

Racism: The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Summary and Full Text

By [UN World Conference against Racism \(WCAR\)](#)

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Theme: [Poverty & Social Inequality](#), [United Nations](#)

The Review Conference will review progress and assess the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA).

Adopted by consensus at the [2001 World Conference against Racism \(WCAR\)](#) in Durban, South Africa, the DDPA is a comprehensive, action-oriented document that proposes concrete measures to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. It is holistic in its vision, addresses a wide range of issues, and contains far-reaching recommendations and practical measures.

The DDPA embodies the firm commitment of the international community to tackle racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance at the national, regional and international level. Recognition that no country can claim to be free of racism, that racism is a global concern, and that tackling it should be a universal effort, is an important achievement. Although the DDPA is not legally binding, it has a strong moral value and serves as a basis for advocacy efforts worldwide.

[Full text of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action \(DDPA\) \(PDF\)](#)

AT A GLANCE: THE DDPA

- The DDPA reasserts the principles of equality and non-discrimination as core human rights, thus transforming victims of discrimination into rights-holders and States into duty bearers.
- Assigning the primary responsibility of combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to States, the DDPA also calls for the active involvement of international and non-governmental organizations, political parties, national human rights institutions, the private sector, the media and civil society at large.
- The DDPA calls for the universal ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and its effective implementation by State Parties to the Convention.

- The DDPA adopts a victim-oriented approach to problems of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Specific recommendations are formulated to combat discrimination against Africans and persons of African descent, Asians and persons of Asian descent, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, minorities, the Roma and other groups.
- The DDPA recognizes that victims often suffer from multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination based on sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, social origin, property, birth or other status. It highlights the gender dimension of racial discrimination and attributes a key role to women in the development of programmes to combat racism and intolerance.
- The DDPA emphasizes the importance of preventive and concerted action, especially in the field of education and awareness-raising, and calls for the strengthening of human rights education.
- The DDPA calls for comprehensive national action plans to eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. It calls for the reinforcement of national institutions and it formulates concrete recommendations in the areas of national legislation and the administration of justice.
- The DDPA outlines measures to address discrimination in the fields of employment, health, policing, and education. It calls on States to adopt policies and programmes to counter incitement to racial hatred in the media, including on the Internet. It calls for the collection of disaggregated data, as well as additional research, as the basis for targeted actions.
- The DDPA urges States to adopt measures of affirmative or positive action to create equal opportunities for victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in the political, economic, social and cultural decision-making spheres.
- The DDPA urges governments to provide effective remedies, recourse, redress and compensatory measures to victims and to ensure that victims have access to legal assistance so they can pursue such measures. It also recommends the creation of competent national bodies to adequately investigate allegations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia or related intolerance.
- The DDPA acknowledges that slavery and the slave trade are crimes against humanity, and should have always been so. It expresses regret over the fact that the slave trade and colonialism contributed to lasting social and economic inequalities. It welcomes the efforts of UNESCO's Slave Route Project.
- Concerning the Middle East, the DDPA expresses concern about the plight of the Palestinian people under foreign occupation and recognizes the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the right to an independent state. It also recognizes the right to security for all countries in the region,

including Israel, and calls upon all governments to support the peace process and bring it to an early conclusion.

- The DDPA recalls that the Holocaust must never be forgotten.
- Last but not least, the Programme of Action spells out a number of strategies to achieve full and effective equality through international cooperation. They involve an effective international legal framework, enhanced regional and international cooperation, an active role for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the participation of a wide variety of actors, including civil society, non-governmental organizations and youth in the struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

(This is for public information purposes only and does not constitute an official summary of the DDPA)

[Full text of the DDPA \(PDF\)](#)

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