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## Third Committee

### Summary record of the 28th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 5 November 2012, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Mac-Donald . . . . . (Suriname)  
*later:* Ms. Alfeine . . . . . (Comoros)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Agenda item 67: Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance**

- (a) **Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance** (A/66/18, A/67/18, A/67/321, A/67/322 and A/67/328)
- (b) **Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action** (A/67/325 and A/67/326)

**Agenda item 68: Right of peoples to self-determination** (A/67/276 and A/67/340)

1. **Ms. Kohonen Sheriff** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)), speaking on behalf of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, introduced the Secretary-General's report on global efforts for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation and follow-up of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (A/67/325). The report contained information provided by Member States, United Nations entities, regional organizations, human rights institutions and equality bodies on measures they had taken towards eliminating racism and discrimination and implementing the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. It included updates on the activities of OHCHR, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, the Durban follow-up mechanisms, and the Independent Expert on minority issues.

2. The report emphasized that stronger political will as well as urgent measures were required in order to reverse the continuing trends of increasingly hostile racist and xenophobic attitudes and violence, and it highlighted the need to strengthen intercultural dialogue, tolerance and respect for diversity as essential tools for combating racial discrimination and related intolerance. It encouraged Member States to invite the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent to carry out more country visits, and to develop new and implement existing national action plans in order to combat racial discrimination and related intolerance. International and regional organizations were also encouraged to intensify collaboration in fighting against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

3. The Secretary-General's report on the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination (A/67/276) outlined the relevant jurisprudence of the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the treaty-based human rights norms relating to the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination. It also provided a summary of the Human Rights Council's consideration of the matter, including by its special procedures. The developments in the Council under item 7 on the question of realization of the right to self-determination by the Palestinian people were described, as were the observations made on the topic in reports submitted to the Council by the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.

4. **Mr. Ruteree** (Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance) introduced his report on global efforts for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (A/667/326), which focused on the issue of racism on the Internet. The issue presented many challenges, including the increase in extremist hate websites; the use of the Internet and social media by extremist groups and individuals to propagate hate speech and incite racial violence; and the increased number of incidents of racist violence and crimes prompted by racist content. The problem was compounded by the transborder and decentralized nature of the Internet; a lack of clarity concerning the legal terms applicable to inappropriate or illegal content; the differing laws and policies adopted by different States, and the differing criteria they applied in defining the threshold between freedom of expression and criminal acts. The lack of expertise and capacity to regulate Internet-related hate crime was also a significant challenge.

5. Combating racism on the Internet required a consultative and cohesive approach that included governments, civil society, service providers and the private sector. Legislative and self-regulatory measures might prove useful. States should also adopt policies and strategies to make the Internet widely available since the voices of victims were often absent as a result of lack of access. Furthermore, diversification of

content and, in particular, the promotion of local content had the potential to reduce information asymmetry and misperceptions, thereby contributing to greater understanding, tolerance and respect for diversity. Any measures taken to counter racism on the Internet should comply with international human rights law and not unduly limit the right to freedom of expression and opinion.

6. Concerning the report on the inadmissibility of certain practices that contributed to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerances (A/67/328), he noted with appreciation the reporting of positive legal, institutional and policy developments. Non-discrimination was enshrined in most of the Constitutions and legislation cited, including discrimination based on sexual orientation, and legislation had been adopted to address the challenges posed by extremist groups. It was pleasing to note that domestic laws incorporated relevant human rights instruments and criminal law provisions proscribing racist and xenophobic motivation as an aggravating circumstance that attracted heavier penalties. He encouraged all States to enact legislation that included a definition of racial discrimination, to espouse a solid legal framework and to ensure that constitutional or legal measures to counter extremist movements complied with international human rights standards. The right to security and access to justice should also be guaranteed to victims of racist and xenophobic attacks.

7. Complementary measures should be taken to tackle extremist political parties, movements and groups, including awareness-raising activities aimed at fostering tolerance as well as the collection of data on racist or xenophobic incidents. Sensitizing youth to the dangers of the ideologies of extremist parties and the introduction of human rights education remained key tools in combating them. Cooperation with civil society and international and regional human rights mechanisms was crucial to prevent the dissemination of extremist ideologies based on racial superiority. Political leaders and parties had a particular responsibility to condemn and refrain from disseminating messages that scapegoated vulnerable groups and incited racial discrimination.

8. **Mr. Zheglov** (Russian Federation) said that it was important to avoid dissemination of ideas of racial superiority. Actions and statements meant to incite xenophobia could not be justified under freedom of

speech. He was concerned at the use of the Internet to incite racism and urged States to make use of technology to disseminate ideas for democracy and mutual respect. Countering the growth of Nazism should be a priority for the Special Rapporteur.

9. **Mr. Mosot** (Kenya) said that it was often difficult to ascertain the origins of racist acts on the Internet, and he asked for recommendations on how to identify the perpetrators. He wondered where to draw the line between freedom of expression and infringement of the rights of others with regard to Internet content.

10. **Mr. de Bustamante** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, asked, with reference to paragraph 93 of document A/67/328, what institutional measures States could take at the regional level in order to tackle extremism. With regard to paragraph 100 of the report on contemporary forms of racism, he asked for more details on the recommendation concerning coordination between different government structures and in particular the importance of cooperating closely with civil society.

11. **Ms. Fontana** (Switzerland), referring to paragraph 96 of document A/67/328, asked what further measures States could adopt to sensitize the police on the ideologies of extremist political parties. She asked what country visits the Special Rapporteur had made.

12. **Mr. Ruteree** (Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance), responding to comments made, said that he would maintain a priority focus on Nazism and the activities of neo-Nazi groups.

13. He agreed that legislative measures alone were not enough to respond to racist speech and activities, and therefore non-governmental actors, including private companies, must be encouraged to collaborate, especially in taking down Internet content perceived as racist. A diversity of voices from different corners of the world was needed to counter racist speech and racial discrimination. Balancing freedom of expression and the need to control racist content continued to be an important topic. Any action taken to combat racist

content must be in line with international human rights law and should be achieved through strong national legislation. As to coordination between States and civil society, there were a number of examples where civil society had partnered with national human rights bodies to monitor racist Internet content; their joint work had led to some companies agreeing to take down racist content.

14. With respect to country visits, he had already visited Bolivia and would visit Spain in January. He planned to visit countries in all regions.

15. **Mr. Rahman** (Bangladesh) said that, despite all the condemnations, incitation to racial hatred persisted on the Internet and, in the absence of internationally agreed norms, States were imposing their own restrictions. He agreed that States should adopt an approach based on solid and preventive legal frameworks and sought recommendations on how the behaviour could be stopped.

16. **Mr. Ruteree** (Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance) said he recognized that States took different views on what measures to adopt and, hence, what legislation could be implemented to tackle racist content on the Internet. Important work had been done by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in that regard and by the Council of Europe. Regional approaches should be encouraged: it was possible to draw on existing human rights legislation and good practices set by regions.

17. **Mr. Tzay** (Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination), introducing the reports on the activities of the Committee in 2011 and 2012, (A/66/18 and A/67/18), said that the Committee had considered a total of 42 reports by States parties. Under its "review procedure", it had examined implementation of the Convention in one State party which had not submitted a report and whose periodic reports were overdue by at least five years. It had decided to postpone the review of the implementation of the Convention in three countries with long overdue reports in the light of their commitments to finalize their reports. It had considered follow-up reports from 22 States parties and had adopted a decision and two statements, as well as considering a number of situations under its early warning and urgent action procedure. It appreciated the additional meeting time

granted by the General Assembly, which had facilitated consideration of the backlog of reports awaiting response.

18. Since 2010, the Committee had worked on the basis of a list of themes, compiled by the country Rapporteur, which was used to guide and focus dialogue with the State party's delegation during consideration of the State party's report. Besides enabling the Committee to adopt more focused concluding observations, the procedure alleviated the burden on States parties to produce a new report in the form of replies and on the Secretariat to translate lengthy responses in various languages.

19. The Committee continued to actively promote the Convention through a range of events and activities, including a substantive statement on the tenth anniversary of the Durban Declaration, and a thematic discussion on racist hate speech. The Committee's cooperation with different partners and its interaction with various stakeholders were also regular features of its work; it had received valuable inputs from OHCHR and the International Labour Office at each session. In addition to useful dialogues with Special Rapporteurs, there had been increased involvement of national human rights institutions in the reporting process. The value of those institutions in monitoring and following up the implementation of the Committee's recommendations by States parties at the national level could not be stressed enough.

20. The additional meeting time had allowed the Committee to address the backlog of reports awaiting consideration, and he feared that reversion to three-week sessions would lead to the accumulation of backlog again. It should be borne in mind that three-week sessions had been granted at a time when fewer than 90 States had ratified the Convention as compared to the current 175 States. The Committee strongly believed that efforts to strengthen the treaty body system, including through adequate resourcing, were necessary to ensure that the rights enshrined in the treaties were enjoyed globally.

21. With regard to the Committee's membership, reaching gender parity was a problem that could be solved if States parties elected more women candidates. The independence of Committee experts should be ensured by States when they nominated their candidates and throughout the experts' membership.

22. The Committee called on States that had not yet acceded to the Convention to sign and ratify it as a matter of priority and to withdraw reservations contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention. Article 14 of the Convention provided opportunities for individuals to file complaints, but regrettably, only 54 out of 175 States parties had made the declaration accepting the procedure.

23. **Mr. Farhad** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Committee should be provided with the necessary support to ensure its proper functioning and cope with increased work. He asked if the Vice-Chair could elaborate on ways of retaining the momentum during the Durban Review process, and what steps it had taken or planned to take with concerned mandate-holders.

24. **Ms. Ponikva** (Slovenia) commended the Committee on the work it had done on the Convention. She asked what additional measures it had taken to improve effectiveness, particularly in the light of the discussions on treaty body reform.

25. **Mr. Tzay** (Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) said the Committee recommended that States parties should have national institutions to assess and follow up on the work of the Durban Declaration. To cooperate with special mechanisms, the Committee had carried out meetings in which it invited Special Rapporteurs for better cooperation. The Committee had also met with various specialized United Nations agencies that issued reports containing more thorough analyses.

26. As to new measures, he said that the Committee was trying to convey its meetings electronically in the interests of transparency, and so that civil society and States could see the meetings live.

27. **Ms. Patel** (Chair of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination) said that the Group had held three regular sessions during the reporting period. During those sessions it had received and reviewed reports, met with experts and convened meetings of non-governmental organizations involved in the sphere of business and human rights to discuss synergies to implement voluntary frameworks. The Group had requested invitations to visit Libya, Côte d'Ivoire and Somalia. Its planned mission to Libya in May 2012 had been postponed owing to the difficulty of arranging

meetings and security concerns, but it remained committed to visiting the country in the near future.

28. The Group had also sent a communication to the United States, requesting information on legislative matters and court cases involving private contractors. It was concerned that avenues for civil redress against contractors were being blocked by court decisions that gave companies the same privileges as soldiers and the Government's assertion of the State secrets privilege to dismiss lawsuits against contractors. She thanked the United States for its detailed reply, which reflected an important aspect of the Government's cooperation with the mandate.

29. She had also participated in the open-ended intergovernmental Working Group to consider elaborating an international regulatory framework for private military and security companies. Given the human rights risks posed by such companies' activities, an international convention was the most efficient way of regulating the industry. Prior to the meeting, the Group had submitted a detailed paper substantiating that position, explaining that international law contained few rules constraining the activities that could be properly performed by the companies and did not detail States' general human rights and humanitarian law obligations regarding them. Earlier in the year, the Group had initiated a survey of national laws relevant to private military and security companies, which would help identify best practices. The Group had also provided its views on other regulatory initiatives, including extensive comments on Switzerland's draft law on the provision of private security services abroad.

30. The Group was concerned about the continuing activities of mercenaries along the border of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia and about the inability of the relevant authorities to effectively investigate and prosecute reported cases of human rights violations. It remained concerned about the alleged use of mercenaries in the conflict in Libya and their detention. In Iraq, the overall number of contractors had considerably decreased although companies were expanding in spheres that included services to foreign multinationals. On 29 February 2012 the Iraqi Oil Ministry had banned foreign security companies from the 12 major oilfields that were being developed by international companies.

31. The Government of Afghanistan had been making efforts to reduce the use of private military and security companies by the International Security Assistance Force and by governmental and non-governmental agencies that were engaged in development assistance, and to ensure that contractors followed relevant national laws. The increase in piracy and the consequent deployment of private security guards on ships on the high seas and in coastal waters raised issues of jurisdiction and accountability that were perhaps even more complex than the difficulties faced in regulating the land activities of private military and security companies. Private military and security companies, engaged by States that were unwilling or unable to send their own military personnel, were also increasingly involved in peacekeeping operations. The Group was studying how those developments impacted efforts to regulate the industry.

32. Recent events in Africa clearly demonstrated that the problems posed by mercenaries were still a live issue. Mercenaries and private security companies posed a threat not only to security, but also to human rights and the right of peoples to self-determination. It remained crucial that States should cooperate to eliminate the phenomenon. The Group was encouraged by the fact that States recognized the need for regulation, and it hoped that the draft convention introduced in the Council in 2010 would continue to serve as a useful reference document for discussion on what form regulation should take.

33. **Ms. Abubakar** (Libya) regretted that the visit by the Working Group to her country had not taken place owing to the turbulence there. Given that mercenaries had been used by the Qaddafi regime, it was important for her Government that the Working Group should visit Libya.

34. **Ms. Astiasaran** (Cuba) welcomed the work carried out by the Working Group and said that Cuba would submit a draft resolution on the use of mercenaries. She asked about the difficulties faced by the Group in carrying out its activities, as well as for information on its future activities.

35. **Ms. Fontana** (Switzerland) said that her Government had launched internal consultations on a law to regulate security companies abroad. Negotiation of a final text was planned for the end of 2013. She asked for information about the States and regions the

Working Group had studied and whether there were preliminary results to share.

36. **Mr. Zheglov** (Russian Federation) agreed that private and military activities must be regulated by international instruments. The need for international regulation was confirmed by the human rights violations perpetrated by their employees. The States and organizations that continued to use those companies; must bear the responsibility for hiring them. He trusted that the Working Group would consider the issue of combating impunity.

37. **Ms. Patel** (Chair of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination), responding to comments made, said that the Group would carry out a survey of national legislation in order to develop an understanding of how private security and military companies were regulated at the national level. It would seek to determine if the regulations were adequate and to identify best practices. The Swiss draft law had adopted a licensing structure, whereas in the United States, legislation was created through Government contracts.

38. The Group would begin its survey in Africa, as some information was already available on Western Europe, the United States, and Latin America. It also would carry out a small-scale survey of five countries in Eastern Europe to determine the nature of legislation there.

39. Future missions planned were to Libya, Somalia and Côte d'Ivoire.

40. **Mr. Yahiaoui** (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that intercultural dialogue, tolerance, education and respect for cultural, ethnic and religious diversity were crucial for combating the scourge of racism. He emphasized that renewed political will, adequate funding and sustained international cooperation were indispensable to addressing all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. He called on all stakeholders to take concrete action to implement the Durban Plan of Action, as well as the outcome of the 2009 Durban Review Conference, which laid out the most comprehensive international framework to combat racism. He drew attention to the tenth session of the Intergovernmental Working Group for the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration

and Programme of Action, held from 8 to 19 October 2012.

41. As at previous sessions, the Group would submit a resolution on global efforts to eliminate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of the follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. In conclusion, he commended the General Assembly's decision to erect a permanent memorial to honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

42. **Mr. Hunte** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that, as an organization whose members were comprised of multi-ethnic, multiracial and multicultural societies, CARICOM welcomed the efforts of bodies within the United Nations to address aspects of the problem of racism, including the Forum on Minority Issues, the Intergovernmental Working Group on the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent. Renewed emphasis and adequate funding for the follow-up mechanisms, as well as sustained international cooperation, were indispensable to addressing all forms and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

43. The use of the Internet to proliferate racist ideas and promote intolerance was a new and complex challenge, and CARICOM concurred with the Special Rapporteur that the Durban Declaration provided a robust framework to combat the phenomenon. It looked forward to discussing ways to combat racial hatred via the Internet without violating the individual right to freedom of opinion and expression. Despite progress, implementation of the Durban process had not been satisfactorily implemented and it would require the combined effort of every member of the international community. The benefactors of colonialism and its legacies of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade should have provided reparations to people of African descent. He called for real, substantive and tangible measures in specific and identifiable areas that would benefit them.

44. CARICOM was pleased with the General Assembly decision to erect a permanent memorial to honour victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. The memorial took on added significance for the

region, for which it showcased the determination that such a historical wrong and the associated after-effects of racism and racial discrimination would never be repeated. The Community remained convinced that the Durban process, if given the necessary support of all Member States, could lead to the eradication of all forms of racism and intolerance, thereby allowing people everywhere to experience the full enjoyment of their fundamental human rights and freedoms.

45. **Ms. Niyamudeza** (Zimbabwe), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that the region had been subjected to legalized and institutionalized racism and racial discrimination during the colonial era. The Community had therefore laid a foundation for combating those abuses through enactment of article 6(2) of its treaty, which encouraged member States not to discriminate against anyone on grounds of gender, religion, political views, race, ethnicity, culture or disability. Reaffirming the commitment of the SADC States to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, she said that any attempts to renegotiate the Declaration might result in a loss of spirit in the fight against racism. Actions to address racism should be carried out in line with that instrument.

46. Forty-three years after the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination had entered into force, some States had still to ratify or accede to it. Voicing concern at increasing incidences of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerances, she said that legal provisions against discrimination were not sufficient to deal with such abuse and that other measures were needed to bring about the equitable distribution of economic and social resources to ensure social justice and equality of opportunity for all people. SADC had embraced the CARICOM initiative to commemorate the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.

47. Africans in the diaspora and migrants and refugees continued to experience racism in Western countries, where they were often discriminated against in the areas of employment, housing, access to justice, and quality health and education. SADC condemned the use of information and communication technologies to propagate racial hatred and xenophobia. The right to freedom of speech must not be used as an excuse to perpetrate intolerance and stigma. She commended the Department of Public

Information for raising awareness of the need to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerances.

48. *Ms. Alfeine (Comoros), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

49. **Mr. de Bustamante** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that racial or ethnic discrimination was prohibited by his region's Charter of Fundamental Rights, as well as by several regulations and directives. The European Union had also adopted legislation which banned incitement to racist or xenophobic violence or hatred. Member States were required to introduce laws that penalized intentional public incitement to violence or hatred on the basis of race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin, and to set up national bodies to promote equal treatment of all persons and to provide assistance to victims of discrimination.

50. The European Union supported a wide range of civil society organizations in their work against racism through its European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, and had implemented many public awareness measures to increase the exchange and analysis of information on racism and xenophobia and to improve judicial cooperation and cross-border training. Regional mechanisms also played an important role, as did dialogue between regional organizations.

51. The European Union welcomed the contribution of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and related intolerance. While it was true that the Internet was used for propagating racism, it was equally true that new technologies had made a positive contribution to the fight against that scourge.

52. The European Union remained fully committed to the primary objectives of the Durban Conference; it was vital to tackle hatred and extremism in all its forms. The global fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance was an issue that concerned all and on which the international community must unite.

53. **Mr. Selim** (Egypt) said that the world had long suffered from racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerances, and efforts must be intensified to eradicate those abuses. The 2001 Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, together with the 2009 outcome document, constituted the international legal framework for combating them. Efforts must be based on the political commitment to implement the outcomes of the Durban process. Democracy and the rule of law were incompatible with racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and discrimination.

54. In view of the misuse of information and communication technologies to incite hatred and violence, he urged a review of the benefits, challenges and regulations related to access to them and the assessment of ways to optimize the use of those technologies for promoting tolerance and understanding. International dialogue among Governments, the media, civil society and the information society was needed to address the challenges stemming from the improper use of modern technologies. National legal, administrative and executive frameworks also must be strengthened to prevent incitement to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

55. **Ms. Shen Siwei** (China) said that despite the progress made in combating racism, there was a long way to go to achieve the goals of the Durban Declaration. New forms of racism, such as Islamophobia, had appeared, while incitement to racism under the pretext of freedom of expression was growing. The international community must adopt practical measures to remove the root causes of racism and build a more inclusive world.

56. The right to self-determination was a sacred right, both historically important and of great relevance in the contemporary world. It must, however, be correctly interpreted. To openly advocate the splitting of sovereign States under the cloak of self-determination violated the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law and deserved universal condemnation.

57. China supported Palestine's right to self-determination and independent statehood, together with its membership in international organizations including the United Nations. It hoped that the international community would show a stronger sense of



responsibility and urgency regarding the Middle East peace process.

58. **Mr. Santos de Oliveira** (Brazil) said that his country had made significant strides in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance by establishing the Secretariat of Policies for the Promotion of Racial Equality and implementing a broad range of measures aimed at correcting historical injustices and promoting the social and economic inclusion of people of African descent.

59. On 29 October, the President had sanctioned a law establishing racial quotas in higher education for students of black and indigenous origins. From 1997 to 2011, the number of black students attending university had increased from 4 per cent to 19.8 per cent. Crosscutting policies, such as the Bolsa Família cash-transfer programme, had benefited a large number of families of African descent.

60. His country took pride in its diversity, which was an integral part of national and cultural identity. Brazil was home to the largest black population outside Africa, and his Government viewed the proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent as a unique opportunity to acknowledge the contributions made to Brazil's economic, social, political and cultural development by its African descendants.

61. **Ms. Hewanpola** (Australia) said that eliminating racial discrimination remained a key priority for the Australian Government, since despite the country's multicultural experience some Australians continued to feel the impact of racism. Her Government agreed with the Special Rapporteur that the implementation of national legislation was an important step towards eliminating racism. However, legal and governance measures alone were not sufficient; the elimination of racism could only be achieved when communities worked together to foster tolerance and cultural understanding. Accordingly, in Australia a National Anti-Racism Strategy had been launched, whose purpose was to break down divisions between people of different races in the areas of education, media, government services, the Internet and the workplace. The Government and the community together were promoting public awareness of racism and its effects, sharing examples of good practices to stop it and encouraging initiatives that empowered people to reduce and prevent it. It was a source of pride that the

Strategy was a joint initiative of the Government, community organizations and the national Human Rights Commission and a practical example of the effectiveness of partnerships between governments and national human rights institutions.

62. **Ms. Lum** (Singapore) said that her country's racial diversity resulted from its history as a trading hub, when it had thrived because of its openness to the different cultures, languages, religions and technologies of the traders.

63. The Government regularly took steps to emphasize tolerance and respect in order to enhance racial harmony, which was a political, economic and foreign policy imperative for Singapore's continued prosperity. Multiracialism was upheld as a fundamental principle, and the Constitution enshrined principles of spiritual and racial harmony. The Government had established a housing policy that allowed diverse ethnic communities to interact regularly in the community, with minorities ensured the space to keep their heritage alive. It had introduced initiatives, such as its community engagement programme, to create conditions for understanding and to foster a stronger sense of identity. In addition, every year a special day celebrated Singapore's success as a racially harmonious nation. Sustaining that racial harmony was a continuing journey, to which Singapore was committed.

64. **Ms. Sandoval** (Nicaragua) said that the Nicaraguan State had adopted measures to apply the fundamental human rights and freedoms outlined in its Constitution. It recognized the rights of indigenous peoples, especially their right to keep and develop their own identity and culture, manage their own affairs and maintain communal forms of land ownership. For Atlantic coast communities, an autonomous regime had been created, while the development of the Caribbean coast was part of the national human development plan and an important part of the Government's poverty reduction strategy.

65. Other programmes had been launched to combat discrimination against persons with disabilities and people living with HIV/AIDS. National authorities were working to prevent infection among adolescents and young people, and HIV/AIDS testing was available in the country's 153 communities. An office had been established to enforce legislation prohibiting discrimination in employment and affirmative action

measures had been taken through a law defending the rights of those with HIV/AIDS. The Ministry of Labour was working with an association for the blind to enforce a law requiring employers to employ two persons with disabilities for every 100 people hired.

66. The Government was determined to ensure that laws were complied with and that people lived together in harmony.

67. **Mr. Zheglov** (Russian Federation) said that attempts were still being made to falsify the outcomes of the Second World War, and he criticized the spread of neo-Nazi ideology in Europe. Indeed, some extremist groups were employing scare tactics to sway public opinion. While in some States, including the Baltic countries, there was support for neo-Nazis, to the distress of survivors and countries that had suffered at the hands of the Nazis.

68. The international community should address those problems. In his Government's view, the arguments advanced by Brussels citing freedom of speech and "a difficult historical past" were an excuse to condone modern forms of racism, and it called on the European Union to assume responsibility for what was occurring in its midst and to take action to prevent the resurgence of Nazism.

69. In contrast to the European authorities, the general public was not indifferent to ultraright radicalism and extremism. In 2010, 136 organizations in 28 countries had formed an international movement for a World without Nazis.

70. The United Nations had been founded in response to Nazism. The Russian Federation, for one, would not accept a rewriting of history. It would again submit a draft resolution condemning the dangerous acts of extremists, and it appealed to all States to support its initiative.

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.*