

17 March 2021

English only

Human Rights Council
Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development
Third session
30 March – 1 April 2021
Item 5 of the provisional agenda
Consideration of thematic studies

Racism, racial discrimination and the right to development*

Synopsis of the ongoing study of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development

Summary

Anti-racism, non-discrimination and equality of development are central pillars of the right to development. Article 5 of the Declaration on the Right to Development (DRTD) enjoins states to take resolute steps to eliminate the violations of the human rights of peoples affected by racism and racial discrimination. The elimination of racism is therefore recognized as essential to fulfilling the right to development. The objectives of this study are:

- (a) To examine racism and racial discrimination as barriers to the operationalization of the right to development in the context of state obligations;
- (b) To examine systemic racism as it manifests in policies affecting persons outside the state's jurisdiction, in the context of the right to development; and
- (c) To examine the obstacles that racism and racial discrimination pose to international cooperation and global partnerships on the right to development.

This study is based on secondary and on-site research, and submissions by UN Member States, international organizations, civil society organizations (CSO) and other relevant stakeholders.

* Reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.

I. Background

1. In its resolution A/HRC/45/29, the Human Rights Council requested the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development (EMRTD) to implement the recommendations contained in its inaugural report and in doing so, to pay particular attention to the international dimension of the right to development, and how this aspect would make the practical implementation of the right to development effective at the national, regional, and international levels. In accordance with this request, the EMRTD is preparing five thematic studies to be submitted during the first three-year term of the Mechanism. One of these is a thematic study on *racism, racial discrimination and the right to development*. This pre-session document provides a synopsis of the study and outlines key themes and preliminary findings. Since this is an on-going study, the EMRTD welcomes comments and suggestions on this synopsis.

2. Racism and racial discrimination have been longstanding issues on the UN's human rights agenda. The EMRTD acknowledges the important contributions of UN organs and experts that deal with racism, in particular, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent (WGPAD), the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP), the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP), the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. The EMRTD also recognizes the pivotal role of the World Conferences Against Racism (WCAR) in promoting the struggles against racist ideologies, policies, and practices, notably the 2001 Durban Conference. This EMRTD study complements these ongoing efforts by focusing on racism and racial discrimination in the specific context of the right to development.

3. This study is necessary and timely for several reasons. The *first* is the current global movement for racial justice which has called into question the historical and contemporary structures of racial discrimination. Across the world, marginalized racialized groups are demanding racial equality, and anti-racist interventions from states, regional, and international organizations. These demands call for renewed focus on international efforts to combat racism. The *second* imperative for this study is the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on racialized communities which has intensified poverty and reduced the quality of life in these communities. In many countries, maps of the pandemic reveal its disproportionate impact on racialized communities economically, socially and in terms of general wellbeing. These issues can be addressed through the framework of the right to development. *Finally*, 2021 marks the twentieth anniversary of the 2001 Durban Declaration and Program of Action which highlighted the negative economic, social, and cultural consequences of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance. The Durban Declaration resolved to free every person from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty and to make the right to development a reality for everyone. These resolutions have been reaffirmed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

II. Racism and the Right to Development

4. Racism, racial discrimination, and racial injustice are violations of fundamental human rights. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism has noted that the core historical foundations for present-day racism are the “legacies of colonialism and slavery [which] persist as myriad contemporary structures of racial

discrimination and oppression.”² Racism and racial discrimination serve to rationalize hierarchical domination of one racial or ethnic group over others, and to maintain social and material advantages for the dominant group while producing adverse outcomes for those marginalized. Racism is linked to state violence, lack of economic opportunities, poverty, unemployment, and health disparities that impinge on the right to development. In the legal and institutional framework to fight racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, the CERD has stated that “racial discrimination or the potential for racial discrimination exists in all societies.”³ Systemic racism, racial, ethnic, and related forms of discrimination constitute a source of marginalization, exclusion, inequality, and oppression among people in all regions of the world. Racism is therefore a worldwide phenomenon that requires a global response.

5. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called attention to the “persistent plague of racism” as a “scourge [that] violates the UN Charter and debases our core values.”⁴ He stated: “the rot of racism is corroding institutions, social structures and everyday life. We must do far more to address this scourge... We know the challenge is complex with deep roots in centuries of colonialism and slavery.”⁵ Today, we see racism in discrimination against Afro-descendants and indigenous peoples. We see racist or discriminatory dimensions in growing anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim hatred, violence against some minority Christian communities and other forms of intolerance and xenophobia around the world. We also see a rise in anti-Asian racism and xenophobia fueled by COVID-19 and the stigmatization of Asian communities in some countries.⁶ Indeed, the pandemic has further exposed the strong social and economic dimension to racism and discrimination.

6 Although this study focuses on racism in the context of the right to development, it is recognized that racism often intersects with other forms of discrimination such as those based on ethnicity, gender (sexism), sexual orientation, country of origin/nationality (xenophobia), religion, and cultural heritage. To combat prejudice in all its forms, we must also pay attention to the *intersectionality* between racism and these other forms of prejudice and discrimination. However, recent studies have shown that that inequalities based on race have not received the same attention as other forms of inequality in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), their targets, and the global indicators developed to monitor progress on implementation.⁷

² United Nations Human Rights Council, “Contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and racial intolerance,” Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (Tendayi Achiume), prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 73/262. (2019). A/74/321.

³ United Nations Committee on The Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Seventy-fifth session, August 2009, CERD/C/UAE/CO/17, para. 12. The CERD enjoins state parties to enact legislation and adopt practices specifically prohibiting racial discrimination or amend the existing laws, in order to be in full compliance with the Convention.

⁴ United Nations, Secretary-General’s Letter to Staff on the Plague of Racism and Secretary-General’s remarks at Town Hall, 9 June 2020, [un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2020-06-09/note-correspondents-secretary-generals-letter-staff-the-plague-of-racism-and-secretary-generals-remarks-town-hall](https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2020-06-09/note-correspondents-secretary-generals-letter-staff-the-plague-of-racism-and-secretary-generals-remarks-town-hall).

⁵ United Nations, Overcoming Racism Demands Action ‘Every Day, at Every Level’, Secretary-General Stresses, in Message to Human Rights Council Panel, [un.org/press/en/2021/sgsm20592.doc.htm](https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sgsm20592.doc.htm).

⁶ Human Rights Watch, Covid-19 Fueling Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia Worldwide National Action Plans Needed to Counter Intolerance, [hrw.org/news/2020/05/12/covid-19-fueling-anti-asian-racism-and-xenophobia-worldwide](https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/05/12/covid-19-fueling-anti-asian-racism-and-xenophobia-worldwide).

⁷ Inga T. Winkler & Margaret L. Satterthwaite, “Leaving no one behind? Persistent inequalities in the SDGs,” *The International Journal of Human Rights* 21, no. 8 (Jul 2017), 1073-1097, doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2017.1348702.

III. Equality of Development

7. The principle of the equality of development provides a road map to promoting justice and dignity for all and for combating racism in all its manifestations.⁸ Equality, including the right to freedom from discrimination, is at the core of the human rights framework and is present in all human rights instruments. The principle of equality of development is central to the right to development. The DRTD affirms that “equality of opportunity for development is a prerogative both of nations and of individuals who make up nations.”⁹ Key to the right to development agenda is the elimination of historical and systemic obstacles that have impeded development in many regions of the world. As outlined in the preambular sections of the DRTD, the obstacles to be eliminated include “the massive and flagrant violations of the human rights of the peoples and individuals affected by situations such as those resulting from colonialism, neo-colonialism, apartheid, *all forms of racism and racial discrimination*, foreign domination and occupation, aggression and threats against national sovereignty, national unity and territorial integrity and threats of war.”¹⁰ The DRTD reinforces this point by enjoining states to take resolute steps to eradicate the violations of human rights of peoples affected by racism and racial discrimination. The elimination of racism through the principle of equality of development is therefore recognized as essential to fulfilling the right to development.

8. Racism as an obstacle to development has also been recognized by other international and regional organizations. The *European Commission Action Plan against Racism* (2020) acknowledges that high levels of inequality arising from racism represent an obstacle to the achievement of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.¹¹ The principle of equal development is reflected in the commitment of the SDGs to “leave no one behind.” It is manifest in Goal 10, which commits states to “reduce inequality within and between countries,” and in Goal 16, which aims to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.” Advancing equality of development for all as envisioned in the DRTD and SDGs requires political commitment, transparency and accountability, impartial justice, equal access to services and meaningful participation, including for those marginalized.

IV. Disparities in human development due to systemic racism

9. The links between extreme poverty and racial discrimination have been well established. Racism and racial discrimination can affect vulnerable communities at both national and international levels. At a *national* level, racism fractures the social cohesion of the society and impacts the wellbeing of vulnerable groups. Racial prejudices and systemic racial discrimination affect the wellbeing of racialized or ethnic groups by denying them equitable access to social services (health, education, social protection, etc.) economic opportunities, justice, safety, and security. These effects of racism exacerbate poverty and inequalities. On an *international* level,

⁸ United Nations, *Overcoming Racism Demands Action*.

⁹ Preamble, Declaration on the Right to Development, Adopted by General Assembly resolution 41/128 of 4 December 1986.

¹⁰ Preamble, Declaration on the Right to Development.
EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025, ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/eu-anti-racism-action-plan-2020-2025_en; The social and economic realities of racism and racial discrimination in the EU are also evident in the Special Eurobarometer 138: Racism and xenophobia in Europe, data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S193_53_0_EBS138.

racism and racial discrimination can result in the deprivation of transnational economic opportunities for individuals, and of foreign direct investment and relief from debt for poor countries.¹² Discrimination based on national origin, ethnicity, or religion limits the freedom of individuals to emigrate and/or access better educational or economic opportunities outside of their country of origin.

10. Racial inequalities and disparities are evident in many developmental areas including access to quality education, employment, justice, health, housing, social security, access to political participation, access to basic needs such as food, safe drinking water, and equal protection against the ravages of climate disasters. Minoritized racial and ethnic groups are generally further behind advantaged racial and ethnic groups in poverty, economic growth, and access to clean water and food.¹³ The discussion below outlines some of these racial disparities and implication for the right to development that will be examined in detail in this study.

(a) **Health and COVID-19**

11. Research has shown a negative relationship between racism and health. Racial disparities are prevalent in the context of healthcare in many states and racism influences health throughout one's life span beginning in childhood. Several UN organs have recognized and urged action over the evidence that in many countries there are severe health status disadvantages for ethnic and racial groups. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reports that many health inequalities have social antecedents in various forms of inequality, including gender, ethnicity, and *race*.¹⁴ In many countries, there is a strong correlation between life expectancy at birth and population distribution by racial and ethnic group. For example, in Brazil, Afro-Brazilians have a lower life expectancy than the white population.¹⁵ In Australia, New Zealand and Canada, aboriginal people have significantly lower life expectancy.¹⁶ In the United States, African-Americans have a "substantially lower life expectancy at birth rate" than the white population.¹⁷ On average, a Dalit woman dies 14 years younger than one from upper caste in India.¹⁸ Roma populations across Europe have on average a life expectancy between 5-20 years shorter and face high infant mortality rates, two or three times higher than of the general population.¹⁹

¹² See submission by Qatar.

¹³ Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, "Beyond the Human Rights Rhetoric on 'Leaving No One Behind: Integrating the Elimination of Systemic Racism, and Racial and Ethnic Discrimination, into the Implementation of the SDGs," Statement in Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations, UN Headquarters, New York, 21 September 2020, spssi.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.ViewPage&PageID=2609.

¹⁴ United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report 2019: Beyond income, beyond averages, beyond today: Inequalities in human development in the 21st century*, 2019, 58.

¹⁵ Alexandre Dias Porto Chiavegatto Filho, Hiram Beltrán-Sánchez, and Ichiro Kawachi, "Racial Disparities in Life Expectancy in Brazil: Challenges from a Multiracial Society," *American Journal of Public Health*, 104, 11 (2014): 2156–2162.

¹⁶ Bronwen Phillips, John Daniels, Alistair Woodward, Tony Blakely, Richard Taylor & Stephen Morrell, "Mortality trends in Australian Aboriginal peoples and New Zealand Māori," *Population Health Metrics*, 15, 25 (2017); Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "Lifespan of Indigenous people 15 years shorter than that of other Canadians, Study Finds." January 23, 2018. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/indigenous-people-live-15-years-less-philpott-briefing-1.4500307>

¹⁷ M. Jermaine Bond, and Allen A. Herman, "Lagging Life Expectancy for Black Men: A Public Health Imperative," *American Journal Public Health*, 106, 7 (2016): 1167–1169.

¹⁸ UN Women, *Turning Promises into Action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2018, 31.

¹⁹ European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) Closing the Life Expectancy Gap of Roma In Europe <https://epha.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/closing-the-life-expectancy-gap-of-roma-in-europe.pdf>

12. Structural racial discrimination exacerbates inequalities in health care access and treatment, leading to disparities in health outcomes and increased mortality and morbidity rates among racialized communities. Communities such as Afro-descendant peoples, Latinx,²⁰ Roma,²¹ and Indigenous people²² suffer from intergenerational inequalities in access to healthcare and other social determinants of health, and demonstrate higher infection, hospitalization, and death rates due to COVID-19.²³ The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism has reported on the failure of health-care professionals to accommodate linguistic, cultural and religious diversity. This creates structural barriers to racial and ethnic minority communities' access to health care. The 2020 report of the WGPAD established clear links between systemic racism and the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁴ The pandemic has brought racial disparity and discrimination to the surface in institutions designed to confer justice, equity, and redress.²⁵

(b) Housing

13. Housing is not only a human right on its own but is also a precondition for the enjoyment of many other fundamental rights, human dignity, and overall well-being. Having a home is also the first line of defense against extreme events and crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁶ Homes are essential for accessing job opportunities, hospitals, schools, food, sanitation, transportation, water and energy, and other public services. The Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing has noted that housing conditions for many peoples around the world are overwhelmingly abhorrent and too often violate the right to adequate housing, depriving them of their right to live in security and dignity.²⁷ Many of these marginalized people are racial and ethnic minorities who disproportionately face barriers to housing access and security. The absence of, or weak, specific policies that protect vulnerable and marginalized communities from discriminatory practices in the housing market is apparent across many states. In addition, numerous countries do not conduct fair housing audits to ensure equal access and non-discrimination. Housing policies and practices in several

²⁰ Judith Morrison, "Exposure and Inequalities: African Descendants During COVID-19, UNDP Latin America and the Caribbean," latinamerica.undp.org/content/rblac/en/home/blog/2020/ser-afrodescendiente-durante-el-covid-19--exposicion-y-desiguald.html.

²¹ Open Society Foundation, "Roma in the COVID-19 Crisis: An Early Warning from Six EU Member States," opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/roma-in-the-covid-19-crisis.

²² United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "COVID-19 and Indigenous peoples," un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/covid-19.html.

²³ Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, "Beyond the Human Rights Rhetoric on 'Leaving No One Behind.'"

For example, data from the United States shows that the COVID-19 death rate for African Americans is more than double that of other racial groups. The situation is similar in England and Wales, where the death rate for black, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi people is nearly double that of white people, even when class and some health factors are taken into account; United Nations, "Address 'appalling impact' of COVID-19 on minorities, UN rights chief urges," news.un.org/en/story/2020/06/1065272.

²⁵ Human Rights Council, "COVID-19, Systemic Racism and Global Protests: Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent," undocs.org/A/HRC/45/44.

²⁶ Balakrishnan Rajagopal, "The pandemic shows why we need to treat housing as a right," *The Washington Post*, 7 May 2020, [washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/05/07/pandemic-shows-why-we-need-to-treat-housing-right/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/05/07/pandemic-shows-why-we-need-to-treat-housing-right/); Maimunah Mohd Sharif and Balakrishnan Rajagopal, "Housing must be at the heart of the COVID-19 response and recovery," *Devex*, 30 October 2020, devex.com/news/opinion-housing-must-be-at-the-heart-of-the-covid-19-response-and-recovery-98448.

²⁷ United Nations, "Adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and the right to non-discrimination in this context," Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing (Leilani Farha) submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 15/8 and 37/4. A/74/183, undocs.org/A/74/183.

countries result in the segregation of racialized communities into urban housing enclaves with poor living conditions and limited access to social services and economic opportunities. Unfortunately, there are also limited national and international mechanisms for holding accountable those found to be engaged in discriminatory housing practices.

(c) Employment

14. Racism can exclude people from work and is also experienced at work in the form of racial discrimination and harassment. Although most states have enacted laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, race-based discrimination remains pervasive. Institutional policies or practices systematically exclude racial minorities groups from job opportunities and employment decisions based on racial stereotypes reinforce prevailing patterns of discrimination.²⁸ Legal remedies against discrimination do not always ensure equal employment opportunity in practice. In some states non-discrimination and equal opportunity laws in the employment sector are inadequately enforced. In other countries, well-meaning affirmative action measures aimed at addressing racial disparities in employment face stiff political opposition from dominant groups, thereby hindering social and economic inclusion.

(d) Education

15. In many countries, race and ethnicity continue to have a significant impact on education access and outcomes. Contemporary disparities in education are partly traceable to the legacies of historical racism. The former Special Rapporteur on the right to education Katarina Tomaševski emphasised the imperative of including those historically excluded from education for racist motives.²⁹ Systemic inequities in the allocation of educational resources and discriminatory practices within education systems disproportionately disadvantages racialized communities. This is exacerbated by the underrepresentation of teachers and administrators from racial and ethnic minority communities, and the insufficient inclusion in school curricula of the cultures and histories of minority communities. These result in inordinately negative outcomes for racial minority students and their communities.

(e) Policing and Administration of Justice

16. Racial and ethnic minorities do not enjoy access to equal justice in many countries. They are overrepresented in criminal justice enforcement and underrepresented within the institutions that adjudicate crime and punishment. Members of racial, ethnic, and other minorities or vulnerable groups often face harassment, arbitrary detention, and abusive treatment in within law enforcement systems. These trends are reflected in policing, criminal prosecutions, trials, sentencing, and imprisonment and have lasting consequences on racialized communities.

(f) Political Exclusion and Alienation

17 The rise of nationalist populism in some countries and its association with racist political discourse, anti-immigration policies, racial/ethnic discrimination, and xenophobic anxieties, fosters the increased marginalization and alienation of racialized communities and places them in precarious social, cultural, legal, and physical conditions.

²⁸ Julio Faundez, "Racism and Employment," *Proceedings of a Workshop to commemorate the end of the United Nations Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination*, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), New York, 2005, 53.

²⁹ Katarina Tomaševski, "Racism and Education," *Proceedings of a Workshop to commemorate the end of the United Nations Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination*, 68.

V. Measurement, Assessment and Accountability

18. Research and racially disaggregated information are vital to anti-racism policies, and assessment mechanisms are essential to identifying and addressing incidents of racial discrimination. A key theme that has emerged in this study is the absence, or inadequacy, of indicators for assessing racial discrimination and the effectiveness of national and international anti-racism laws, policies, and programs. For example, our understanding of the links between race and health status, race and vulnerability to disease, race and gender, and race and poverty remain limited by the lack of disaggregated information on race.³⁰ According to the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, the primary impediment to understanding the impact of COVID-19 on the right to adequate housing has been the lack of disaggregated data to show the impact in terms of gender, race and caste or along other lines.³¹ Despite calls by several UN human rights experts for disaggregated data for groups protected by international law, only limited attention has been focused on collecting and disaggregating data on discrimination affecting racial and ethnic populations.³² Several CSO submissions for this EMRTD study call on the UN Statistical Commission to take the lead in collecting and making accessible human rights data disaggregated by race among other identifiers. CSO stakeholders also call for the inclusion of disaggregated racial/ethnic data, in relation to compliance with the ICERD, in Member States Voluntary National Reviews used to assess progress on the SDGs. Other recommended accountability measures are the institution of Race Disparity Audits (RDA) at national and local levels, Equality Impact Assessments (EIA), and redressing the adverse impact of refugee, immigration, and border enforcement policies on racial equality.

VI. Racism, International Cooperation and Global Partnerships

19. The submissions of states, CSOs, and other stakeholders to EMRTD study questionnaires indicate that *several* stakeholders consider racism to be an obstacle to international cooperation and partnerships on the right to development. The key points raised by stakeholder submissions include the following:

- (a) Racism dehumanizes and marginalizes peoples thereby creating inequities in economic and social development between states.³³
- (b) Racism manifests in international development through a lack of diversity in aid and development organizations. Leadership positions at the helm of these the multilateral and bilateral organizations do not reflect diversity in race or nationality.
- (c) Racism and prejudice in the international development sector creates mistrust between recipients and aid organizations and is therefore an obstacle to international cooperation.

³⁰ Kevin Boyle, "Introduction," *Proceedings of a Workshop to commemorate the end of the United Nations Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination*, 10.

³¹ United Nations, "Adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living," Report of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context (Balakrishnan Rajagopal) in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 43/14. A/75/148, undocs.org/A/75/148, 5.

³² Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, "Beyond the Human Rights Rhetoric on 'Leaving No One Behind.'"

³³ See submissions by Malta.

(d) The recent rise in nationalist political movements in certain rich donor countries has fostered an increase in racist and xenophobic ideology. These groups reject open and free international exchange and advocate protectionist measures that undermine the scenarios of international cooperation. Political pressure from these movements negatively impacts these countries' abilities to contribute more generously to international development and cooperation efforts. It is important that countries move away from such leadership if what we seek is peaceful coexistence and global human development.³⁴

20. These preliminary findings will be further investigated in a series of stakeholder meetings and consultations scheduled for May to October 2021. The EMRTD has received invitations with CSO and academic institutions in Brazil, the United States, China, Germany, and South Africa to partner on these consultative meetings. The EMRTD welcomes additional opportunities for consultation. These consultations will explore the challenges outlined and consider recommendations to address the identified challenges.

VII. Addressing Racism in the context of the Right to Development

21. Despite 75 years of the UN's anti-racism engagement, racism and racial and ethnic discrimination persist today as pervasive and destructive to national and global forces.³⁵ This underscores the need for renewed commitment by states and concerted action by the international community to address the disparities and inequalities in human development due to racism and racial discrimination. In these efforts, CSOs play a crucial role of holding states accountable to their human rights obligations and commitments to non-discrimination and equality of development using UN mechanisms including treaty body mechanisms such as CERD, and the special procedures. As societies become ever more multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural, we "need greater investments in inclusivity and cohesion, to harness the benefits of diversity rather than perceiving it as a threat."³⁶ The international community is called upon to reaffirm commitment to universal human rights and common values that enshrine equality and dignity for all.

22. This study proceeds from the premise that some states and regional bodies have, over the past few years, taken steps to address systemic racism and racial discrimination within their jurisdictions. These include laws, policies and other pragmatic interventions that address racism in the context of operationalizing the right to development for enhanced implementation of SDGs. In some cases, anti-racism and non-discrimination have been integrated into formal education and in the training of officials in public institutions, including those involved in operationalizing national development agendas.

23. State responses to the EMRTD questionnaire show that some states and regional organizations have taken proactive measures to address racial discrimination in the broad context of national development. Measures include national anti-racism agendas and action plans such as the: National Council to Prevent and Eradicate Discrimination, and the National Discrimination Survey (Mexico); National Policy for a Society free of Racism, Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia, and the Action Protocol in Situations of Racial Discrimination and Xenophobia (Costa Rica); National Agenda for the Equal Rights of Indigenous Nationalities and Peoples, Afro-Ecuadorian People and Montubio People (Ecuador); National Office Against Racial

³⁴ See submissions by Qatar.

³⁵ Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, "Beyond the Human Rights Rhetoric on 'Leaving No One Behind.'"

³⁶ United Nations, Overcoming Racism Demands Action 'Every Day, at Every Level,' Secretary-General Stresses, in Message to Human Rights Council.

Discrimination (Italy); and National Directorate of Racial Ethnic Equity, Migrants and Refugees (Argentina).

24. The EMRTD invites states, international organizations and civil society organizations to share good practices, shortcomings and lessons learned in addressing racism in the context of operationalizing the right to development and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
