

**Action Plan to Combat Racial and Religious
Discrimination and Intolerance**

Recalling that the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination provides, inter alia, that States Parties undertake to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms and promoting understanding among all races, and, to this end each State Party undertakes to engage in no act or practice of racial discrimination against persons, groups of persons or institutions and to ensure that all public authorities and public institutions, national and local, shall act in conformity with this obligation,

Recalling also that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides, inter alia, that everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, which shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching,

Deeply concerned about incidents of intolerance, discrimination and violence against persons based on their race or religion in all regions of the world,

Determined to enhance the capability of the international community to address and combat such incidents and reverse such disturbing trends,

Believing that working together to enhance and strengthen existing legal regimes to protect against discrimination and hate crimes, increase interfaith efforts, and to expand human rights education are important first steps in combating incidents of intolerance, discrimination and violence based on race and religion,

Determined, therefore, to implement the following Action Plan in order to pursue concrete actions aimed at eliminating racial and religious intolerance, discrimination and violence and fostering societies committed to respecting racial and religious diversity,

I. Comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation

• *Action:* Members States are called upon to:

1) Compile a comprehensive list of current laws prohibiting racial and religious discrimination;

- 2) Review existing national laws to ensure that protections against racial and religious discrimination comply with their obligations under international human rights law; and
- 3) Facilitate an international meeting of national experts to assess this legislation and evaluate its effectiveness in practice.

• *Action:* Member States are called upon to:

- 1) Assess whether their current domestic institutions robustly enforce anti-Discrimination laws, and determine actions necessary to fill any gaps in enforcement;
- 2) Assess whether domestic institutions appropriately enforce such anti-discrimination laws equally among members of all racial and religious groups within the State; and
- 3) Establish, if one does not already exist, a national body or bodies responsible for ensuring the implementation of anti-discrimination laws, investigation of cases, maintenance of relevant statistics, reviewing allegations of failed or improper enforcement, and for bringing cases against individuals who violate the law.

• *Action:* Members States are called upon to

- 1) Take effective measures to ensure equal access to governmental programs or activities, irrespective of an individual's race or religion;
- 2) Take effective measures to ensure that government officials in the conduct of their public duties do not discriminate based on an individual's race or religion;
- 3) Take effective measures to ensure that members of racial or religious minority groups have equal access to housing, education, and employment;
- 4) Foster religious freedom and pluralism by promoting the ability of members of all religious communities to manifest their religion, and to contribute openly and on an equal footing to the public realm;
- 5) Encourage representation and meaningful participation of individuals, irrespective of their race or religion, in all sectors of society, especially in government; and
- 6) Undertake strong efforts to counter racial or religious profiling, which is understood to be the invidious use of race, religion or ethnicity as a criterion in conducting stops, searches, and other law enforcement investigative procedures.

II. Hate Crimes

- *Action:* Member States are called upon to strengthen their legislative frameworks against acts of violence or intimidation motivated in whole or in part by an offender's bias against , *inter alia*, race or religion, i.e., hate crimes by:
 - 1) Enacting, where they do not already exist, laws that expressly address such hate crimes;
 - 2) Effectively tracking relevant crime statistics to determine whether new laws are needed in this regard; and
 - 3) Undertaking legislative, inter-agency or other special inquiries into the problem of hate crimes.

- *Action:* Member States are called upon to enhance enforcement of such hate crimes laws and policies by:
 - 1) Monitoring hate crimes incidents to determine whether hate crimes laws are being implemented;
 - 2) Taking effective measures to ensuring that institutions created to counter hate crimes have adequate resources;
 - 3) Taking effective measures to ensure robust enforcement of hate crimes laws; and
 - 4) Providing proper hate crimes training to prosecutors, judges, and law enforcement officials.

- *Action:* Member States are called upon to pursue proactive outreach to relevant communities and concerned groups to:
 - 1) Acknowledge and condemn hate crimes based on race or religion and speak out against official racial or religious intolerance and bigotry;
 - 2) Educate the public about hate crimes, including legal redress mechanisms; and
 - 3) Create forums for working on confidence-building measures after instances of hate crimes.

III. Advocacy and Incitement

- *Action:* Member states are called upon to:
 - 1) Speak out against intolerance, including advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence;
 - 2) Adopt measures to criminalize the incitement to imminent violence based on race or religion;

- 3) Censure, as appropriate, government officials who in their official capacity advocate for racial, ethnic, and religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence; and
- 4) Present in their periodic reports to the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, and include in their Universal Periodic Review report to the Human Rights Council, a full account of the measures that they have taken consistent with their obligations under international law, including equal protection of the law, to address and combat advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence.

IV. Interfaith Efforts

• *Action:* Member States are called upon to:

- 1) Encourage the creation of collaborative networks of faith leaders, civil society leaders, and policy makers to build mutual understanding, promote dialogue, and inspire constructive action toward shared policy goals;
- 2) Help facilitate domestic interfaith meetings including representatives of all religious communities within their societies to pursue tangible outcomes, such as service projects in the fields of education, health, conflict resolution, employment, integration, and media education;
- 3) Create a faith-based Advisory Council within the government to, inter alia, identify and address potential areas of tension between different racial and religious communities and assist with conflict resolution and mediation;
- 4) Encourage training of government officials on effective outreach strategies; and
- 5) Encourage efforts of community leaders to discuss within their communities causes of discrimination and practices to counter them.

V. Human Rights Education

Action: Member States are called upon to engage in a multi-faceted approach to human rights training:

- 1) Institute and expand training programs to inform and sensitize governmental authorities about actions, perceptions and biases that may contribute to racial and religious discrimination and intolerance;
- 2) Make widely accessible information about victims' rights and remedies in situations of racial and religious discrimination and violence; and

3) Conduct a public awareness campaign and widely disseminate relevant international human rights instruments, such as the UDHR, the Declaration on Religious Minorities, the ICERD, and the ICCPR; create forums to bring together leaders from different religious and racial communities, the media, and educators to discuss these instruments and the causes and consequences of discrimination and intolerance and to develop strategies to counter these phenomena.

• *Action:* Members States are called upon to engage in the following outreach to youth:

- 1) Provide systematic support for grassroots organizations working actively with youth to promote tolerance, diversity and non-discrimination;
- 2) Create networks for youth NGOs and education experts dealing with intolerance and discrimination; and
- 3) Build public-private partnerships to support and fund public education efforts, arts performances, film festivals, educational tours, and academic conferences that disseminate information on the richness of diverse cultures and on the importance of cultural interaction.

VI. Reporting Requirements

- Members States are called upon to report to the OHCHR on their efforts with regard to each action point within a 1 year timeframe;
- OHCHR is invited to post reports of Member States on a website maintained by the Anti-Discrimination Unit;
- Civil Society is invited to provide independent reports on implementation of the Action Plan, which should also be posted the website; and
- The Special Rapporteurs on Racism, Freedom of Religion and Belief, Freedom of Opinion and Expression, and the Independent Expert on Minority Issues are encouraged to consider the reporting on this website in the work they are undertaking.

VII. Next Steps:

Member States are called upon to convene in the Spring of 2011 to assess progress on the ground in implementation of this Action Plan to combat intolerance, discrimination, and violence against persons on the basis of their race or religion and to determine next steps.