years ago, leaders from across the globe came together in Durban, South Africa to address the pernicious effects of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance at all levels. The World Conference Against Racism, as it was known, led to the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) – a comprehensive and visionary document that embodies the world’s commitment to tackle the scourge of racism.

The 20th anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action – together with its follow up processes and mechanisms, the International Decade for People of African Descent, the Agenda Towards Transformative Change for Racial Justice and Equality and 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda – is a renewed opportunity to place racial equality and justice as the centrepiece of international, regional, and national agendas.

# DDPA – A HISTORICAL TIMELINE

**“I believe this conference could mark a historic breakthrough in the struggle against racism that recognizes historic injustices and expresses deep remorse for the crimes of the past.”**

*FORMER UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND  
2001 WORLD CONFERENCE SECRETARY GENERAL, MARY ROBINSON*



## 2001

World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, SA



## 2009

Durban Review Conference in Geneva

—  
Nelson Mandela International Day (18 July)

## 2002

Three Durban follow up mechanisms created: Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, Group of Independent Eminent Experts on the Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

## 2005

Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues Established

## 2007

Ad Hoc Committee on Elaboration of Complementary Standards created

## 2011

DDPA 10th Anniversary and adoption of the Political Declaration

—  
International Year for People of African Descent

The linkages between past and contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance were clearly established at the 2001 World Conference against Racism. The DDPA notes that at the outset of the new millennium, the global fight against these scourges and their evolving manifestations is a matter of international priority.

The DDPA also recognizes that colonialism has led to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and that Africans and people of African descent, Asians and people of Asian descent and indigenous peoples were victims of colonialism and continue to be victims of its consequences.

The DDPA was agreed by the world community, under the historic umbrella of the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa. The Conference was fueled by the experiences and revelations of those at the forefront of the

apartheid struggle and their thirst for democracy, justice, equality, human development, the rule of law, and respect for international human rights.

The Durban Declaration reaffirms core principles of equality and non-discrimination. The Programme of Action emphasizes States' primary responsibility for combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, recommending clear mechanisms for achieving a more fair, just, and equitable society. It serves as a practical guide for States to design and implement comprehensive reforms in various sectors at all levels, and honour their commitments towards combatting racism and discrimination.

The DDPA recommends that States adopt national action plans to promote diversity, equality, equity, social justice, and the participation of all, with plans that are comprehensive in scope, and address historical wrongs.



## 2015-2024

International Decade for  
People of African Descent



## 2021

First International Day for  
People of African Descent  
(August 31)

—  
Permanent Forum for  
people of African Descent  
is established

—  
DDPA 20th Anniversary



A 'Black Lives Matter' protester wearing a face mask holds a placard in Notting Hill in London, Britain. © EPA-EFE/ANDY RAIN



Demonstrators protest during a national demonstration against racism, hatred, discrimination, inequality and aggression in Brussels, Belgium. The sign reads "Against Racism/ Jews and Muslims/ same fight." © EPA-EFE/JULIEN WARNAND

## THE DDPA AND THE CALL FOR RACIAL JUSTICE 20 YEARS ON

Displacement, conflicts, health pandemics, yawning socio-economic inequality, and the increasing impact of climate change, coupled with the rise of political populism show, the DDPA to be a visionary document and relevant blueprint today for combatting racism.

Drafted twenty years ago, the DDPA warns that racism and xenophobia are striving to regain political, moral and even legal recognition. Through political platforms and dissemination through modern media they seek to perpetuate the lie of racial superiority.

The DDPA urges States to act decisively at national, regional, and international levels to **combat racism**, racial discrimination, and intolerance. It also **recognises multiple forms of discrimination**, including a gender dimension to racism and encourages women's participation in development programmes, and establishment of systems to evaluate and monitor discrimination against women.

The DDPA acknowledges **no country is free from the scourge of racism and racial discrimination**. Two decades on, apartheid lies dead, but, sadly, racism lives on in all regions and in all societies. Racism is vicious and global: it is dangerous, abhorrent, and pervasive.

The global COVID-19 pandemic has exposed governments' failures to address structural racism and discrimination, which create barriers to health services. Yet, 20 years ago the DDPA had enshrined nearly 50 references to end racial disparities to health and healthcare.

The twenty-first century **continues to bear witness to the discrimination and persecution of marginalised and disadvantaged peoples**, including Africans and people of African descent, Asians and those of Asian descent, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons, minorities, including the Roma, and the LGBTQ+ community, among others suffering hate.

The DDPA recalls that **the history of humanity is replete with major atrocities as a result of gross violations of human rights** and calls for remembering history to avert future tragedies. It emphasized that the Holocaust must never be forgotten. It also expressed deep concern about the increase in anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in various parts of the world, as well as the emergence

of racial and violent movements based on racism and discriminatory ideas against Jewish, Muslim and Arab communities.

The DDPA highlights the **imperative to recognise and learn from the historical injustices** underpinning poverty, underdevelopment, marginalisation, social exclusion, economic disparities, instability and insecurity. While the transatlantic slave trade ended over two centuries ago, the ideas that propelled it remain alive today. Ending slavery's legacy of racism is a global imperative for justice.

The DDPA emphasizes that **remembering the crimes or wrongs of the past, unequivocally condemning them and telling the truth about history are essential elements for international reconciliation** and the creation of societies based on justice, equality and solidarity. It invites the international community to honour the memory of the victims of these tragedies and calls upon States to take appropriate and effective measures to halt and reverse the lasting consequences of the past.

As societies become ever more multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-cultural, greater political, cultural, and economic investment is needed to ensure inclusivity and cohesion. In the private sector, the advantages of ensuring ethnic diversity in the workplace include increasing numbers of consumers, higher level of innovation and competitive advantage; better products and services and bigger profits; higher efficiency and reduced turnover of staff; good company reputation. **States must harness the benefits of diversity rather than perceiving it as a threat.**

## A VICTIM CENTERED APPROACH: RECOGNIZING HISTORICAL WRONGS; PROVIDING ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND RESTITUTION; AND EMPOWERING VICTIMS AS CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE

*Paragraph 160, DDPA: "Urges States to take all necessary measures to address, as a matter of urgency, the pressing requirement for justice for the victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and to ensure that victims have full access to information, support, effective protection and national, administrative and judicial remedies, including the right to seek just and adequate reparation or satisfaction for damage, as well as legal assistance, where required."*

### AFRICANS AND PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT

*Paragraph 4, DDPA: "Urges States to facilitate the participation of people of African descent in all political, economic, social and cultural aspects of society and in the advancement and economic development of their countries, and to promote a greater knowledge of and respect for their heritage and culture."*

Whether as descendants of the victims of the transatlantic slave trade or as more recent migrants, people of African descent constitute some of the poorest and most marginalized groups. People of African descent still have limited access to quality education, employment, health services, housing and social security. They all too often experience discrimination in their access to justice, and face alarmingly high rates of police violence, together with racial profiling.



#### **Azeneth Báez, Afro-Chilean cultural activist, Chile**

As a child, Azeneth Báez's daily routine began with a hair straightening ritual in a vain hope it would deter school bullies from demeaning and ridiculing her hair and African identity.

"Back then, we did not have these hair straighteners that teens have now, so I used an old clothes iron. I would have done anything to stop the bullying I faced," recalled

Azeneth of her schooldays in the northern Chilean town of Arica.

Azeneth's torment spurred her to cultural activism. She networked with Azapa Valley afrodescendants, accustomed to hiding their unique ceremonies, stories, and traditions from wider society, helping to galvanise Afro-Chileans to assert their heritage and rights as citizens in the high-income South American country.

Azeneth, and fellow activist Cristian Báez, co-founded the Lumbanga, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that along with Oro Negro ("Black gold"), is one of the most prominent Afro-Chilean organisations demanding inclusiveness.

At school, Arica-born lawmaker Luis Rocafull was taught there were no black Chileans. "We kept honouring our European-looking founding fathers, while ignoring the role and contributions to our history of indigenous and afro communities", he said. "Centuries ago, people from Africa were brought to our land against their will, and were crucial for the construction of what we are now as a region", said Rocafull, an ally of the Afro-Chilean community.

Lobbying for recognition involved regular 2000 km-bus trips to meet authorities in the capital Santiago, street rallies, and information campaigns. Rocafull, sponsored a draft bill to legally recognise Afro-Chileans as a tribal people, honouring their culture and traditions.



Members of rights groups for migrant workers, holding a sign saying “Stop! Racism,” attend a protest rally at a plaza in downtown Seoul, South Korea. © YONHAP/EPA



Nemonte Nenquino (left) and Omanca are land human rights defenders from the Waorani people in Ecuador. The group recently won a landmark ruling against the Government preventing exploration on their land. © OHCHR



The legal proceedings had specific relevance within the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024), which laid “the foundations to advance justice and development for all afrodescendants in Chile,” said Birgit Gerstenberg the then-UN Human Rights Representative for South America. “We hope other countries in the region can make similar progress.”

“Some told us we do not exist. Others treated us like foreigners. It was hard for many to see us as fellow citizens”, said Marta Salgado, historical leader of Oro Negro. Nevertheless, afrodescendants earned legal recognition and a place in Chilean history, when the bill Rocafull sponsored was signed into Law on 16 April 2019. UN Human Rights was a strategic partner in the campaign.

## WOMEN

*Paragraph 69 DDPA: “racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance reveal themselves in a differentiated manner for women and girls and can be among the factors leading to a deterioration in their living conditions, poverty, violence, multiple forms of discrimination, and the limitation or denial of their human rights.”*

### **Alyne de Silva Pimentel, Women and Multiple Discriminations, Brazil**

In 2002, Alyne da Silva Pimentel, a 28-year old Afro-Brazilian woman, died from maternal health-related causes after her local health centre misdiagnosed her symptoms and delayed providing her with emergency obstetric care. In 2007, her mother submitted an individual complaint before the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, arguing that national authorities had made no effort to establish professional responsibility and that she had been unable to obtain justice in Brazil. In August 2011, in *Pimentel v. Brazil*, the Committee noted that States have a human rights obligation to guarantee women of all racial and economic backgrounds timely and non-discriminatory access to appropriate maternal health services.

The Committee found violations of the right to health care and failure to ensure effective judicial protection in the context of non-discrimination. The Committee concluded that Alyne da Silva Pimentel was discriminated against, not only on the basis of her sex, but also on the basis of her status as a woman of African descent and her socioeconomic background. The *Pimentel v. Brazil* case was the first case on maternal mortality to be decided by an international human rights body. It has global significance in advancing the reproductive rights and maternal health care of millions of women throughout the world, particularly those women facing racial discrimination.

**“The Decade is a unique platform that emphasises the important contribution made by people of African descent to every society, and promotes concrete measures to stop discrimination and promote their full inclusion.”**

*UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, MICHELLE BACHELET  
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL,  
43<sup>RD</sup> SESSION, 13 MARCH 2020*

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

*Paragraph 43, DDPA: “... recognizes the special relationship that indigenous peoples have with the land as the basis for their spiritual, physical and cultural existence and encourage States, wherever possible, to ensure that indigenous peoples are able to retain ownership of their lands and of those natural resources to which they are entitled under domestic law ». In 2019, the Human Rights Council recognized the increasing threats to environmental defenders and passed a resolution expressing “grave concern at the situation of environmental human rights defenders around the world” and strongly condemning “the killing of and all other human rights violations or abuses against environmental human rights defenders.”*

### **Nemonte Nenquino, Waorani People, Ecuador**

In 2018, Ecuador’s Minister of Hydrocarbons announced an auction of 16 new oil concessions covering roadless, primary forest in the several regions, including the Waorani People’s ancestral land.

Nemonte Nenquino, is President of the Waorani Pastaza Organization (CONCOAWEP), which represents the Waorani across Ecuador’s Pastaza region. “It is not

enough to defend ourselves with spears or rituals. Now we have to go to court to protect ourselves and work with lawyers and community law," said Nenquino as she helped rally his people to resist the government's auctioning oil concessions on their land.

The Waorani filed a suit claiming the government had not properly consulted the community about the auctions. In April 2019, the court agreed. Nenquino said the court ruling was not just a victory for the Waorani. **"The struggle is not only for the indigenous, but for all humanity. We have to sustain our planet. We're wiping out nature and we're helping humanity to disappear. We have to unite to save the world."**

Waorani elder Omanca, who attended a recent Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, said fighting for the environment is her life, even in the face of threats. Human rights defenders, particularly those defending their environmental rights and land, are increasingly being killed as commercial interests attempt to exploit mineral resources on indigenous people's lands.

"I consider that I am defending the rights of nature and I am not afraid to face threats," she said. "That is why I am here (in Geneva), to explain what is happening in my territory, in the jungle so that the place I live can be respected."

## MIGRANTS

*Paragraphs 48 and 49 DDPA:* "... strongly condemn the manifestations and acts of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance against migrants and highlight the importance of creating conditions conducive to greater harmony, tolerance and respect between migrants and the rest of society."

### **Mary Consolata Namagambe, Combatting Racism, Denmark**

After immigrating aged nine to Denmark from Uganda with her parents and grasping elements of the local language, Mary Consolata Namagambe realised her classmates supposed compliments of her African identity were in reality racial slurs.

"I was the first brown African kid in the class so everybody was excited about me. They wanted to touch my skin, to touch my hair... But the more I began understanding the language, I began noticing things that other kids would call me", including the N-word.

At 24, Namagambe created the platform, The N-word Hurts, for people of African descent to discuss the country's casual attitude towards racism. She also launched Udlændinge vejleder udlændinge (Foreigners Guiding

Foreigners) for peer-to-peer guidance and counselling to help recently arrived foreign students navigate the Danish education system.

"I told myself [...] I love this country and I want to teach the people I live with how to treat me and how to talk to me, so we all can be together."

In 2018, Namagambe was chosen to attend the UN Human Rights Fellowship Programme for People of African Descent, learning how to use the Human Rights system to reinforce her activism.

**"If you see that something in your community is not right, if you can feel in your bones that what is happening is unfair, stand up. Because your voice is valid."**

## REFUGEES

*Paragraph 34, DDPA:* "Urges States to comply with their obligations under international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law relating to refugees, asylum-seekers and displaced persons, and urges the international community to provide them with protection and assistance in an equitable manner."

### **Abdul Aziz Muhamat, Refugee Rights, Australia**

For nearly six years his name was just a number: QNK002. The bureaucratic numerical pseudonyms designed to dehumanise Abdul Aziz Muhamat and the hundreds of other male refugees in Papua New Guinea's Manus Island detention centre, was a form of punishment for those fleeing conflicts and humanitarian crises and seeking sanctuary in Australia.

Requests for food, water, or any other form of assistance would only be considered by the facility's guards if refugees identified themselves by their internment number and not their given name.

Muhamat was detained and transferred to the Manus Island Australian offshore while fleeing the conflict in Darfur, Sudan. The offshore immigration system had been meant to be kept secret, hidden from the eyes of the rest of the world until Muhamat exposed the camp's inhumane conditions in the 2017 podcast *The Messenger*, co-produced by *Behind the Wire* and the *Wheeler Centre*.

His campaign for refugee rights earned him the 2019 Martin Ennals Award. He took part in the UN Human Rights Fellowship for People of African Descent in the same year.

In accepting the award in Geneva, Muhamat said "Today, the international community recognizes our existence, our struggle, our fight. They lead us to believe in hope for another day [...] **People are calling our names. People**

are still believing in us; that we are human beings, and we have a dignity. This is the message I am going to take back with me, to tell people we are not just a number.”

## RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC MINORITIES

*Paragraph 60, DDPA:* “We recognize with deep concern the existence in various parts of the world of religious intolerance against religious communities and their members...as well as the emergence of increased negative stereotyping, hostile acts and violence against such communities because of their religious beliefs and their ethnic or so-called racial origin.”

The global increase of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and the re-emergence of racist violent movements based on discriminatory ideologies is a cause of great concern for communities around the world.

UN Human Rights has joined forces with faith-based groups to combat growing hate speech and religious intolerance, through creation of a peer-to-peer toolkit based on fostering peaceful pluralistic societies. The “Faith4Rights” toolkit is based on 18 « Faith » commitments guiding action and brings together case studies and other resources for discussing the relationship between religion, beliefs and human rights.

The “Faith4Rights” toolkit is a living document that taps into social media, with a particular focus on the needs of youth and minorities. The toolkit modules can be tailored to the specific context of participants, recognizing that these discussions are not limited to one region or one religion.

“The causes for the rise of intolerance and hate speech are many, and so must be the approaches to tackling this scourge, including with a focus on faith-based organizations, leaders and community members, who can provide a narrative premised on hope, justice, inclusion and fairness: in other words a human rights approach,” said UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues Fernand de Varennes, in introducing the toolkit.

## ROMA, GYPSIES, SINTI, TRAVELLERS

*Paragraph 68, DDPA:* “We recognize with deep concern the ongoing manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including violence, against Roma / Gypsies / Sinti / Travellers and recognize the need to develop effective policies and implementation mechanisms for their full achievement of equality.”



## Silvia Feraru, Roma community mediator, Moldova

Since 2014, Silvia Feraru has provided advice, assistance and advocacy for the mainly Roma people of Carpineni village in Moldova. As a member of the Association of Roma Mediators, she has provided a link between her mostly Roma constituents, and local government.

The Roma community in Moldova has suffered from decades of discrimination and prejudice, which has led to many having a distrust of government services. UN Human Rights Office in Moldova has worked with members of the Roma and other communities to improve the ability of mediators. Feraru was trained on using international human rights mechanisms to advocate for better recognition of rights and delivery of services for the Roma.

Feraru has developed a strong relationship with local government and has helped start initiatives to keep children in school and allow families to find homes.

**“Participation in the human rights trainings offered me the necessary knowledge of how to correctly defend my rights as a Roma woman,”** Feraru said. “Now, serving as a Roma community mediator, I can more efficiently help and encourage them to fight for a prosperous future.”

## ASIANS AND PEOPLE OF ASIAN DESCENT

*Paragraph 36, DDPA:* “in many parts of the world, Asians and people of Asian descent face barriers as a result of social biases and discrimination prevailing in public and private institutions.”

The COVID-19 pandemic is heightening xenophobia globally, in particular towards Asians and people of Asian descent. This has been exacerbated by populists exploiting racism and xenophobia for political advantage.

There has been a significant increase in racial verbal abuse, harassment and violence in public spaces, particularly targeting Asians and people of Asian descent in the context of the pandemic. In some countries, people of Asian descent have been refused medical treatment and dental care. These reactions illustrate the urgent need for States to emphasise that the human rights of all individuals, in particular of the most vulnerable and marginalised, must be protected during crises.



A demonstrator holds a poster reading: I am not a virus, during anti-Asian hate protests in Los Angeles, California, USA. © Etienne Laurent/EPA-EFE

## HOW CAN WE END RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

The DDPA provides a number of recommendations for States to help end the scourge of racism, and promote equality and non-discrimination worldwide, chief among them, ratification adherence to and full implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). It also places the blame for roadblocks to overcoming racism, discrimination and achievement of racial equity mainly the lack of political will, weak legislation and lack of concrete strategies of States.

A 2021 UN High Commissioner for Human Rights report deplores the persistence of systemic racism, and highlights the imperative to reform discriminatory institutions, legislation, policies, and practices, in order to break this cycle. The *Agenda towards transformative change for racial justice and equality*, urges States to adopt a “systemic approach to combatting racial discrimination” through the adoption of whole-of-government and whole-of-society responses built on four pillars:

- *STEP UP*: Stop denying and start dismantling racism
- *PURSUE JUSTICE*: End impunity and build trust
- *LISTEN UP*: People of African descent must be heard
- *REDRESS*: Confront past legacies, take special measures and deliver reparatory justice

“I am calling on all States to stop denying, and start dismantling, racism; to end impunity and build trust; to listen to the voices of people of African descent; and to confront past legacies and deliver redress”, said UN Human Rights Chief, Michelle Bachelet, in launching the report. “There is today a momentous opportunity to achieve a turning point for racial equality and justice”.

## WAYS TO COMBAT RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

*Paragraph 80, DDPA: “We firmly believe that education, development and the faithful implementation of all international human rights norms and obligations, including enactment of laws and political, social and economic policies, are crucial to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.”*

The DDPA provides clear and practical measures for the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance at the national, regional and international levels.

### JUSTICE

The Durban Declaration reaffirms that victims of human rights violations resulting from racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, should be assured of having access to justice, including the right to seek justice and reparation for any damage suffered, in line with regional and global human rights norms.

### EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

Eliminating illiteracy in society is a crucial component and essential pillar for combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance. The DDPA calls for embedding human rights education in all schools for all ages, including portraying an accurate rendition of history from a victim-oriented approach. It also recognises the valuable contribution to humanity by Africans and people of African descent, Asians and people of Asian descent, indigenous peoples, minorities and other groups discriminated against and historically wronged.

### BLUEPRINT FOR NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

The DDPA serves as a blueprint for governments to develop and implement legal measures and policy responses, including programmes for reparations for past racial injustices, and empowers the victims of racial discrimination as rights-holders, through measures including:

- Implementing of effective policies to prevent, detect and ensure law enforcement is accountable for misconduct motivated by racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance (para. 71, Programme);
- Making ideologies based upon racial superiority or hatred punishable offences (para. 86, Declaration);
- Teaching about the facts and truth of the history, causes, nature and consequences of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (para. 98, Declaration)
- Ensuring political and legal systems reflect the multicultural diversity within societies and where necessary, improve democratic institutions so that they are more fully participatory and avoid marginalization, exclusion and discrimination against specific sectors of society (para. 61, Programme)
- Enhancing data collection, disaggregated in accordance with national legislation, collected with the explicit consent of the victims, based on their self-identification and in accordance with provisions on human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as data protection regulations and privacy guarantees (para. 92 (a), Programme).
- Implementing effective legislative and administrative policies, specifically addressing the plight of vulnerable workers – including migrants, domestic workers and trafficked persons – due to discrimination, xenophobia and violence (para. 67, Programme).

## INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The DDPA urges all actors on the international stage to build an international order based on inclusion, justice, equality and equity, human dignity, mutual understanding and promotion of and respect for cultural diversity and universal human rights, and to reject all doctrines of exclusion based on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (para. 148, Programme)

It also calls upon States, in opposing all forms of racism, to recognize the need to counter anti-Semitism, anti-Arabism and Islamophobia worldwide, and urges all States to take effective measures to prevent the emergence of movements based on racism and discriminatory ideas concerning these communities (para. 150, Programme).

Moreover, the DDPA calls for the universal ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and its effective implementation and urges States to sign on to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as the Optional Protocols.

**Find out which countries have signed on to 18 critical human rights treaties protecting against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, here:** <https://indicators.ohchr.org/>

## WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT/WHOLE OF SOCIETY RESPONSE

The Programme of Action highlights responsibility not only of States but a cross section of society, including international and non-governmental organisations, political parties, media and others to chart a path forward for the eradication of racism, including calls for:

- Ensuring the role of a free press in promoting the diversity and benefits of a multicultural society; and voluntary codes of conduct/self-regulatory measures against the dissemination of racist messages;
- Concrete steps by political leaders and parties towards social cohesion, tolerance and respect;
- State-civil society partnerships to enhance disaggregated data collection of racially motivated violence, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance;
- Transforming working environments into places free from discrimination by enforcing civil rights, workplace education programmes, and protecting workers' rights.

**See more here on international mandates and efforts to eliminate racism:** <https://spinternet.ohchr.org/ViewAllCountryMandates.aspx?Type=TM&lang=e>



Protesters hold signs urging an end to systemic racism during a march in honor of the new United States national Juneteenth holiday in Galveston, Texas, USA. © EPA-EFE/CJ GUNTHER



Members of the People's Vaccine Campaign of South Africa protest equal access and fair prices for COVID 19 vaccines. © EPA-EFE/NIC BOTHMA



A man holds a placard during the 'Commitment March: Get Your Knee Off Our Necks', at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, USA. The march took place on the 57th anniversary of the historic march where Dr Martin Luther King delivered his 'I Have a Dream' speech. © EPA-EFE/GAMAL DIAB

## REALISING THE PROMISE OF THE DDPA: ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2001

The DDPA has been catalytic in laying the foundation for global efforts in combatting and preventing racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The DDPA has contributed to the proliferation of legislative measures, the development of national action plans and monitoring mechanisms; and has helped to place the issue of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance as an urgent priority on today's international agenda.

Since the global community adopted the DDPA in 2001:

- 42 States have adopted or amended legislation prohibiting racial discrimination;
- 35 States have established equality bodies for combating racial discrimination and promoting equality;
- 23 States and regional institutions have adopted national and regional policies against racism;
- 26 more States have ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, bringing the total to 182 States that are party to this Convention.
- The International Decade for People of African Descent was pronounced for the period 2015-2024.

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action clearly established linkages between the legacy of the past and contemporary forms of racism and racial

discrimination. In the DDPA states recognize that colonialism has led to racism and racial discrimination, and that Africans and people of African descent, Asians and people of Asian descent and indigenous peoples continue to be victims of its consequences today.

Several states have recently begun taking measures to redress these historical wrongs and to address racism deeply entrenched in centuries of colonialism and enslavement. Actions include: creation of historical foundations and national days for remembrance of victims of the slave trade; acknowledging and apologizing for past governments' part in the transatlantic slave trade; declaring slavery a crime against humanity; and establishing national commissions of inquiry on reconciliation and accountability for past wrongs against specific groups.

Yet, no state has comprehensively accounted for the past or for the current impact of systemic racism. It is time to overcome these hurdles through political leadership, creative responses, empowerment measures and honest dialogue about the impact of these legacies on contemporary forms of racism.

**“It is time to acknowledge and repair longstanding wrongs and reverse their consequences. Reparatory justice is essential for reconciliation, prevention of conflict and the creation of societies based on fairness, equality, respect and solidarity.”**

*UN SECRETARY-GENERAL, ANTÓNIO GUTERRES*





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