



**General Assembly**

Distr.  
GENERAL

A/HRC/9/5  
1 September 2008

Original: ENGLISH

---

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Ninth session

Agenda item 9

**RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED  
FORMS OF INTOLERANCE: FOLLOW-UP TO AND IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE DURBAN DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION**

**Implementation of recommendations made by the Intergovernmental  
Working Group at its fifth session on the effective implementation of  
the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

**Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner  
for Human Rights\***

---

\* The present report is submitted late in order to include the most recent information.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. In a note by the Secretariat (A/HRC/7/43), submitted to the Human Rights Council at its seventh session, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) referred to decision 2/102, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner to continue with the fulfilment of their activities, in accordance with all previous decisions adopted by the Commission on Human Rights, and to update the relevant reports and studies.
2. In the note, OHCHR also made reference to the fact that the Intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action held the first part of its fifth session in Geneva from 5 to 9 March 2007, and the second part from 3 to 7 September 2007. In the note it was stated that the report of the Working Group on its fifth session (A/HRC/6/10) contained recommendations for OHCHR and that the progress report of OHCHR on the implementation of those recommendations would be submitted to the Council at its ninth session, taking into account the reporting cycle of one year following the conclusion of each session of the Working Group. It is against this background that the present report is being submitted.
3. The Intergovernmental Working Group held its fifth session in two parts. At the end of the session, the Working Group adopted by consensus several recommendations on each of the themes discussed during the two parts of its session. In its recommendations 103-105, the Intergovernmental Working Group invited OHCHR: (a) to post on the Internet relevant information on Durban follow-up activities, thereby facilitating the exchange of information on the follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, and contributing to a higher visibility of those activities; (b) to increase its collaboration with United Nations agencies and country teams with regard to the follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action; (c) to take a proactive stance with regard to its capacity to assist States in the preparation and implementation of national plans of action. The present report provides an overview of the activities undertaken by OHCHR to implement those recommendations.

## **II. MEASURES ADOPTED AND ACTIONS TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. Posting on the Internet of relevant information on Durban follow-up activities**

4. The OHCHR website includes a “list of issues” link, which leads to another sub-link entitled “racism”, which in turn leads to a list of the relevant Durban-related documents. In implementing the recommendation of the Working Group regarding the posting of information on the Internet, OHCHR rearranged, updated and improved the sub-link, thus providing access to the documents relating to Durban follow-up activities and the Durban Review Conference.
5. The recommendation to post documents on the Internet was also supported by the Preparatory Committee for the Durban Review Conference. During the first session of the

Intersessional Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group, established by the Preparatory Committee for the Durban Review Conference, it discussed the issue of posting on the Internet information regarding Durban follow-up activities and the Durban Review Conference. The Secretariat submitted a note to the Working Group which indicated the links to the various documents posted on the OHCHR website.

6. Following decision 2/9 of the Preparatory Committee adopted at its first substantive session in April 2008, in which the Preparatory Committee requested the High Commissioner, in her capacity as Secretary-General of the Durban Review Conference, to prepare and carry out, in close cooperation with the Department of Public Information, a worldwide information campaign with a view to mobilizing support for the objectives of the Durban Review Conference by all sectors of political, economic, social and cultural life, as well as other interested sectors, the OHCHR Communications Section, in collaboration with the Department of Public Information, prepared and began implementing an information campaign that included information notes, posters, websites, materials and media briefings.

7. In order that the decision of the Preparatory Committee and the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Working Group could be implemented, the area of the OHCHR website dedicated to the anti-racism review process and conference (see paragraph 4 above) was further enhanced with public information materials. The logo developed at the request of the Preparatory Committee and made available in four languages for the regional meetings in Brazil and Nigeria (see paragraph 16 below) was placed on the homepage of the website to facilitate quick and direct access to the relevant section. The information campaign (see paragraph 6 above) envisions the further development of the review process and conference website in a way similar to that followed for the World Conference against Racism of 2001. This dedicated review process and conference website will contain public information materials and all relevant documents and will be continuously updated up to and beyond the Conference in April 2009.

**B. Increase in collaboration with United Nations agencies and country teams with regard to the follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

**1. Collaboration with United Nations agencies**

8. In addressing the challenges connected to racism, OHCHR organizes and participates in various activities to mainstream the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action into the mandates, programmes and projects of United Nations specialized agencies. In particular, OHCHR operates in close partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, especially with regard to its project for an International Coalition of Cities against Racism, which relies on the instrumental role city authorities and policymakers can play at the local level to create dynamic synergies in the fight against racism.

9. OHCHR encourages agencies to get involved in the process, including by transmitting reports and information material on follow-up to the World Conference against Racism; dedicating parts on their websites to non-discrimination and/or follow-up to the World

Conference; issuing and developing publications; paying special attention to the commemoration of relevant international days, especially the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition; including information about the Review Conference and the preparatory process within the context of their respective public information activities; and preparing parallel events to the process or during the Review Conference. OHCHR regularly updates agencies on the process leading up to the Review Conference and is planning to convene a meeting with Geneva-based focal points shortly.

## **2. Collaboration with United Nations country teams**

10. Every year, OHCHR organizes a special event to commemorate 21 March, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Following the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Working Group, OHCHR made a special effort to ensure that United Nations agencies and country teams were increasingly involved in the commemoration in 2008, which focused on the theme “Dignity and justice: the cornerstones of combating racial discrimination”. The commemoration was organized jointly with the International Organization of la Francophonie.

11. OHCHR produced a leaflet for the observance of 21 March in support of the year-long campaign commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The outreach material was circulated to OHCHR field offices, United Nations agencies and media, and was also posted on the OHCHR website. The overall objective of the leaflet and its dissemination was to increase the visibility of the commemoration of 21 March and OHCHR actions in the field of anti-discrimination, including through Durban follow-up activities.

12. As part of its strategy to increase collaboration with United Nations country teams in preparation for the Review Conference, OHCHR organized a consultation with its field presences, held in Geneva on 27 and 28 December 2007 and was attended by OHCHR field representatives from 10 field presences, mainly from Africa and Asia, where awareness of the Durban processes had been poorest.

13. The aim of the consultation was to identify the means to improve dissemination of information and to design strategies by engaging field-based stakeholders, in particular country teams, in improving implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and contributing to the preparatory processes of the Durban Review Conference.

14. The brainstorming on problems, challenges and opportunities in the process of popularizing the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and other anti-racism initiatives resulted in an agreement on some broad but specific strategies that could be implemented to engage stakeholders further in the issues of racism and encourage their involvement in the Durban review processes currently under way. Some of the strategies emerging from the brainstorming included the filling of the existing knowledge gap by preparing an information kit for use by the field on the Durban process, and addressing the negative perceptions about the 2001 Durban Conference and the Declaration and Programme of Action.

15. The two-day consultation ended with the elaboration of a plan of action, which spelled out concrete actions that could be taken to promote anti-discrimination initiatives; boost dissemination of information on the Durban process; and engage stakeholders in the review process. A specific element of the plan was to enhance collaboration between OHCHR field offices and United Nations country teams in order to engage stakeholders in the Durban review process. The plan of action also included measures to enhance collaboration with field offices and regional and international organizations, such as the International Organization of la Francophonie.

16. In organizing the regional preparatory meetings for the Durban Review Conference in Brasilia, from 17 to 19 June 2008, and in Abuja, from 24 to 26 August 2008, OHCHR coordinated with the United Nations country teams and requested through the Regional Coordinators that United Nations agencies in the respective regions support and facilitate the participation of non-governmental organizations in the preparatory process.

### **C. A proactive stance with regard to capacity to assist States in the preparation and implementation of national plans of action**

17. OHCHR welcomes the pledge made by the European Commission in 2006 to support its work in implementing the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, a component of which aims to provide advice and assistance to Governments through technical cooperation projects to elaborate national plans of action against discrimination.

18. OHCHR is engaged in informal collaboration with three Governments that have requested or expressed their wish to receive assistance in the preparation of national plans of action with a view to ensuring that the challenges associated with the preparation of those plans are taken into consideration.

19. Under this project, OHCHR has been elaborating guidelines for the preparation of plans of action that could serve to assist and facilitate the development of such plans by Member States. The proactive role of OHCHR in assisting States was limited owing to a lack of capacity, considering the many tasks that had to be accomplished during the reporting period.

## **III. CONCLUSION**

20. **OHCHR is engaged in updating its Internet website on a regular basis. New information relevant to Durban follow-up activities, and in particular the Durban Review Conference, is posted regularly on the website in the light of the constant developments unfolding in the preparations for the Conference in 2009. It is anticipated that the new website will be made operational in the near future to allow much broader access to all information concerning both the Durban Review Conference and the follow-up activities thereto, which will facilitate engagement of stakeholders in Durban-related activities.**

21. **In addressing the challenges connected to combating racism, OHCHR maintains close and effective collaboration with United Nations agencies in order to contribute to the**

**harmonization of anti-racism-related policies and strategies. In this regard, OHCHR disseminates information on the follow-up to the World Conference against Racism and the preparations for the Durban Review Conference to focal points in other agencies.**

**22. Finally, considering the important role played by national plans of action in combating racism, OHCHR will need to strengthen its capacity to encourage, support and assist States in developing their own plans. OHCHR experience in this area indicates that the development of such plans comprises several phases, which will require a clear, well-designed and all-inclusive methodology.**

-----