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**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related
forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation
of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

Written statement* submitted by Sikh Human Rights Group, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[26 May 2025]

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



Declaration on Diversity to Address Racism

Populist politics around the world and hate rhetoric against migrants is increasing racial attacks and bringing to life subliminal racism in many countries. While politicians in some democratic countries exploit latent racism for populist politics, their tactics and at times success also shows that racism still exists entrenched in many societies. It always has the potential to be exploited and become ugly, making life for minorities complicated if not fearful at times.

The Sikh Human Rights Group has been proposing a UN Declaration on Diversity to address underlying and latent racism. Such a declaration will encourage States to undertake policies that make diversity a norm and racism difficult to exploit.

If societies are encouraged to accept diversity, it becomes difficult for the politics of opportunism to divide them deeply. There can be some instances either locally or nationally where brief periods of hate against minorities is expressed, but there is also reasonable evidence that societies that accepts rather than just tolerate diversity, become resilient against such opportunism.

Three examples are the people's reaction to recent wave of violence against minorities and migrants in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the democratic politics of populist vote banks in India and the public's enlightened approach to civilisation coexistence in the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Recent attacks on migrants and some minorities in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland did not receive wide spread support from the majority British public. The Government took quick action by imposing law and order immediately, arresting the perpetrators and setting up special courts to fast track prosecutions. However this action by the current Labour Government would have met further protests and violence had British society in general not supported its actions. The willingness of the public to endorse Government action is because successive British Governments have made diversity an acceptable part of British culture and life now. There is little if any appetite for widespread racism or hate that is evident in some other countries around the world. The success of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is one that should be looked at. However even the British Government will admit that there is still more to do.

Another country that is a beacon of diversity is India. It is not the politics of Indian system that ensures resilient society to divisive and populist exploitation. It is in fact hundreds if not thousands years of civilisation values that militates against politics of hate and divide.

The Vedic concept of 'Bahuda' which promotes pluralism and acceptance of diversity has endured through ages in South Asian civilisation enabling different cultures, migrant communities, belief systems and ideas to coexist in an extraordinary tapestry of pluralist society. Despite attempts in the past and in modern age to divide society, there is a hard wired resilience within society to fight back against politics of division.

Further Guru Nanak's teachings of oneness of all life as manifestation of the same has entrenched pluralism much deeper into the cultural values of South Asian society. These teachings have deconstructed politics of division, discrimination and hate and made people resilient to fragmentation within communities. The Sikh Gurdwara is a living example of people from all backgrounds, races, beliefs and cultures sitting together to eat together in the institution of 'langar' the free food in Sikh Gurdwaras.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia is another beacon of good practice that has managed to find a way for two different civilisations to coexist within the same territorial boundary. This is a modern example of a State that has gone beyond the narrative of rights and taken positive action by consultation and accommodation.

SHRG feels that the United Nation's Eurocentric focus on legal rights and human rights is not sufficient to combat racism. Limiting actions to hardening legal instruments or accusing States of failing to comply with the Durban Declaration is not effective. It makes good work for lawyers and human rights activism but does not resolve underlying racism.

If laws and human rights policies were sufficient alone in making the world a perfect place, we would not be experiencing increase in racism.

Sikh Human Rights Group proposes that States should see best examples on how civilisations and some States have made societies resilient to politics of exploitation and division. There are many examples where discrimination remains the game of politicians with little reception within communities. And there are many examples in which countries have taken positive steps to make diversity acceptable and entrenched.

A Declaration on Diversity is different than a Declaration on Cultural Diversity. A Declaration on Diversity can be extensive covering all forms of diversity along with racial diversity. If society accepts wide range of diversity, it becomes difficult for racism to foster as society will also be resilient to racial politics. A Declaration on Diversity will encourage States to introduce policies that promote acceptance of diversity. If society becomes resilient to politics of division and exploitation, then discrimination and hate will gradually find little space for opportunism.

A Declaration on Diversity compliments the Durban Declaration. It will add another dimension to realise the sentiments and values inherent in the Durban Declaration. It will strengthen the path to achieve what Durban started to address.
