

**RACISM, MIGRATION, AND DEVELOPMENT: A
HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE A Symposium to
Commemorate the International Day for the Elimination
of Racism** 22 March 2012, 1:00 – 4:30PM

Conceptual Framework

A collaborative educational symposium will be held on 22 March 2012 on Racism, Migration and Development to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In this symposium, a panelist representing each of the three partnering NGO committees (Indigenous Peoples, Migration, and Mental Health) and the Sub-Committee for the Elimination of Racism of the NGO Committee on Human Rights will address historical and/or contemporary causes and consequences of racism in the context of migration and development. Their presentations will also take into account the international human rights standards and their implementation which are the particular focus of each committee's advocacy agenda, strategies, and key recommendations for change.

Background

On 26 October 1966, the United Nations General Assembly established the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to be observed annually on 21 March (GA Resolution 2142 XXI), the day in 1960 that police opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa, protesting the apartheid 'pass laws'. The GA Resolution establishing the Day in 1966 called on the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination, as required by the International Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), adopted by the GA on 21 December 1965.

Since its formation after the 2001 World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, the Sub-Committee for the Elimination of Racism of the NGO Committee on Human Rights has held educational programs to commemorate 21 March and to increase awareness of the importance of implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action Against Racism . Although, as of October 2011, 175 countries have ratified CERD, and a number of them have abolished racist laws and practices, in many countries and all regions of the world, people, communities and societies suffer from various forms of historic and contemporary racial injustices. Clearly, much remains to be done.

Partnering with the New York Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the NGO Committee on Migration, the NGO Committee on Human Rights, and the NGO Committee on the UN International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples, the Sub-Committee for the Elimination of Racism will commemorate 21 March 2012 by focusing attention on Racism, Migration, and Development.

According to recent estimates, there are 214 million international migrants in the world today and billions more have experienced forced or voluntary migration over the years. International migration is a very complex phenomenon and a major concern for many countries, individuals, families, and racial/ethnic, religious or other social groups.

The Durban Declaration and Program of Action Against Racism notes with concern that racism contributes to forced displacement and the movement of people from their countries of origin (Parag 52). It also recognizes that “xenophobia against...migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, constitutes one of the main sources

of contemporary racism and that human rights violations against members of such groups occur widely” (Parag. 13) in relation to employment, housing, social services including education and health, and access to justice.

In his last report of 3 August 2010, Jorge Bustamante, Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, proposed that “the enjoyment of human rights by migrants, regardless of immigration status, is a crucial means to ensure equitable human development and social development and justice for migrants. Migrants can play an active role in the social and economic development of host countries and contribute to the development of countries of origin and transit, particularly when their human rights are fulfilled in a manner that ensures equal opportunities and gender equality” across all age groups.

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action invites States to promote and adopt an objective and long-term approach to all phases and aspects of migration, paying special attention to the root causes and consequences of migratory flows, such as lack of full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (Parag. 96).

Format

Each of the panelists will have 15 minutes to make its committee’s contribution to the symposium. The preliminary program is as follows:

Welcome

Ms. Doris Abdullah, Church of the Brethren, Chair, Sub-Committee for the Elimination of Racism of the NGO

Committee on Human Rights

Mr. Bruce Knotts, Unitarian Universalist Association, Chair,
NGO Committee on Human Rights

Moderator

Mr. Ivan Simonovic, Assistant S-G for Human Rights

Panelists

Introductory Remarks on the Theme by Mr. Simonovic OR
one of the following persons:

Mr. Githu Muigai, Past Special Rapporteur on Contemporary
Forms of Racism

Mr. Francois Crepeau, Current Special Rapporteur on the
Human Rights of Migrants

Panelist: Sub-Committee for the Elimination of Racism of the
NGO Committee on Human Rights Panelist: NGO Committee on
UN Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples Panelist: NGO
Committee on Migration Panelist: NGO Committee on Mental
Health Discussant

Interactive Discussion