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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.

[5 February 2023]

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



Towards a United Nations Declaration on Diversity

While the Declaration and Plan of Action that emerged from the Durban World Conference Against Racism in 2001 remains controversial with some member States, there is plenty in the document that offers the building blocks to look forward to a world without discrimination, including our proposal for a UN Declaration on Diversity and UN day of Diversity.

It is our proposal that we can compliment the efforts to end racial and related discrimination with positive policy approaches to inclusion and making society comfortable with diversity.

At the 51st Human Rights Council, we held a side event in which we were able to showcase how four different forms of diversity were being made inclusive in four different countries. The Permanent Representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia explained how a plurinational constitution has made the country inclusive of the different communities of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

An ex-civil servant from the British Government who spoke in his personal capacity explained how the setting of a division on faith communities in the Government made the different faith communities in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland inclusive in the decision-making process, especially on policies that affected them.

A representative from the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge Systems from Kwazulu Natal University, South Africa, explained how integrating indigenous knowledge in Government policies made large sections of people in South Africa feel engaged in State policies.

A representative of the Sikh Human Rights Group, explained that the current rights-based approach is necessary, but minority and traditional communities often have to fight to be respected. A proactive and positive approach by the State to make all sections of the nation inclusive could reduce the tensions involved in a political campaign to achieve their rights.

Additional, different, creative, and positive approaches can compliment and strengthen fundamental rights and the various international treaties. A Declaration on Diversity inclusive of the different rights can encourage States to sign up to some or all of its aspects with intentions to adopt best practices and affirmative action to promote diversity.

We support the mechanisms from the Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General.

These mechanisms are necessary to combat Racism, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. However, there is also a need to look at positive approaches to diversity by seeking to promote it through best practices and encouraging States to commit to promoting diversity as a norm.

We propose that State parties of the Human Rights Council consider promoting a comprehensive Declaration on Diversity and a UN Day of Diversity, which will be wide-ranging, promoting inclusiveness and positive action in areas such as but not limited to race, ethnicity, culture, religion, lifestyle, gender, disability, age, political thought, linguistics, environment, and biodiversity.
