



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Forty-third session

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Agenda item 9

**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up 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.

[03 February 2020]

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\* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



## **A declaration on diversity**

Racism and discriminatory practices against minorities are increasing in the world, especially in the wake of populist politics that target the ‘other’ or a minority. This is undermining the great hopes of the 2001 World Conference Against Racism, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance Declaration and Action Plan.

While strengthening the law and anti discriminatory policies is essential to address this, we feel that encouraging a culture of accepting diversity as natural and enacting policies to help people to be comfortable with diversity will compliment the existing approaches.

There are many countries that have adopted policies of promoting diversity across the many sectors of the State. However there are many others where minorities have to fight for respect, dignity and equality by political campaigns and legal challenges.

A positive approach towards diversity needs to come from the United Nations. We think that a Declaration on Diversity will encourage States to adopt policies, learn from best practices and reduce discrimination against minorities and under represented groups.

A Declaration on Diversity will encourage inclusive societies around the world. It will be a standard for States to aspire to for a happier coexistence between different communities, groups, religions, lifestyles, ethnicities, nationalities, genders and ages. A Declaration on Diversity also incorporating respect for biodiversity will promote a better understanding of the ecosystems sustained by diversity. Respecting diversity in nature and human life compliments each other.

A Declaration on Diversity can bring together the many strands of instruments that have evolved from the original UN Charter and create an overarching list of positive framework for countries to work from.

Such a Declaration and the United Nation’s efforts to end various forms of discrimination can further be given a boost if there is an annual UN Diversity Day celebrated around the world. This will be a day when States can show case their programmes to promote diversity and their achievements in this field.

While not all states will robustly apply the Declaration, a slow and gradual acceptance and adoption of the principle articles within such a Declaration will be a success in itself as an initial charter for a positive action plan on fulfilling the sentiments and ambitions of the Durban Declaration.

State members are urged to explore the idea of a Declaration on Diversity as a positive approach to human diversity, ecosystems and biodiversity.

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