



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Forty-sixth session

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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.

[30 January 2021]

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



## **Towards A Declaration on Diversity**

In the past year discrimination around the globe has been fought against in the millions. While the fear of a global pandemic has spread across all corners of the world it has not stopped people of colour, variable lifestyles, gender, social economic backgrounds and religion protest for their right of equality and for their voices to be heard. While there was a race to find a vaccine for COVID-19, the real pandemic of racism, xenophobia and discrimination has been around for centuries and there is still no vaccine for it. We have been living with the pandemic of discrimination for centuries. It is time to find a cure that is effective.

While strengthening the law and anti-discriminatory policies is essential to address discriminatory attitude towards the 'other' or the minority groups of the world, Sikh Human Rights Group (SHRG) feels we need to go further than the law. We need to encourage a culture of accepting diversity as natural and enacting policies to help people to be comfortable with diversity, and eventually feel enriched by the diversity this world has to offer. This in turn will complement the existing approaches.

While we recognise there are many countries that have adopted policies of promoting diversity across the many sectors of the State, and comparatively, there are many countries where individuals have to fight for basic respect, dignity and equality through political campaigns and legal challenges; no country has come close to curing the discriminatory pandemic. SHRG believes measures to improve and create a positive approach towards diversity is through the United Nations (UN). We propose that a Declaration on Diversity is the appropriate step.

A Declaration on Diversity will encourage States to adopt policies, learn from best practices and reduce discrimination against minorities and underrepresented groups. This will show solidarity around the globe when we need it most, show that voices have been heard, and that no one died in vain while protesting for their human rights.

A Declaration on Diversity will emphasis and embody pluralism, where societies worldwide are encouraged to live in peaceful coexistence with one another, regardless of one's community, lifestyle, religion, ethnicity, gender, age or background. We, as a world, need to do more than just tolerate one another's differences and give more than just civil rights. We need to inspire people to embrace diversity and not only feel comfortable with it but value it. People need to educate themselves on the different struggles other people around the globe and down the street from them have faced.

A Declaration on Diversity will also be incorporating respect for biodiversity. It will promote a better understanding of the ecosystems sustained by diversity. Respecting diversity in nature and human life compliments each other.

The UN is made up of people from all walks of life and should represent mutual coexistence between people of different backgrounds. We strongly believe a Declaration on Diversity is long overdue and will be the mere start to an overarching list of monumental frameworks for all countries to work from and improve on.

A Declaration on Diversity will show to the world, a world that is still hurting and feeling angry and silenced from 2020, that the UN has listened, stands in solidarity and is making a difference. From there an annual UN Diversity Day could be introduced, celebrating the beauty of diversity within this wonderful planet and how no longer living with hate or fear of someone who is different to you should be how we live our life from now onwards. When you share human rights with people from all walk of life that does not mean you lose any of your human rights or quality of life, but rather your life will only become enriched as you admire the variety of people this world, we all share, has to offer.

We understand not all states will agree to all aspects of a Declaration on Diversity. However, we believe a glass ceiling needs to be broken and now is the time to break it. Now should be the time of change or encouraging challenging and uncomfortable conversations to stand up for people, who in some states, are still fighting for basic human rights, dignity and respect. A slow and gradual acceptance and adoption of the principal

articles within such a Declaration will be a success in itself as an initial charter for a positive action plan on fulfilling the sentiments and ambitions of the Durban Declaration.

We urge all states to consider a Declaration on Diversity as a way of making small and positive steps towards a planet that celebrates human diversity ecosystems and biodiversity.

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