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**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 Agence pour les droits de l'homme, 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.

[21 August 2021]

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



The success of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA), requires more education and awareness campaigns, targeting degrading human attitudes and behaviors such as racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia

The year 2021 marks an important moment towards the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA), which is the most authoritative and comprehensive program to fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance. According to the Global Health & Human Rights Database (2021), victims of the above-mentioned inhuman acts can suffer several or aggravated forms of discrimination because of sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, social origin, property, birth, etc. Thus, fighting all these forms of human rights violation is a matter of priority for the international community. This is especially true about the African population, the sacrifices they have made and their efforts to draw the attention of international communities to such inhuman tragedies, affecting all countries across the continent and throughout the world as well.

The effects of colonialism and apartheid are still visible in the current South African Society, with racially-based poverty and underdevelopment. Racism exists everywhere in the world but varies according to the context. In Morocco, for instance, anti-black racism is pronounced, widespread, and largely denied by non-blacks. The same is true in Nigeria where people are being discriminated against on the bases of gender, ethnic background, religion, language, financial status, income, and academic qualifications. Egypt is another example, presenting evidence of discrimination and inequality resulting from political opinions, religion or beliefs, gender, ethnicity or race, nationality and citizenship, disability, health status, and sexual orientation as well as gender identity.

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action acknowledged xenophobia as still of burning importance today, reflecting the necessity to deal with xenophobic attitudes and behaviors. The economic downturn has worsened the conditions of migrants and refugees, particularly from sub-Saharan countries, most of whom are experiencing increasing abuse and violence. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has confirmed, for example, growing xenophobia in Egypt, where attitudes towards migrant women, in particular, have worsened recently, leading to more cases of sexual and gender-based violence. Although attitudes towards refugees and migrants of color might be slowly changing, the country still has a long way to go, as racist attitudes against migrants and refugees appear to be deeply ingrained across various sections of Egyptians society. There have been also recurring incidences of xenophobia in Nigeria as a driving force to asset the country's power position in Africa as against a shared hegemonic power between the two African major powers. In the case of Morocco, as the UN Special Rapporteur (2019) claims, there is no comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, while the lack of a national action plan to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance is evident, depriving government actors at all levels of much-needed guidance, while leading to structural exclusion and racist stereotyping based on language, culture, or gender.

As stated in the 46th session of the Human Rights Council (2021), racism forms a major obstacle to development, and combatting racism and all other forms of discrimination must be integrated into attempts towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action focuses on the actions the States should take in collaboration with parliaments, national institutions, civil society, and others to realize these goals. However, implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action requires the joint efforts taken by all members of the international community.

We think that to contribute to the success of the plan, more education and awareness campaigns are needed, targeting human degrading attitudes and behaviors such as racism, racial discrimination, and xenophobia. Regarding xenophobia, all organizations should focus on educating those directly or indirectly involved in violent attacks and raising their awareness of the human rights involved, which will gradually lead to cultural transformation and a shift in attitudes. The most important thing to remember is that the best way to deal

with any problem is to find out its root causes and try to solve the problem fundamentally. Hence, regular and comprehensive assessments of human rights conditions with the coordination and cooperation of different organizations across the world can help realize the goals of human rights protection and elimination of all kinds of inhuman behaviors and attitudes, ensuring accountability for every kind of misconduct.
