



PALAIS DES NATIONS – 1211, GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

3 March 2023

Excellency,

No country in the world is free of racism. Racism and racial discrimination harm everyone, and undermine development, peace, democracy, and the rule of law.

Despite our collective commitment in article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to equal enjoyment of human rights without distinction, equality and non-discrimination remain elusive. Statistics across some 50 countries compiled by my Office reveal that one in five people reported experiencing direct discrimination, with racism and racial discrimination among the most common grounds.

Inspired by the courage and determination of people and communities who stand up against racism, we must take bold steps to address new and emerging forms of racial discrimination and repair long-standing human rights violations, including those rooted in legacies of enslavement and colonialism. These steps should build on existing State obligations under international human rights law, and be guided by the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the Agenda towards transformative change for racial justice and equality, and the recommendations of human rights mechanisms.

As part of the Human Rights 75 initiative, I invite you to combat racial discrimination by committing to take specific and urgent actions as set out in the Annex. As a first step, for every State that has not yet done so, this year should be marked by the adoption of a comprehensive, time-bound and adequately-resourced national action plan to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. In addition, States that are not yet parties are urged to ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and States parties should consider making a declaration of acceptance of the Committee's competence to review individual cases. Member States are invited to update on actions taken at the high-level event which I will convene in December 2023.

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All Permanent Representatives of
Member States and Permanent Observers of
non-Member States to the United Nations Office at Geneva



In this anniversary year, let us make substantial and long overdue progress towards ending the scourge of racism and racial discrimination, and upholding dignity and rights for everyone, everywhere.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'V' followed by a series of connected loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Volker Türk



ANNEX

Human Rights 75 - combating racism and racial discrimination

States are urged to take the following concrete steps to combat racism and racial discrimination as part of the Human Rights 75 initiative:

1. Adopt and implement comprehensive national laws and policies that include positive duties to eliminate racial discrimination, to combat prejudice, stereotypes and stigma, and to advance equality, along with adequately resourced national action plans that engage all of government and all of society.
2. Establish and strengthen independent national human rights institutions and equality bodies, with capacity to receive complaints, and ensure they are adequately resourced.
3. Collect and publish data disaggregated by race, national or ethnic origin, sex, gender, age, migration status and other factors, with a view to analysing the effect of all laws and policies on particular racial and ethnic groups and in line with Sustainable Development Goal indicators 10.3.1 and 16.b.1.
4. Ensure effective participation of racial and ethnic groups in public decision-making and evaluations, to achieve transformative change and fully benefit from our societies' diversity.
5. Consider concrete action to confront past legacies of racial discrimination and long-standing human rights violations and deliver reparatory justice.