



# International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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## Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 112th session

### Summary record of the 3050th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 8 April 2024, at 10 a.m.

*Temporary Chair:* Ms. Lee (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights)

*Chair:* Mr. Balcerzak

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.*

### **Opening of the session**

1. **The Temporary Chair** declared open the 112th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

2. Welcoming the Committee members who had recently been elected or re-elected, she said that their skills and extensive experience would strengthen the Committee's important work in monitoring the implementation of the Convention.

3. As the Secretary-General had recently stated at the fifty-fifth session of the Human Rights Council, the world was experiencing a period of turbulence, in which conflicts were taking a terrible toll upon human rights. At the same time, the Committee had observed a dangerous regression in the fight against racism and racial discrimination. Minorities, people of African descent, people of Asian descent, Indigenous Peoples and migrants, including asylum-seekers and refugees, were all particularly vulnerable to discrimination in all aspects of their lives. Moreover, millions of people still suffered from the cruel legacies of colonialism.

4. The seventy-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 2023, had provided an opportunity for all actors to take stock of progress made towards realizing the standards set out in the Declaration and to reaffirm commitments to human rights. Governments, organizations and other actors had made some 300 pledges, many of which were concrete, time-bound and potentially transformative. Eleven States had pledged specifically to combat racial discrimination. For instance, Australia had pledged to establish an anti-slavery commissioner, Denmark and Luxembourg to develop a national action plans against racism, and the United States of America to release a second round of Equity Action Plans. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) encouraged the Committee to follow up on such pledges during reviews of State party reports.

5. As 2024 was the final year of the International Decade for People of African Descent, a report of the Secretary-General was being prepared that would provide a final assessment of the progress made in implementing the corresponding programme of activities. On 21 March 2024, the General Assembly had held a commemorative plenary meeting on the occasion of International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the theme of which had been the implementation of the International Decade. During the fifty-fifth session of the Human Rights Council, at a panel discussion to commemorate the International Day, the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Nada Al-Nashif, had underscored that effective and sustainable initiatives towards recognition, justice and development for people of African descent must be pursued vigorously beyond 2024, and had called for States to consider proclaiming a second international decade, starting in 2025. In addition, the General Assembly had held a meeting to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the theme of which had been "Creating global freedom: countering racism with justice in societies and among nations".

6. Other United Nations anti-racism mechanisms were making important progress. The International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement had visited Brazil in December 2023. The Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent had undertaken a country visit to Norway in December 2023 and would visit Colombia in May 2024. The reports of both mechanisms would be presented at the fifty-seventh session of the Human Rights Council. Furthermore, the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action had updated the Council on its progress towards the elaboration of a draft United Nations declaration on the promotion and full respect of the human rights of people of African descent, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 76/226. All stakeholders were encouraged to support that process in order to ensure the development of a comprehensive and forward-looking global framework that reflected human rights concerns and the lived experiences and aspirations of people of African descent.

7. In addition, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance would soon publish a report on the relationship between artificial intelligence and non-discrimination and racial equality. The Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples would submit a report to the General Assembly on the situation of mobile Indigenous Peoples.

8. The current United Nations liquidity crisis was causing great concern and was having a severe impact on both staff resources and non-post expenditure. OHCHR was working to ensure the continued provision of support to the treaty body system and would keep the Committee apprised of the situation. On 22 January 2022, the United Nations Office at Geneva had ceased servicing non-mandated hybrid or virtual meetings, meaning official meetings with full conference services conducted between participants who were not at the same venue. Although dialogues with States parties, which had been mandated under General Assembly resolution 68/268, could still be organized in a hybrid format, other types of meetings could no longer be serviced. OHCHR deeply regretted the disruption that the sudden announcement had caused, both for the Committee and for civil society organizations, which had come to rely on hybrid meetings.

#### **Solemn declaration by the newly elected members of the Committee under rule 14 of the rules of procedure**

9. In accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure, Ms. Boker-Wilson, Mr. Guan, Mr. Gwalawala Sibande and Mr. Tlemçani made the following solemn declaration: “I solemnly declare that I will perform my duties and exercise my powers as a member of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination honourably, faithfully, impartially and conscientiously.”

#### **Election of officers, in accordance with rule 15 of the rules of procedure**

10. **The Temporary Chair** invited Committee members to nominate candidates for the office of Chair, the three posts of Vice-Chair, and the office of Rapporteur.

11. **Mr. Kut**, seconded by **Ms. Stavrinaki**, nominated Mr. Balcerzak for the office of Chair.

12. *Mr. Balcerzak was elected Chair by acclamation.*

13. **Ms. Chung**, seconded by **Ms. Tlakula**, nominated Ms. Esseneme for the office of Vice-Chair.

14. **Ms. Stavrinaki** nominated Ms. McDougall for the office of Vice-Chair.

15. **Ms. Tlakula** nominated Ms. Shepherd for the office of Vice-Chair.

16. *Ms. Esseneme, Ms. McDougall and Ms. Shepherd were elected Vice-Chairs by acclamation.*

17. **Mr. Guan**, seconded by **Mr. Guissé**, nominated Ms. Chung for the office of Rapporteur.

18. *Ms. Chung was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.*

19. *Mr. Balcerzak took the Chair.*

#### **Tribute to the memory of Régis de Gouttes, former member of the Committee**

20. **The Chair** said that the Committee had been saddened to learn of the passing in February 2024 of a former long-serving member, Mr. de Gouttes.

21. **Mr. Amir** paid tribute to the memory of Régis de Gouttes.

22. *At the invitation of the Chair, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence.*

**Adoption of the agenda (CERD/C/112/1)**

23. *The agenda was adopted.*

*The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.*