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### **SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT, WORKING GROUP CHAIR**

#### **URGES, AS THIRD COMMITTEE TAKES UP RACISM, SELF-DETERMINATION**

##### **Special Rapporteur on Use of Mercenaries, Other Experts Also Brief Delegates**

A United Nations expert urged support today for the proposed International Decade for People of African Descent as the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) began its discussion on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and the right to self-determination.

"People of African descent have for centuries been victims of racism, racial discrimination, enslavement and denial of their rights," said Verene Shepherd, Chair of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, as she presented that body's report for the Committee's consideration. She expressed support for designating the period 2014 to 2023 as the International Decade for People of African Descent.

The draft programme of action for the proposed international decade would be centred on the theme "Recognition, Justice and Development", she said, stressing the need to recognize people of African descent as a distinct group and to address the historical and continuing violations of their rights, including the denial of equal access to justice, reparations and protection under the law. Quoting the words of Edward Linenthal, she said the "indigestible fishbone of slavery" continued to stick in the throat due to the persistence of its legacies over 500 years. The impact of slavery and colonialism were most obvious in the Americas and on the African continent itself, she added.

The Committee also heard from Mutuma Ruteere, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, who addressed the link between racism and poverty. Noting that poverty disproportionately affected racial or ethnic minorities, he said that a lack of education, adequate housing and health care transmitted it from generation to generation, perpetuating racial prejudices and stereotypes.

Fiji's representative, speaking on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China, welcomed the recent designation of South Africa as facilitator of the consultative process for proclaiming the international decade, pledging to galvanize the necessary efforts for approval of the relevant and long-overdue draft resolution.

The representative of Antigua and Barbuda, speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said the region's history reflected the legacy of the very injustices suffered by Africans and their descendants. Last July, CARICOM's Heads of Government had agreed to support the establishment of a regional reparations commission to begin laying the groundwork for a process of engagement with the former slave-holding countries.

Offering a different perspective, the representative of the European Union delegation argued that the global fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, without singling out any region, is an issue that concerns us all, and in which the international community must be united.

South Africa's delegate, speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), joined others in stressing the significance of the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination,

Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the resultant adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, saying it marked a “seminal and watershed moment in history”. However, progress in its implementation by States had been slow and uneven, he added.

Algeria’s representative was among several delegates who warned against the incitement of hatred and intolerance, including “Islamophobia” and the association of the Muslim religion with terrorism, by political parties and extremist racist organizations.

Many of the more than 30 speakers today also expressed support for the rights to self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Also briefing the Committee was Anton Katz, Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of people to self-determination, who reiterated the need for an international, legally binding instrument to regulate the use of mercenaries as a necessary complement to national laws, which lacked adequate registration, licensing and accountability systems.

Ivan Šimonović, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, also presented reports of the Secretary-General for the Committee’s consideration.

Also participating in the general debate were speakers representing China, Russian Federation, Israel, Colombia, Libya, Iceland, Norway, Malaysia, Senegal, Brazil, Belarus, Nigeria, Pakistan, Egypt, Ecuador, Cuba, Sudan, Iran, Qatar, India, Cameroon, Botswana, Armenia and Nicaragua, as well as the International Organization for Migration.

The Third Committee will meet again at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 5 November, to conclude its general discussion on racism and self-determination.

#### Background

The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) met this morning to take up the elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, as well as the right of peoples to self-determination. On the first topic, delegates had the following documentation before them: “Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on its eighty-first and eighty-second sessions” (document [A/68/18](#)); note by the Secretary-General transmitting the “Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance” (document [A/68/329](#)); “Report of the Secretary-General on how to make the International Decade for People of African Descent effective” (document [A/67/879](#)); and a note transmitting the “Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance” (document [A/68/333](#)). For the second topic, Committee members had before them the “Report of the Secretary-General on the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination” (document [A/68/318](#)), and a note transmitting the “Report of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination” (document [A/68/339](#)).

The Committee began by hearing introductory statements and the presentation of reports by several experts, including special rapporteurs and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights.

#### Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

MUTUMA RUTEERE, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, introduced two reports (documents [A/68/329](#) and [A/68/333](#)), saying the first addressed the issue of racism and poverty. It noted that the continuing socioeconomic vulnerability of minorities was frequently the result of historical legacies such as the impact of slavery and colonization, systems of inherited status as well as long-standing formalized and State-sponsored discrimination in many parts of the world. Poverty disproportionately affected racial or ethnic minorities, and a lack of education, adequate housing and health care transmitted it from generation to generation, perpetuating racial prejudices and stereotypes, he said. Guaranteeing the right to education for all children should be the cornerstone of strategies to reduce poverty and end discrimination.

Vulnerable and marginalized groups disproportionately faced obstacles in gaining access to health care, he continued. Similarly, legal insecurity of tenure for poor and marginalized ethnic and racial minorities forced some of their members to move to urban areas, where the only affordable shelter was to be found in informal and slum settlements, where they endured substandard housing and faced the daily risk of eviction. Among those marginalized groups were more than 200 million people of African descent; indigenous peoples constituting about 5 per cent of the world’s population, but representing one third of its 900 million extremely poor rural people; the estimated 10 million to 12 million Roma, who were among Europe’s most important minority groups; Dalits in the caste system; and migrants.

Turning to the second report, he emphasized the universal nature of the human rights and democratic challenges posed by extremist groups, saying no country was immune to them. States should prohibit any commemorative celebration of the Nazi regime and its crimes against humanity, whether official or non-official, he said, urging them to ratify international legislation to combat racism and call for the modernization of national anti-racism legislation in light of the increasingly open expression of hate speech and incitement to violence against vulnerable groups. States should bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes motivated by racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or homophobia and combat impunity.

In the ensuing question-and-answer session, the representative of the European Union Delegation asked the Special Rapporteur to elaborate on harmonizing national legislation with international standards, protecting people of a certain sexual orientation from violence, and ways to collect disaggregated data.

Mr. RUTEERE cited examples of good national legislation in Europe aimed at combating the proliferation of Nazism, saying national measures could be harmonized with international and regional instruments on genocide and on civil and political rights, as well as with the European Union Charter of Human Rights. On attacks by extremist groups, he said lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people were among the targets. In conclusion, he noted that many countries had regulatory restrictions on disaggregating data on the basis of ethnicity, but there were innovative ways to collect disaggregated data using universities and Government organizations that did not face State restrictions.

In response to the representative of Nigeria, who cautioned that the Special Rapporteur should not venture into LGBT issues because his mandate already covered enough areas, he said he was fully aware of his mandate, but had a duty to issue early warning of patterns, including incidents against people of certain sexual orientations.

IVAN SIMONIVIC, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, introduced the "Report of the Secretary-General on global efforts for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action" (to be issued); "Report of the Secretary-General on how to make the International Decade for People of African Descent effective (document A/67/879); and the "Report of the Secretary-General on the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination" (document A/68/318).

#### People of African Descent

VERENE SHEPHERD, Chair of the Working Group of Experts on People of African descent, presented her report (document A/68/879), recalling that the entity had been formed in 2002, in the wake of the historic World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001. Since then, many individuals and groups had been lobbying for more serious attention to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action as a framework to guide those committed to the elimination of all forms of intolerance and injustice, including historical injustices like native genocide, slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. She urged support for an international decade for people of African descent, in which efforts would be undertaken, among other things, to recover black pride and dignity, produce indigenous knowledge systems and educate people to understand their past. It was well-known that people of African descent had for centuries been victims of racism, racial discrimination, enslavement and denial of their rights, she said.

Despite efforts by the international community, Governments and local authorities, racism continued to result in violations of human rights, suffering, disadvantage and violence, she continued. Citing Edward Linenthal's reference to the "indigestible fishbone of slavery", she said it remained stuck in the throat due to the persistence of its legacies over 500 years. The impact of slavery and colonialism was nowhere more obvious than in the Americas and on the African continent itself, she said. The draft programme of action for the proposed international decade would be centred on the theme "Recognition, Justice and Development", she continued. Recognizing people of African descent as a distinct group was a key step to increasing their visibility as well as respect for their culture, identity, history and heritage, she said. Justice was fundamental to addressing the historical and continuing rights violations suffered by people of African descent, including their rights to equal access to justice, reparations and equal protection by the law. Development both highlighted their role in global development and pushed for human rights-based approaches in addressing the socioeconomic and political inequality they faced.

During the proposed decade, attention would be paid to multiple forms of discrimination based on sex, language, religion, social origin, birth or other status, she continued. The decade would also be an opportunity to bring together actors at the international, regional and national levels, including United Nations bodies and agencies, Member States, civil society and people of African descent, with the aim not only of promoting equality for people of African descent, but also of contributing to greater economic and social development outcomes, social justice, inclusion and positive intercultural relations. She concluded by inviting the General Assembly to designate the period 2014 to 2023 as the International Decade for People of African Descent, with the

programme to be elaborated by the Working Group and with full financial support from Member States. Despite the progress made, more work was needed to rid the world of the scourge of racism, as well as human rights violations and other acts of intolerance linked to ethnicity and skin colour, she stressed, adding: "I urge you to stand on the right side of history."

In the ensuing interactive session, delegates raised issues relating to visits to assess the situation on the ground, the possibility of adding "empowerment" to the theme for the proposed decade and the funding needed to carry out the Working Group's mandate. Other delegates asked about distinctions between the discrimination suffered by people of African descent and that faced by other groups, the assessment of the International Year for People of African Descent in 2011. The latter questions were addressed to the Chair of the Working Group and to the Assistant Secretary-General.

Ms. SHEPHERD said members of the Working Group had made several visits to Africa, where they had noted the positive measures undertaken by States as well as the remaining challenges. On the theme, she said there was no need to add "empowerment" since that would be a result of the chosen theme — recognition, justice and development. On funding, she urged financial support for participation by non-governmental organizations and other civil society representatives, especially in light of their important role in keeping the Working Group informed.

Reiterating that African descent had the unique historical experience of racism and discrimination because of their skin colour, she said the proposed decade would allow a focus on those specific issues, citing other international years and decades designated to call attention to other unique issues. Voicing concern over rising "pigment-phobia" and "Africa-phobia", she said that although the International Year for People of African Descent had had positive results, more time was needed to complete the work started.

Mr. SIMONOVICH reiterated that, while human rights and the prohibition of all forms discrimination were universal, the ways in which discrimination manifested itself differed, calling for different measures to address it. Since the particular aspects of discrimination against people of African descent could not be addressed in one year, the United Nations could allocate a specific decade for it, he added.

Participating in the dialogue were representatives of Nigeria, South Africa, European Union Delegation and Equatorial Guinea.

#### Use of Mercenaries

ANTON KATZ, Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of people to self-determination, introduced the body's report (document A/68/339), giving an overview of its activities during the review period. The Working Group had held three regular sessions, and continued to receive and review reports on the activities of mercenaries and private military and security companies, as well as their impact on human rights. It had held an expert panel on the use of such companies by the United Nations and conducted visits to Somalia and Honduras. It had also requested visits to Bolivia, Chad and Ghana, among other countries. The Working Group had postponed its visit to Libya, received an invitation from Syria and was pursuing its survey of national laws relevant to private military and security companies.

The result of the study demonstrated that there was little guidance on how to effectively address the privatization of security due to the absence of a legally binding international instrument, he said. That had resulted in divergent national approaches, creating regulatory gaps which may be potential sources of human rights violations. The report provided an update on both parts of the Working Group's mandate — mercenaries on the one hand, and private military and security companies on the other. The Working Group was concerned about the continuing activities of mercenaries along the border of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, and about the detention of alleged mercenaries in Libya. It also noted with concern the reference by the Permanent Representative of Syria to the aggravating role played by mercenaries in that country, he said, adding that the Working Group also reported on the evolution of the private military and security industry in Iraq and Afghanistan, and in the area of maritime security.

Mercenaries posed a threat not only to security, but also to human rights and the right of people to self-determination, he continued. Private military and security companies, as well as their ever-expanding activities, also continued to raise a number of challenges. Outsourcing security to such companies created risks for human rights, hence the need to regulate those activities. The Working Group, therefore, reiterated its position that an international legally binding instrument was a necessary complement to national legislation, which was inadequate for addressing such challenges due to inadequacies relating to registering, licensing and transparent accountability systems. A robust international legal framework, coupled with national laws and self-regulatory initiatives, was therefore necessary for the effective regulation of corporate actors whose operations posed potential threats to human rights.

Delegates asked about the unavailability of the Working Group's report in all six official languages; the Working Group's inputs for the upcoming meetings of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on an international regulatory framework, and of "Montreux+5"; the future focus of the survey of domestic legislation regulating mercenaries and private military and security companies; the extent to which, and ways in which, the Working Group would support national legislation; the Convention on the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa, and other existing regulating instruments; the Working Group's scheduled visit to Syria; and the responsibility of important businesses for the recruitment of mercenaries, as in the case of Equatorial Guinea in 2004.

Mr. KATZ pointed out that the report was available in all six official languages on the Working Group's website, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Mercenaries/WGMercenaries/Pages/WGMercenariesIndex.aspx>).

On the international regulatory framework on private military and security companies, to be held in Geneva next month, he said the Working Group would offer any input requested of it, and the same was valid for the "Montreux+5" Conference — also to be held in Geneva next month — which would enable signatory parties to share their experiences on the implementation of the Montreux Document's obligations and best practices, on that occasion.

Replying to a question about alternative mechanisms to regulate the issue of mercenaries, and support for national legislation, he reiterated both the need for a legally binding international instrument, and for the Working Group to support national legislation, but rejected the possibility of resorting to the death penalty as a punishment for mercenaries. A model law should come from the United Nations, he said.

In response to another question, he said the survey's next phase, on national laws relevant to private military and security companies, would focus on French-speaking African countries and Asia, followed by other regions.

Referring to the International Code of Conduct as an initiative to enable private military and security companies to regulate themselves, he said the fact that it was "self-regulatory is part of the problem", because that should not be the case for documents standardizing possible violations of human rights.

In conclusion, he said the Working Group was ready and willing to visit Syria, but there were security concerns.

Participating in the dialogue were representatives of Cuba, European Union Delegation, Switzerland, Nigeria, Syria and Equatorial Guinea.

#### General Discussion

PETER THOMSON (Fiji), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 developing countries and China, welcomed recent efforts to elaborate complementary standards to strengthen and update international instruments on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in support of the full and effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Only by mobilizing political will at the national, regional and international levels to effectively implement those documents "will we be able to truly combat and curb the scourge of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in all spheres of life and in all parts of the world, including all those under foreign occupation". The persistence of racism and racial discrimination was related to past atrocities committed during conquest, colonialism, the Holocaust, slavery and other forms of forced servitude.

He went on to emphasize that the legacy of slavery was at the heart of situations of profound social and economic inequality, which continued to affect people of African descent. It was important that the fight against racism recognize the social and economic dimensions of past injustices and seek to redress them appropriately. Welcoming the recent designation of South Africa as facilitator for the consultative process for the proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent, he said it would galvanize the necessary efforts for approval of the long-overdue draft resolution on the proposed decade. The Group of 77 and China would table a draft resolution on global efforts for the total elimination of racism and racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of the follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

ANTHONY LIVERPOOL (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), agreed with the Special Rapporteur on the inextricable link between poverty and racism in some countries, emphasizing that that factor should be taken fully into account in devising ways to address inequality, including the uneven distribution of wealth. CARICOM urged Member States to put enforceable legal mechanisms in place that would end exclusion, restriction or preference on the basis of race, colour, lineage, or national or ethnic origin. States should consider reviewing laws or norms that nullified or diminished the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural and other spheres, he added.

He said the history of the Caribbean region reflected the very legacy of the injustices suffered by Africans and their descendants victimized due to the transatlantic slave trade and the resultant forced labour and related inhumane practices, which had rightfully been declared crimes against humanity during the Durban process. CARICOM concluded that those events represented a fundamental cause for reparations for centuries of exploitation and hardship thrust upon the regions peoples, including indigenous people and those of African descent. Last July, CARICOM Heads of Government had agreed to support the establishment of a regional Reparations Commission to begin laying the groundwork for a process of engagement with former slave-holding countries, he said.

JEREMIAH NYAMANE KINGSLEY MAMABOLO (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action marked a "seminal and watershed moment in history". States had joined a global commitment to combat the evil scourge of racism at the international level, he recalled. Of particular importance had been the extension of maximum protection and adequate remedies to the victims. Equally significant had been the declaration of slavery, the slave trade and the transatlantic slave trade as crimes against humanity, and of colonialism as one of the major sources of historical racism and racial discrimination. Despite some progress, however, the implementation of the documents was "slow" and "uneven", he said.

The experiences and terrible consequences of apartheid in South Africa were well documented, he said, stressing that SADC had laid a solid foundation for combating those abuses through the enactment of anti-discrimination legislation and the domestication of the relevant international and regional instruments, including the International Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Urging Member States not to enter reservations on some of the key provisions of the instrument, he encouraged those who had done so to withdraw them. "The defeat of apartheid represented a powerful symbol of the victory of mankind over inhumanity, underscoring the indomitability of the human spirit and its ability to overcome unimaginable adversity and hardship confronted by indescribable odds," he said.

RAFAEL DE BUSTAMANTE, European Union Delegation, reiterated the bloc's commitment to fight racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, which remained a priority in the Union's human rights agenda. Agreeing with the Special Rapporteur that no country was immune, he said the European Union was no exception in light of the victimization of Roma and immigrants. That was regarded as the most widespread form of discrimination. To tackle it, member States were required to introduce laws to fight racism and xenophobia through by penalizing intentional public incitement to violence or hatred on the basis of race, religion, descent, national or ethnic origin.

He agreed with the Special Rapporteur also on the role of media in representing the diversity of multicultural societies and thus fighting racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Urging States to implement fully and effectively their legal and policy measures to protect individuals facing discrimination, he emphasized that "words must be followed by deeds". It was vital in challenging times to tackle all forms of hatred and extremism by building respect for difference and unity in the face of such threats. Without singling out any region, he said, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance were the concern all, in fighting which the international community must be united.

HAN QZING ( China), associating himself with the Group of 77, said "freedom of speech" was often used as an excuse to incite racial discrimination or to defame religion. China supported the role of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action in guiding all United Nations activities in the fight against racism, and called upon all parties to step up its implementation and effectively enforce "zero-tolerance" policies on racism at the national and international levels. Turning to the right to self-determination, said it was a sacred political right of all people fighting foreign aggression and interference, or safeguarding national sovereignty, independence and dignity. At the same time, however, it should not be used as an excuse to split sovereign States or to incite hatred among ethnic groups. In conclusion, he reiterated China's support for the Palestinian people's legitimate national rights, including the right to an independent Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, as well as its admission into international organizations, including the United Nations.

ANDREY NIKIFOROV ( Russian Federation) voiced concern over the rise of neo-Nazi movements, especially those supported by young people, and over the seriousness of the crimes committed in their name. However, such crimes were dismissed as disruption of public order under the right of freedom of expression, he noted. "The human rights declaration was agreed upon as a reaction to Nazism in World War II," he emphasized, calling on all countries objectively to assess the neo-Nazi movement. He then recalled the adoption, by a recorded vote, of the resolution on "Glorification of Nazism: Inadmissibility of certain practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance", tabled by the Russian Federation. He called on States interested in combating modern forms of racism to support the resolution, and on those who had voted against it to revise their position. "We need to respect the victims of World War II and not allow these neo-Nazis to rise," he stressed.

OPHIR KARIV ( [Israel](#) ) said the results of an anti-Semitism survey had been released on a date coinciding with the seventy-fifth anniversary of *Kristallnacht*, the night of violent anti-Jewish riots in Germany and Austria. They showed that it had intensified over the past five years, particularly with the proliferation of online hate speech. "In addition to confronting traditional forms of racism, we now have to contend with racism 2.0, in which individuals are using modern technology to spread ancient hate," he noted. Despite the challenges it posed, the Internet also offered great potential as a tool for education. The State of Israel had always been sensitive to the critical role of education in promoting tolerance and understanding, since it was a pluralistic society comprising Jews, Christians, Muslim Arabs, Bedouin, Druze and Circassians, all living together in coexistence. In its most recent Universal Periodic Review, Israel's goal of increasing quality among its diverse communities had been described as a "national priority", he said, adding that it had become an essential component of national education and training programmes.

MIGUEL CAMILO RUIZ ( [Colombia](#) ), associating himself with the Group of 77 and China, said the Secretary-General's report had shown that despite all progress, people of African descent still faced big challenges in gaining access to economic and social wealth, quality education and health services, among other things, in different parts of the world. They also experienced discrimination in the administration of justice and police violence. Colombia had demonstrated its commitment to its multi-ethnic people by hosting the Third World Summit of Mayors and Leaders of African Descent in September, he recalled. Furthermore, it had ratified several multilateral instruments, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. In its attempts to further economic opportunities for the entire Colombian people, and Afro-Colombians in particular, the Government recently created the Pacific Alliance, which provided possibilities for investment, employment and infrastructure improvement as well as economic integration.

NAGIB I.S. KAFOU ( [Libya](#) ) said new forms of xenophobia and racism had come to light, affecting the lives of many people around the world. They were not confined to one country and must therefore be treated in a global manner. People of African descent had suffered the worst racism, having been enslaved and taken across the Atlantic Ocean to be sold, he noted. Since the colonizing countries had not respected their human rights, Libya called on countries that had been colonized to ask for reparations, and on the colonizing Powers to take responsibility for their actions. Turning to the situation in the Middle East, he said Israel's occupation of the State of Palestine hindered the Palestinian people's enjoyment of human rights. Libya was also deeply concerned over the growth of xenophobia on the basis of religion and belief, which in some countries translated into hatred against Islam and Muslims, he said, citing the desecration of monuments under the pretext of freedom of expression, which had increased hatred between adherents of different religious beliefs and from different countries.

GRÉTA GUNNARSDÓTTIR ( [Iceland](#) ) said no society was completely free of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia or related intolerance. Calling for universal adherence to and full implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, she said her country's penal code did not tolerate any kind of hate speech based on nationality, ethnicity, race or religion, which was not accorded free-speech protection. Turning to self-determination, she reiterated Iceland's support for the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the State of Palestine's full membership in the United Nations. Iceland equally supported efforts to achieve a lasting and mutually acceptable political solution on Western Sahara, she added.

GEIR PEDERSEN ( [Norway](#) ) said hate speech was not new, but greater access to the Internet and increasing use of social media were making it more visible and easier to spread. The solution was not censorship, but actually more speech, he said, emphasizing that freedom of assembly and freedom of expression had proven more powerful than any other tool in the fight against racism. Coordinated international efforts were vital to ending racism and discrimination, he said, adding they could not be eliminated without focused, long-term efforts by national authorities. History held too many examples of mistrust and conflict based on religious discrimination and intolerance, he said, stressing that such discrimination was often based on ignorance and fear of the unknown. Greater knowledge, intercultural dialogue, tolerance and respect for diversity were essential in combating them.

FARISHA SALMAN ( [Malaysia](#) ) welcomed the Secretary-General's report, saying it highlighted the implications of Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Government of Malaysia had always believed in a two-state solution, based on the June 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine, he said, condemning Israel's unlawful annexation and demographic manipulations in East Jerusalem, which had created fundamental threats to the Palestinian right to self-determination. The only way forward was to ensure that Palestinians were afforded their basic rights as human beings, including their right to an independent State.

ABDOU SALAM DIALLO ( [Senegal](#) ) said that self-determination and the fight against racial discrimination were basic principles for all peoples and the "only guarantee" of global peace. In reference to the former, he underlined the right of the Palestinian people to decide their own destiny for themselves, recalling the

human rights violations perpetrated in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, such as the separation wall, the destruction of infrastructure and the construction of settlements. Senegal, therefore, welcomed the renewed negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis under the auspices of the United States, he said. On the need to combat racial discrimination and related intolerance, he said victims included migrants, indigenous peoples, asylum-seekers, refugees and internally displaced persons. Much remained to be done in that respect, and for that reason, it was crucial to remember that self-determination and building a world in which everyone could live in harmony were the ideals upon which the United Nations was founded.

BRUNO SANTOS DE OLIVEIRA ( Brazil ), associating himself with the Group of 77 and China, highlighted the strides made in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in the last decade. Brazil had established a secretariat at the ministerial level for the promotion of racial equality, which reflected its commitment to the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. In a 2010 national census, more than 100 million Brazilians, more than half the population, had declared themselves African descendants, he said, reaffirming his country's commitment to make all necessary efforts for the prompt proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent, now long overdue.

BAKHITA SELMA MANSOURI ( Algeria ), associating herself with the Group of 77 and China, said racial discrimination lay at the heart of human rights because it concerned the fundamental principle of their universality and respect for human dignity and social justice. Racism — an “old wound” of humanity — had adapted itself to the contemporary world in attempts to gain political, moral and juridical acknowledgement. In certain countries, political parties and extremist racist organizations incited hatred and intolerance against different groups, she said, citing Islamophobia and the association of the Muslim religion with terrorism. She went on to say that her country had made support for national self-determination a cardinal point of its foreign policy. In that respect, the violation of the right to self-determination was a violation of human rights as a whole, as well as a form of discrimination, she added.

TATIANA LESHKOVA ( Belarus ) emphasized the utmost importance of interreligious and intercultural understanding for her country, adding that it suffered no ethnic or religious conflicts, partially because of decisive Government policies, and partially due to historically good relations among different ethnic groups. Belarus was cooperating with the international community on that issue, as shown by the recent seminar organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the benefit of law enforcement and legal bodies dealing with racism issues. The Government attached importance to cultural diversity and equality, as exemplified by policies aimed at increasing employment among the Roma minority as part of a larger endeavour to integrate them into society. Turning to the issue of neo-Nazism, she said Belarus had lost one third of its people during the Second World War, and was therefore greatly concerned about the rising threat. She reiterated the country's “zero tolerance” policy towards neo-Nazism.

USMAN SARKI ( Nigeria ), associating himself with the Group of 77 and China, said racism was the most degrading treatment ever invented by man and inflicted upon others of different types for their subjugation, exclusion, exploitation, humiliation and denigration. The elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance remained a top priority for Nigeria, he said, emphasizing, however, that efforts to address racism should not be left to Governments alone. Indeed, fighting racism in a systematic manner was not a task that Governments could accomplish without the people's support, he said, stressing the crucial role of civil society groups. States should revise their domestic legislation to repeal provisions that had directly or indirectly discriminated against disadvantaged people.

MASOOD KHAN ( Pakistan ) noted that the struggle for self-determination should not be confused with terrorism, recalling the dire situation in which the people of Jammu and Kashmir found themselves, and the fact that they had not been able to exercise their right to self-determination through a free and impartial plebiscite. The people of Jammu and Kashmir had never become, legally and constitutionally, part of India, he said, emphasizing that Pakistan supported the realization of their right to self-determination through peaceful means. Their suffering could not be “swept under the carpet because of power politics”, he added. Pakistan and India owed it to current and future generations, and to the region's people, to find a solution based on justice and international legality. Turning to racism and racial discrimination, he said Muslims around the world had become targets of racial actions based on misperception, adding that interreligious and intercultural dialogue was essential for combating that form of racism.

SEIF ALLA YOUSSEF KANDEEL ( Egypt ) said racism and racial discrimination had blemished humanity for centuries but were unacceptable in the twenty-first century. In today's world, discrimination had taken on more subtle forms and was not only based on race, but also on nationality and religion, among others, and it was spread through messages of hatred and stigmatization. Emphasizing that real democracy and the rule of law were incompatible with all forms of racism, he said the international community should, therefore, commit itself to the full implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the Durban Review document of 2009 and the related conventions. The international community must also promote a responsible role for the media and civil society to combat every form of racism, especially those based on religion. Similarly, it



should develop and strengthen national legal, administrative and executive frameworks in order to prevent incitement to racism, racial discrimination and hatred in all their forms.

XAVIER LASSO MENDOZA ( Ecuador ), associating himself with the Group of 77 and China, said his country was trying to change the “old racist and discriminatory schemes” — a legacy of colonial times — still persisting in daily life. That task had become a State policy. Heavy sanctions had been established, for example, to punish those who committed “crimes of hatred”. Ecuador also promoted a more robust social strategy, in accordance with the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action. Education was increasingly based on cultural diversity and had thus become “bilingual”, incorporating ancestral languages, among others. Similarly, radio stations were broadcasting to 13 communities in their local languages with the aim of ensuring greater inclusion of traditionally excluded indigenous peoples and Afro-Ecuadorians. He concluded by expressing Ecuador’s solidarity with the Palestinian people.

RODOLFO REYES RODRÍGUEZ ( Cuba ), associating himself with the Group of 77 and China, said the full implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was a “pending task” of the international community towards achieving equal rights for all human beings. Twelve years after the Declaration’s adoption, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance continued in many regions, while ancient civilizations and religions were demonized in the “centres of power and their big means of communications”. On the right to self-determination, he welcomed the renewal of the mandate of the Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries, and called on all States to cooperate with that important mechanism, and with the open-ended intergovernmental working group to consider the possibility of elaborating an international regulatory framework on the regulation, monitoring and oversight of the activities of private military and security companies. He concluded expressing his country’s support for the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and its commitment to combat all forms of unilateral actions, such as the embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States, in disregard of 22 resolutions of the General Assembly.

MOHAMED IBRAHIM MOHAMED ELBAHI ( Sudan ) underscored his country’s commitment to promoting and protecting all human rights, noting that it would soon ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racism. National legislation had been aligned with the Convention, guaranteeing all human rights throughout the country, without discrimination. “Tolerance and acceptance of others is the basis of the way Sudanese handle their relationships,” he said, recalling that the country had respected the South Sudan’s right to self-determination. Its acceptance of the request for a referendum and its respect for South Sudan’s choice of secession were exemplified by the presence of the President of Sudan at its independence celebrations. He expressed great surprise at the criticism aimed at his country by the United States and the European Union. “These two delegations should improve their human rights situation locally before giving lessons to others,” he said, emphasizing that human rights reforms should not be politicized. In conclusion, he reaffirmed Sudan’s support for an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. JAHROMI ( Iran ) said racial discrimination and xenophobic attitudes were among the main sources of violence and extremism, and no country could remain immune from their violent discourse, practices and actions. In some parts of the world, violence and hostile acts increasingly targeted different groups of people, especially Muslim communities, indigenous peoples, migrants, African and Asian descendants and Roma. Despite rigorous measures put in place to extract people of African descent from historical exclusion and discrimination, their legitimate expectations had not been adequately fulfilled, he said. The continuation of discrimination against them in the administration of justice and the alarmingly high rates of police violence against them called for measures to raise national awareness, he said. As for discrimination against Muslims, he said the alarming upsurge in Islamophobia could jeopardize peaceful coexistence around the world, and called upon the international community to address it through concrete and immediate actions.

Ms. AL DOSARI ( Qatar ), associating herself with the Group of 77 and China, said that, despite global policies to address racism, many people were still suffering. “We cannot talk about eliminating racism without dealing with education as the effective means to build awareness of people’s rights and spread respect for human rights,” she emphasized. The protection and promotion of all rights was enshrined in Qatar’s Constitution, and awareness campaigns had been undertaken to encourage the abandonment of violence. On the right to self-determination, she said Israeli settlement construction was undermining the enjoyment of human rights by Palestinians, and called for an independent state, in line with the inalienable right to self-determination.

Mr. RAJEEVE ( India ), associating himself with the Group of 77 and China, said his country had played a leading role in the historic struggle for decolonization, and had been at the forefront of the movement to secure the right to self-determination so that those under alien subjugation, domination and exploitation could freely determine their own political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development. He warned against attempts at the United Nations and elsewhere to reinvent some of the basic principles of the United Nations Charter, such as self-determination, and to apply them selectively for narrow political ends. Today’s unwarranted reference to the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, an integral part of India, was regrettable.

CÉCILE MBALLA EYENGA ( Cameroon ), acknowledging that acts of racism persisted all over the world, noted that they were often perpetrated against minorities, such as illegal immigrants and asylum-seekers.

It was, therefore, crucial that the international community redouble its efforts to eliminate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and promote the full implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. It was the responsibility of States to take measures against racism and related intolerance, as well as to end the injustices perpetrated against people of African descent, she said.

FAITH DANIEL ( [Botswana](#)) condemned the terror attacks in Kenya, saying that the killing of civilians would never bring about a solution to any form of discord or difference. Emphasizing that human rights education and training, with a particular focus on contemporary forms of racism, remained a priority for Botswana, she urged political leaders and their respective parties to strongly and clearly condemn all political messages that disseminated ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination or xenophobia. That would contribute to full and effective equality for all, and to strengthening respect for the rule of law, human rights and democracy.

Mr. JAHROMI ( [Iran](#)) called attention to the fact that Palestinians were still deprived of their natural right to exercise self-determination on their own territory. Regrettably, the Israeli regime continued to perpetrate massive violations of Palestinian human rights in the occupied territories, including killing innocent civilians and carrying out arbitrary detentions, collective punishment and other restrictions against Palestinian people.

GAREN NAZARIAN ( [Armenia](#)) said full implementation of the International Convention against Racial Discrimination was of paramount importance, emphasizing that his country's national legislation ensured equality for all its citizens. While education could play a crucial role in creating new values of tolerance and non-discrimination, it could also be used to develop, trigger and encourage violence and racism, as seen during the electoral campaign in Azerbaijan, where political opponents had accused each other of "having family ties with Armenians". Education had been used as an instrument to encourage the manifestation of hatred, he said, adding that textbooks in Azerbaijan's public schools called Armenians bandits, fascists and terrorists. The dissemination of "Armeniophobia" sentiments was part of Government policy, and those opposing it were physically assaulted, he said. Azerbaijan also oppressed other minorities, which were suffering discrimination and harassment aimed at forcing them to assimilate, he said, calling upon the international community to condemn racism in Azerbaijan. As for the right to self-determination, he said that unless it was respected, individual rights could neither be protected nor promoted.

Mr. KANDEEL ( [Egypt](#)) said that despite hundreds of reports and resolutions adopted by different United Nations organs, the people of Palestine had not yet enjoyed their right to self-determination. Egypt supported the Special Rapporteur's proposal calling for the convening by the International Committee of the Red Cross of an international conference to draft a convention for occupations exceeding five years, or for the establishment of a commission of inquiry to examine the issues related to prolonged occupation.

JUANA SANDOVAL ( [Nicaragua](#)) underscored that the rights of indigenous peoples were envisaged in her country's Constitution, along with their rights to keep and develop their cultural identity, have their forms of social organization, and administer their local questions, among others. The communities of the Atlantic coast enjoyed autonomy on many fronts. In October of this year, the Regional

Autonomous Government of the Southern Atlantic of Nicaragua, for example, had held its first session. Her Government also supported policies and initiatives aimed at combating discrimination against persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. Nicaragua had also ratified the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 and its Protocol of 1967, and had signed the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees of 1984.

Ms. BORGMAN of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) expressed deep concern for the increasing forms of intolerance towards migrants, including racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, ethnic profiling and political violence. The most effective way to eliminate such phenomena was to integrate migrants into the economic, social, cultural and political life of the host country. Underscoring the potential of young people as agents of change, she called for their social inclusion in shaping positive attitude among migrants and native youth alike. She also called for a fundamental shift in the public perception of migration as a process to be managed and not a problem to be solved, emphasizing the need to address misperceptions of migration through factual information on the positive contributions of migrants.

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