



General Assembly

Distr.: General
27 June 2019

English only

Human Rights Council

Forty-first session

24 June–12 July 2019

Agenda item 9

**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related
forms of intolerance, follow-up and implementation
of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

Written statement* submitted by Sikh Human Rights Group, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[03 June 2019]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Towards a declaration on diversity

To promote the sentiments and intentions of the 2001 Durban World Conference Against Racism particularly with reference to para 6 of the Declaration, the Sikh Human Rights Group has been proposing a Declaration on Diversity.

A Declaration will compliment existing antidiscrimination instruments that aim to promote inclusive and tolerant societies. Whereas anti discrimination instruments seek to use the force of State law and international compliance by States to prevent discrimination against minorities, vulnerable communities and groups, there is also a need to foster a culture of accepting diversity as a fact of human life and nature.

We believe that the immense diversity among human beings and nature needs to be protected and nurtured through a combination of approaches which should also include wider acceptance of diversity, valuing it and promoting a culture of co-existence.

Reference is made to para 6 of the 2001 Durban Declaration of the World Conference Against Racism, 'We further affirm that all peoples and individuals constitute one human family, rich in diversity. They have contributed to the progress of civilizations and cultures that form the common heritage of humanity. Preservation and promotion of tolerance, pluralism and respect for diversity can produce more inclusive societies.'

To preserve and promote inclusive societies, there need to be positive programmes of actions by States to reduce marginalisation, to strengthen minority communities, to change attitudes and enhance cohesion between groups and sections of communities.

Diversity also includes biodiversity in nature and other forms of life. There is now general acknowledgment that biodiversity is not only the essence of nature but necessary in maintaining eco systems.

A Declaration on Diversity will encourage acceptance and coexistence of civilisations, cultures, ethnicities, belief systems, lifestyles and ecosystems.

By signing up to a Declaration, States can develop their own approaches in promoting diversity within their own countries but also benefit from including best practices from experiences of other States.

A Declaration on Diversity will also meet as well as enhance Sustainable Development Goal 16.7: 'Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels'.

At this stage there is a need to accept the principle of a Declaration on Diversity and then set up a committee to explore its purpose, its benefit and its intricacies before going into the particulars. The Human Rights Council is urged to consider this proposal.