**MODERATOR’S OPENING REMARKS**

ANTI-RACISM IN EDUCATION AND POPULAR DISCOURSE

Good afternoon and thank you for joining this Group’s second public meeting of the 10th session of this Group entitled anti-racism in education and public discourse. We aim to consider broadly the dynamics of racism and anti-racism within the educational sphere. The overall idea behind the theme of the session "Anti-racism in education and public discourse" will be to focus on how to mobilise and advance human rights and anti-racist education in the formal education system as well as in public discourse to better educate societies on the history, meaning and effects of racism and associated concepts ; in order to bring greater awareness about racism and racial discrimination and also to galvanise social and political efforts by individuals, states, NGOs and educators to eradicate it. It is also intended first to understand the role of racism within education as well as to understand some of the challenges and limitations facing anti-racist educators in different jurisdictions (including forms of political repression and censorship targeting anti-racist scholarship and teaching; as well as structural and financial impediments facing racially marginalised students and teachers).

The renowned black intellectual and anti-racist activist Malcolm X wrote in 1964, that:

“Education is an important element in the struggle for human rights. It is the means to help our children and our people rediscover their identity and thereby increase their self respect. Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs only to the people who prepare for it today.”

Like many activists and movements concerned with liberation of peoples from racial oppression, Malcolm X identified education as a central pillar of social, economic and cultural development of a people. Oppressive racial regimes either denied or under-serviced the needs of racially oppressed and colonised peoples within racial regimes. At the same time, those resisting racial subjugation developed alternative modes of education and discourse to challenge racist and racial knowledge. The focus in this respect was both the servicing, staffing and resourcing of schools as well as the quality and content of the teaching provided to students in those communities. It also included racial discrimination and stereotyping, capacitating teachers from underrepresented communities, as well as ensuring continuous learning through public libraries, consciousness-raising and community education. More recently, anti-racist pedagogies espousing a critical race theory or decolonial lens have come under immense political challenge in racially divided schools, raising issues of whether existing educational institutions and practices are up to the challenge of confronting and dismantling racism.

Education as we know is central to the larger UN body’s Fight Racism campaign, with the ambition of a world without racism. Indeed, the DDPA similarly stress education as a key site of anti-racism. Among the concrete actions advocated for by the DDPA includes, among others:

* Investments in health systems, education, housing, electricity, drinking water and environmental control measures and promoting equal opportunities in employment
* Ensuring access to education and to new technologies, in particular to [women](https://www.un.org/en/fight-racism/vulnerable-groups/women) and children
* Inclusion of the history and contribution of Africans and people of African descent in the education curriculum
* Promote better knowledge of and respect for indigenous cultures and heritage
* [Develop educational materials](https://www.un.org/en/fight-racism/get-involved/teach) to teach young people the importance of tolerance and respect

We can see here then that the DDPA triangulates the main focus on education and racism as follows: (1) access to education and educational opportunities to reverse the economic and social legacies of racial oppression and discrimination; (2) education of young people on the history and effects of racism; (3) dissemination of anti-racist themes and messages in public discourse to encourage social transformation against racism.

The speakers today will address us from their different perspectives on this multifaceted relationship between education and racism.