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Durban 2001

United against Racism

NEWSLETTER OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM SECRETARIAT

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Focus on Children and Youth

Children and young people will be an important focus of attention for the World Conference against Racism since they are, all too often, vulnerable targets of discrimination and exclusion. I intend that the issues of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance that concern children are considered at Durban and that the Conference works to ensure that children are protected against all forms of discrimination.

In cooperation with UNICEF, my Office is organizing a parallel event on children in Durban during the Conference. This panel will discuss child rights issues and provide a link to the General Assembly Special Session on Children that will be held a few weeks later. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has identified the principle of non-discrimination (Article 2) as one of the core elements for implementing the Convention. It has drafted a General Comment on Article 29(1) of the Convention on education and non-discrimination, and it has contributed an article on this to the newsletter.

The Youth Summit prior to the Durban Conference provides an opportunity to focus on specific issues relating to youth. Youth are particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of racial discrimination or to alienation that may cause intolerance of others. For example, young people can be the targets of racist elements who use the Internet to promote

their ideas. My Office is publishing a report on youth and racism that will be released at Durban.

The issue of juvenile justice is another important issue affecting youth in many countries. Racial profiling, and high rates of sentencing and incarceration disproportionately impact on the young people of certain racial or ethnic groups. It is my hope that the Conference will come up with a practical Programme of Action to address these issues.

Young people have a lot to contribute to a shared vision of an inclusive, non-discriminatory world because they have open minds, new ideas and unique perspectives.

We want to hear the voices and views of our young people on racism and on ways to stop it. I am encouraging governments to include young people on their delegations to the Conference and my Office is working hard to ensure that the Durban Youth Summit is the start of global youth action against racism.

Mary Robinson

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Secretary General of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

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Second Preparatory Committee

Over the course of ten days in late May, representatives of Member States and observers, including the United Nations programmes and specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations, human rights bodies and mechanisms and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), met in Geneva to discuss the complex and difficult issues of the Draft Declaration and Programme of Action, caucus and

With less than four months to go before the World Conference the text before us still requires a great deal of work."

The High Commissioner noted that "the hallmark of every successful world conference was to look for common ground. I am convinced that consensus positions can be found on much of the text under discussion to which all delegations can rally. The challenge which faces us over the next weeks is to identify these areas of consensus and rationalise them into agreed text."

On the first day, the representatives of Chile, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy and Senegal gave short summaries of the outcomes of their respective regional preparatory meetings. The Committee also considered

a document on the provisional agenda, programme of work and venue of the Durban Conference. The document also concerned practical issues such as accommodation and the NGO Forum.

In the first few days, four NGOs not in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and contested by certain States were accredited by the Preparatory committee after a vote, to participate in the world Conference.

During the first week, the Committee began a paragraph by paragraph consideration of a compilation document of proposals made at the first and second inter-sessional open-ended working groups (document A/CONF.189/PC.2/27). This document contains various proposals made by delegations at the first and second inter-sessional open-ended working groups held from 6 to 9 March and 7 to 11 May 2001, respectively.

The Committee later decided to establish a "Group of 21" States (made up of 4 representatives from each region and chaired by South Africa) to cluster paragraphs, identify duplication, and make proposals for redrafting certain preambular paragraphs.

The Foreign Minister of South Africa, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma made a statement on 29 May in which she echoed many of the High Commissioner's sentiments and acknowledged the difficult work facing the Preparatory Committee. Dr. Zuma stated that "at the end of the [preparatory] process, we should be able to say, without any fear of contradiction, that our efforts would make a significant change to the conditions of the millions of ordinary people who are victims of racism and racial discrimination. This is a measure against which history will judge us. At the end of the process, we should be able to say with confidence that our contributions are such that they are honestly commensurate to the task."

"We must rise above narrow national and group positions and begin to work as partners in order to facilitate consensus. We should not shy away from confronting critical and difficult issues, in the hope that they will disappear. The task before us, therefore, is to ensure that meaningful progress is made in order to lay the foundation for a breakthrough in the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance."

In the second week, the Committee decided to set up two open-ended working groups to work on the Draft Declaration and Draft Programme of Action. Ambassador Philippe Petit of France chaired the Group that worked on the Draft Declaration and Mr. Gilberto Saboia, Secretary of State for Human Rights of Brazil and Head of the Brazilian delegation, chaired the Group that worked on the Draft Programme of Action.

These two groups made some good progress. They agreed on some text that was later adopted by the plenary meeting of the Preparatory Committee.



Government delegates and NGO representatives informally discuss the issues. (Secretariat photo)

create networks and carry on with technical preparations for Durban. On the last day, many of them attended a free outdoor concert against racism in Plainpalais in Geneva.

The Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference took place from 21 May to 1 June 2001 in Geneva. It was chaired by Ambassador Absa Claude Diallo of Senegal.

The High Commissioner for Human Rights and Secretary General of the World Conference, Mary Robinson, made an opening speech in which she recalled the outcomes of the regional meetings held to prepare for the World Conference. She noted that the Second Preparatory Committee marked the beginning of the final phase of work, but that "still a lot remained to be achieved." She said that "[p]rogress on drafting the final declaration and programme of action has been slower than many had hoped.



It was a full house during the NGO training session at Palais Wilson. (Secretariat photo)

On 1 June, the Committee decided that in order to make further progress the Group of 21 should continue working immediately after the session for a period of two weeks. It also decided to recommend that the General Assembly authorize it to hold a third session from 30 July to 10 August at Palais des Nations in Geneva.¹

Youth and NGO Activities

Nearly 750 NGOs (those not in consultative status with ECOSOC) were accredited to the World Conference by the Preparatory Committee and close to 100 of them participated in the Geneva meeting. In addition, almost 100 NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC, participated in the Session. While many of the non-consultative status NGOs were new to the UN process, they quickly learned how to caucus, network, and lobby on issues of concern to their constituents. This learning process was facilitated by a training session organized by the NGO Liaison Unit of the Office of the High Commissioner, in cooperation with UNIFEM, the South African NGO Coalition (SANGOCO), the Conference of NGOs in consultative status with the United Nations (CONGO) and the NGO Liaison Service (NGLS). The training session brought together well over 200 NGO activists on the weekend before the Preparatory Committee.

During the Second Preparatory Committee, NGOs held over 180 formal meetings and many more informal ones in the lounges and corridors of the Palais des Nations. Over 20 NGO caucuses were set up: regional caucuses – for the Americas, Asia, Africa, United States of America, Canada, Brazil; constituency-specific ones – Afro-descendants, Indigenous, Roma, Arab countries, women, youth, faith-based (religious and spiritual); and issue-specific caucuses – migration (including trafficking), criminal justice, Palestine, Jewish issues, national action plans, race and poverty, race and health, and caste.

The International Steering Committee (ISC) of 20 members, elected by and reporting to regional NGO coordinating committees, held its first meeting during the Preparatory Committee.

Two members of the ISC represent youth. These members helped to establish an International Youth Committee that organized several meetings and they held a reception attended by the High Commissioner.

Over the two weeks, youth from around the world exchanged experiences and views about racism and made new networks and friendships.

In Concert for Unity

After all the hard work, over 25,000 people attended the free concert organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote the World Conference against Racism in Plainpalais, Geneva on the evening of 1 June. The diverse audience was treated to the melodies of World Music star – and newly-appointed Goodwill Ambassador for the Conference – Natacha Atlas and to the Jamaican-inspired music of France's Massilia Sound System.

Concertgoers came out to have a good time and to show their support against racism through music and song. The High Commissioner welcomed such a large turn-out in support of unity



Massilia Sound System entertains concertgoers at Plainpalais. (Secretariat photo)

against racism. At Plainpalais, a tent village was set up to house the many UN agencies that came to support the event, including United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and a number of NGOs.

¹The Committee also adopted its draft report of the activities and decisions of the Second Session. The official report of the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee will be available for the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee of the World Conference.

To Durban

Third Session of the Preparatory Committee

30 July – 10 August 2001
Palais des Nations (Geneva)

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Youth Summit

26-27 August 2001
Kingsmead Cricket Stadium
Durban, South Africa

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NGO Forum

28 August - 1 September 2001
Kingsmead Cricket Stadium
Durban, South Africa

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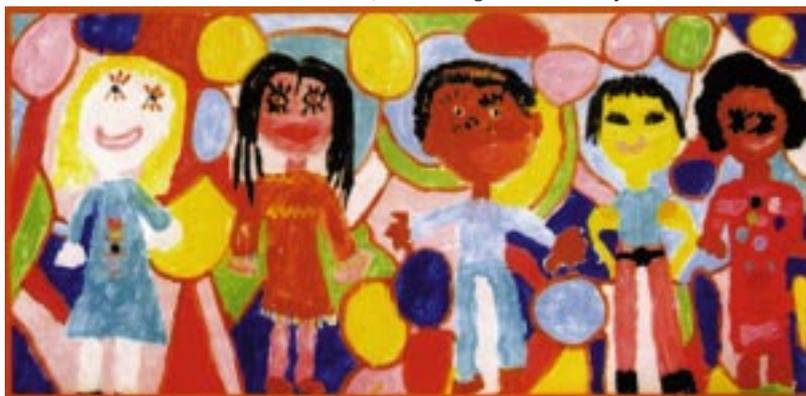
World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

31 August – 7 September 2001
International Convention Centre
Durban, South Africa

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Parallel event on children

Child rights will be the topic of a parallel event on 4 September 2001 during the World Conference in Durban. A panel organized by OHCHR with the support of UNICEF will help link the child rights issues of the Durban Conference to the General Assembly Special

Session on Children which will take place in New York from 19 to 21 September 2001. The Durban event will focus on the role that education can play in combating racism and in ensuring children's enjoyment of all of their human rights.

UNRISD Conference on Racism and Public Policy

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) is organizing an international conference on 'Racism and Public Policy' to take place from 3 to 5 September 2001 in Durban. The conference will complement the objectives of the World Conference by providing participants and the wider public with research-based information on some of the core issues of racism, xenophobia and intolerance as they affect different groups, countries and regions. It will examine the opportunities, problems and challenges of public policies devised for combating racist and xenophobic practices in different settings. The Institute has established a network of about 30 high-level social scientists, historians and legal scholars from various regions of the world to prepare papers and lead discussions at this event.

The UNRISD conference will:

- examine how the construction of race and racism in various regions affect social solidarity and citizenship;
- probe the socio-economic and political forces that drive racism and inequalities;
- examine the responses of organized groups, social movements and political parties to cultural or racial diversity; and,
- discuss the impact of public policies on race relations.

For further information on the conference, visit the UNRISD website at www.unrisd.org/racism or contact: Thomas Ansorg, UNRISD, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, tel: +41 22 917 2981, fax: +41 22 917 0650, e-mail: ansorg@unrisd.org

Denis Jones continues his journey to Durban

On 16 June at the shore of Maschsee Lake in the center of Hanover, Germany, several hundred people, including the Mayor of Hanover, 50 Samba and African drummers and a representative of the World Conference against Racism Secretariat, welcomed Denis Jones, the kayaking human rights activist whose goal is to bring 10 million signed 'Declarations of Principles' to Durban. 'Freundeskreis Tambacounda', a German NGO supported by the city of Hanover, organized the outdoor event that also included music, dances and a picnic. The NGO also plans to release a book and video of the event. Practical initiatives like these help attract attention to the World Conference and its objectives and can also be very enjoyable.

Denis Jones began his journey to Durban in Geneva on 30 June 2000. After 9 months spent kayaking through the waters of Europe and the

northern and western parts of Africa, he arrived in Dakar, Senegal in February 2001. Denis had to return to Europe for a short while, but in early July, he will continue his voyage to Durban. He plans to begin in the Atlantic Ocean at the border between Namibia and South Africa and kayak up the Orange River to the Drakensberge Mountains in South Africa. From there, Denis will try to find a stream that will bring him to Durban in time for the World Conference!

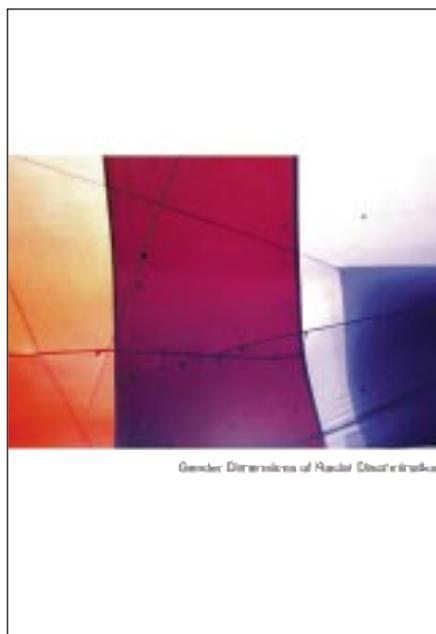
Denis is travelling light: signed copies of the Declarations of Principles, to date signed by people from 53 different countries, are his main luggage.

If you want to add your name to this illustrious list, send an e-mail to: denisjones@net-up.com or fax a signed copy to + 33 (0) 477 51 55 82. Follow Denis' journey at: www.kayak-africa.net

Eminent Persons Group

Leading international political and intellectual figures are coming together under the patronage of Nelson Mandela to provide leadership and inspiration in the run-up to the World Conference against Racism and beyond. The members of the Eminent Persons Group, which also includes Mikhail Gorbachev, Jimmy Carter, Elie Wiesel, Rigoberta Menchu and Coretta Scott King, have "spoken out consistently, loudly and clearly for tolerance, for valuing diversity and for the virtue of learning from the past to build the future." Answering the call of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and Secretary General of the World Conference, Mary Robinson, to "forge a real sense of vision and common purpose in the struggle for racial harmony and tolerance", several members of the Group will meet in Geneva on 2 and 3 August.

OHCHR initiatives on "Gender and Race"



The front cover of the OHCHR publication "Gender Dimensions of Racial Discrimination"

Race, religion, nationality, and social class are factors that make a difference to the ways in which women and men experience discrimination. To help integrate a gender perspective in the preparations and outcome of the Durban Conference, OHCHR will release a publication called "Gender Dimensions of Racial Discrimination" this coming July. The report examines different forms of discrimination based on gender and race, and reviews current government and UN practices to combat gender and racial discrimination.

The Office is also organizing a roundtable on the "Impact of multiple forms of discrimination on women" which will be held in Durban on 2 September. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson will

open the discussion, which will be chaired by Dr. Nafis Sadik, UN Special Advisor and Undersecretary-General and former Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The panelists include: Radhika Coomaraswamy, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women; Gabriela Rodriguez Pizarro, UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants; Charlotte Abaka, Chair of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; Gay MacDougall, member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; and Angela King, UN Special Adviser on Gender and Advancement of Women. They will discuss the gender dimensions of racial discrimination and propose recommendations for future action.

Better reporting on racial and ethnic discrimination against children

Last year, Save the Children published a study on discrimination against children and youth entitled "Children's Rights Equal Rights". The study confirmed what Save the Children organizations in 26 countries already knew from practical experience: that children are much more vulnerable to discrimination than adults. In many countries, racial or ethnic minority, indigenous or migrant children do not have access to education; in others, education is not adapted to their specific needs. Also, children belonging to these groups are often disproportionately represented among

A Reference Guide". The Guide is a unique reporting tool, which is intended for use by governments, treaty bodies, special rapporteurs, national human rights institutions, NGOs and other interested actors. It also introduces the reader to the principle of non-discrimination in international law and its relevance to children.

A number of illustrative cases of how racial or ethnic discrimination may affect children all over the world are featured in the Guide. In many countries of Western Europe, young people are often denied entry to nightclubs and restaurants. In certain countries, shops that cater for leisure activities, such as sports, book or music stores, have been known to label all young black people as thieves and refuse entry on

education, which is fundamental for the development of the child. The checklist includes basic questions such as:

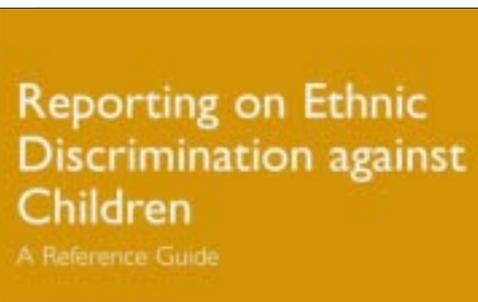
- Have all measures been taken to guarantee equal access in law and in practice to all levels within your country?
- Do children have the right to speak their mother tongue in public and in schools?
- Have textbooks been revised to correct any erroneous assessment of historical, geographical or social data?
- Does the curriculum place emphasis on human rights, tolerance, the dangers of racism and aggressive nationalism?
- Does education adequately foster knowledge of the culture, history, languages and religions of minority children?
- Do schools have a specific policy against racism?
- Does the staff adequately reflect a multicultural society?

The Reference Guide has been well-received by a number of commentators, including Professor Jaap E. Doek, Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. In his opinion, the Reference Guide is "firmly based in the relevant human rights standards and will be very helpful for the States Parties to the Convention and to the Committee when they have their dialogue about the progress made in the State Party with the implementation of the rights of the child, in particular with a view to the principle of non-discrimination. I believe that the use of these guidelines will contribute to a more consistent and systematic discussion of the very important and crucial matter of non-discrimination."

Martin Alexanderson
WCAR Coordinator,
International Save the Children Alliance
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For further information on 'Reporting on Ethnic Discrimination against Children. A Reference Guide' (Art. No. 2001-2604), contact Save the Children Sweden Publishing, fax: +46 8 698 90 25 or visit their website at: www.rb.se/bookshop

¹ Study on the effects of racial discrimination on the children of minorities and those of migrant workers in the field of education, training and employment. Report of the Secretary General, UN Doc. A/CONF.189/PC.1/11, 10 April 2000.



juveniles who are imprisoned, recruited as child soldiers, trafficked, exposed to hazardous work and sexual exploitation. The United Nations Secretary General confirmed in a recent study on the effects of racial discrimination against children that "research in this area is scant, and tends to focus on some countries or minorities to the neglect of others".¹ It is not hard to understand why: children are frequently not considered when adults report on racial or ethnic discrimination. Children are often not informed about their rights and so do not recognize discrimination as a legal infringement of their rights. Children do not necessarily have the legal knowledge, economic resources and contacts required to pursue judicial action. As a result, the discrimination they encounter is hidden and suffered in silence.

There is a clear need for better reporting about how racial or ethnic discrimination affects persons below the age of 18. To contribute to the World Conference against Racism, Save the Children has produced a new publication entitled "Reporting on Ethnic Discrimination against Children.

these grounds. In other countries of Eastern Europe, Roma/Gypsy children are more than fifteen times more likely than non-Roma children to be designated 'intellectually deficient' and placed in special schools.

The Guide also surveys the reporting systems under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, where States Parties have a duty to submit periodic reports to Committees charged with monitoring the implementation of these Conventions. Both the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination regularly consider material submitted by other interested actors, including NGOs.

To this end, the Guide includes a comprehensive checklist intended as an aid for non-governmental organizations and others who wish to report to treaty bodies established to monitor human rights conventions. The checklist contains some sixty questions, divided into eight subject areas, which are important for NGOs to look at when reporting in this area. One of these subjects is



Children, education and the fight against racism

The type of environment in which children learn and what children learn are equally important in fighting racism and discrimination. This is why the Committee on the Rights of the Child - the United Nations body mandated to monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child - pays a great deal of attention to education, particularly access to education and the content of education, as it impacts on the fight against all forms of discrimination against children. The Committee has highlighted the responsibility of the State to take appropriate measures (especially through education) to protect children against discrimination of any kind. The educational system, which can facilitate interaction between children of different economic, social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, is one of the best, and perhaps easiest way for States to address issues of discrimination in society and to prevent or limit its future impact.

Access to education

The Committee consistently stresses in its concluding observations and dialogue with States parties that universal, compulsory, and free primary education is paramount in the fight against all forms of discrimination against children. On the basis of Article 28 of the Convention, which guarantees the right to free primary education for all children without discrimination, the Committee has frequently recommended that States work to remove all obstacles that prevent free and compulsory primary education for all children within their jurisdiction.

To promote the full implementation of article 28, the Committee has also strongly encouraged States to:

- allocate adequate financial and human resources to education;
- reinforce efforts to reduce dropout and retention rates;
- provide appropriate facilities, equipment and learning tools;
- ensure a positive, participatory learning environment;
- enhance vocational training; and,
- facilitate teacher-training, including in human rights education.

States are encouraged to pay particular attention to vulnerable groups such as girls, children belonging to ethnic minorities, children of migrant workers,

Under Article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, States Parties shall:

"...respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status"; (paragraph 1)

"...take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members". (paragraph 2)

refugee and asylum seeking children, internally displaced children, children of economically disadvantaged families, and children living in remote rural communities. Denying adequate access to education to these groups of children who are already vulnerable to discrimination often significantly increases the likelihood that they become victims of discrimination.

Content of education

To change attitudes and behaviours that could lead to discrimination against children in their homes, schools and communities, it is important to teach and sensitise children about

tolerance and human rights. The Committee encourages States to incorporate human rights education, particularly children's rights, in the school curricula. Human rights education should be comprehensive, and actively involve children themselves, parents, teachers and reach out to civil society.

Article 29(1) of the Convention affirms that the right to education is not only a matter of access but also a matter of content. Among other things, education should be directed to: develop respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; develop respect for the child's parents as well as his or her cultural identity, language and values; and prepare the child for responsible life in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child underlines the fundamental objective of education in its General Comment on the Aims of Education (A/CONF.189/PC.2/15), which focuses on the development of the full potential of the child, including his or her respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Committee also stresses the importance of education that specifically teaches non-discrimination and promotes an understanding and appreciation of the values reflected in article 29 (1) and echoed in various other provisions of the Convention.

Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance can have a profound and lasting impact on the lives of children. As such, the Committee encourages all States to use the occasion of the World Conference against Racism to reflect on the role of education in fighting discrimination against children, in particular children belonging to vulnerable groups and to set up a programme of action that helps to fight all forms of discrimination against children.

Committee on the Rights of the Child

The Voice of a Young Person

"My name is Serena deCordova. I am a Black young woman of Caribbean heritage living in the United Kingdom and through my involvement in the National Black Youth Forum, I work on a national level to implement positive change for Black children, young people and our communities in order to eliminate racism.

Last October, I travelled to Strasbourg, France to participate in the European Conference against Racism, a regional preparatory meeting for the World Conference. As I entered my first

Contrary to what was said so many times during these meetings in Strasbourg, we, the youth, are not the future. We are the present; we are here right now. Everyday we experience different things. We live as children and young people of today, whereas the majority of people present at the Strasbourg Conference were the young people of yesterday and the days before that.

Do you see my point? All too often the needs of children and young people are not taken into consideration and this is why consulting children and

World Conference, at the World Conference and indeed beyond the World Conference, will result in a more fruitful and constructive debate if children and young people can participate in them. It is crucial that there is a genuine desire by all participants in the Durban Conference to engage with and consult with young people. The views of children and young people should be taken seriously by all.

Children and young people can bring honesty and openness to the discussions at the Durban Conference. They are fully aware of how discrimination manifests itself in its extremities and they no longer want to ask the questions they have asked time and time again: How many more lives must be lost to discrimination? How many more racist acts must be committed? When will we live in a world where individuals are respected for who they are? Youth want action now and they feel it is time to be proactive.

We, as young people, can place pressure on our governments at a local and national level. This unfortunately is not enough. There needs to be additional pressure at the international level and that is why our meaningful participation in Durban is important. We want governments to bring more honesty to international forums. We want governments who will paint a true picture of what the reality is like for their citizens, who will engage in an open and frank dialogue about racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and who will take action. This is the message we want to impress upon the international community. And my hope is that the stand of young people against racism is taken seriously, and that the very loud, honest and determined voice of youth will be heard not only in Durban but far beyond."

Serena deCordova

Ms. deCordova is a member of the National Black Youth Forum (NBYP), a youth NGO based in the United Kingdom which works on issues of common concern to young Black people in the UK. She participated in the panel on "Racism, Children and the Role of Education" organized by OHCHR and UNICEF on 10 April 2001 in Geneva, during the 57th Session of the Commission on Human Rights.



"We want governments who will paint a true picture of what the reality is like for their citizens, who will engage in an open and frank dialogue about racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and who will take action."

"We, the youth, are not the future. We are the present; we are here right now." (Secretariat Photo)

meeting, it immediately dawned on me that I was once again in the minority. But on this occasion, it was not because of the colour of my skin: it was because of my age. At first glance, I could see no young people. After taking a second look around the room, I was happy to see three other participants who appeared to be under 30. But I could not help to wonder: "how is it possible to have a regional discussion about racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance without a meaningful representation of young people?" Children and young people experience and suffer these things too and therefore our views, feelings, experiences and solutions should not be excluded as we have to live in this world too.

young people is important in all facets of the decision-making process. The reality for Black children and young people living in the UK, for instance, is that our needs are marginalized and rarely taken into consideration by those making decisions that affect our lives. This is why we, the young people, want the right to have a formal input into legislation that impact our lives.

Young people should not only have a voice but be allowed to participate. As victims of racism and many other forms of discrimination, children and young people are best placed to talk about those experiences which concern them and give some advice on solutions and remedies. This is why the discussions during the preparatory process for the

Youth Summit in Durban

Young people always tend to be at the receiving end when decisions that shape their lives and the destiny of their countries, their regions and their world are taken. That is why the youth gathering preceding the World Conference against Racism, a first in United Nations history, provides such a unique opportunity for young people to let their voices be heard and to influence the political decision-making process at the international level.

The Youth Summit, which will take place right before the NGO Forum on 26 and 27 August 2001 at the Kingsmead Cricket Stadium in Durban, will welcome some 200 NGO youth representatives and youth delegates on government delegations representing all geographical regions. The Summit is organized by the International Youth Committee together with the Youth Unit of the World Conference Secretariat and the Youth Task Team in South Africa. Determined to raise the profile of the Durban Conference among young people, the Youth Committee is working to turn the Youth Summit into the starting point of a broad range of action-oriented anti-racism youth initiatives at the international, the regional, the national and the local level.

The idea for a Youth Summit was born at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference

in Geneva in May 2000. Activist youth from every continent got together to think about ways and means to impact on the Durban Conference. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, gave her full support to the idea of a Youth Summit and has actively encouraged States to include youth in their government delegations. Expert seminars, regional and sub-re-

ducing racial and ethnic tensions and bringing about a culture of respect for difference. Organizers hope that the Youth Summit will lead to the creation of a global network of youth organizations and leaders committed to combating the scourges of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

In order for you to participate as a youth in the World Conference against Racism, your organization needs to get accredited. Complete applications for accreditation must be submitted by 2 July 2001. But, accreditation to the World Conference is not a precondition for attending the NGO Forum and the Youth Summit. To register for the Youth Summit, you need to complete the registration form for the NGO Forum, that is available at www.racism.org.za and submit it before 10 August 2001. On the form, mention that you would like to participate in the Youth Summit. If you are under age of 30, a registration fee of 100 US\$ per person for the NGO Forum will cover your participation in the Youth Summit.

If you are interested in learning more about the Youth Summit and the World Conference, please visit the OHCHR website at: www.unhchr.ch Any particular question about the Youth Summit may be directed to: WCAR-YouthSummit@yahoogroups.com

Participate!

www.racism.org.za

Visit!

www.unhchr.ch

Questions?

WCAR-YouthSummit@yahoogroups.com

gional NGO networking meetings followed, providing several opportunities for young people to start thinking, discussing and lobbying about the issues of racism important to them.

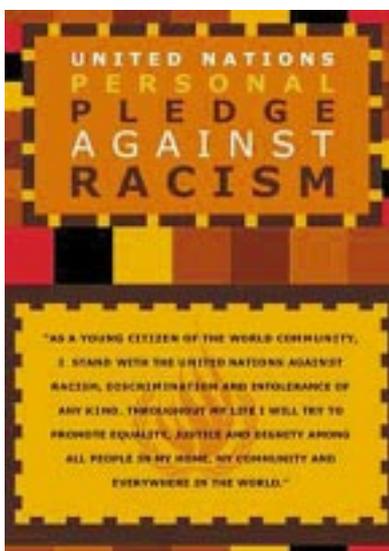
Although the primary responsibility to prevent conflicts and to combat racism and intolerance lies with governments, youth can play a key role in

Take the pledge!

Young people were invited to "Take the pledge" to promote equality, justice and dignity throughout their lives by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, during a special event entitled "Racism, Television and the Internet" webcast from the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 21 March 2001.

The UN and Music Television (MTV) joined forces on this occasion to rally some 400 teenagers to discuss how to fight intolerance in their communities and to view innovative, anti-bias television programming from various countries.

Contribute to the fight against racism and take a personal pledge against racism by clicking on "Take the pledge" on the website of the United Nations at www.un.org/WCAR



Young people in the UK get ready for Durban

Planning for the World Conference has been under way in the United Kingdom since 1999. A key objective is the mobilization of civil society in the UK. Groups from the voluntary and community sector, including Black and ethnic minority-led organizations, women's organizations and young people are getting ready for Durban. Hundreds of representatives from these groups and organizations expressed their views, opinions and concerns at consultation meetings held this year in cities across



Heartstone's Sitakumari with young children, performing her unique blend of dance styles. (© Nick Sidle Photography, UK)

the UK and at roundtables hosted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Activities involving young people have ranged from a national youth forum to an art exhibition and a dramatic performance. Young people will also be part of the official UK delegation to South Africa.

National consultations

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, working closely with other government departments, has held roundtable discussions with UK-based international NGOs to exchange views on the preparatory process, to identify priority issues at the international level, and to discuss follow-up action. The Home Office, the department responsible for race equality issues in the UK, funded a domestic consultation process to give grassroots, local and regional organizations current information about the Durban preparations, and to feed the views, opinions and concerns of minority ethnic communities into the policy-making process.

UK Race and Europe Network (UKREN), an umbrella organization of anti-racist community groups and NGOs and the UK representative of the European Network against Racism (ENAR) ran a series of ten consultations with the voluntary and community sector between February and April of this year in cities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Around 300 organizations took part in briefing and strategy meetings and workshops organized around the five main Conference themes. Community groups including many Black and ethnic minority-led organizations, statutory bodies and government representatives met to discuss issues of national concern and to develop a UK NGO position to take forward to Durban. This consultation process will conclude with a de-briefing event after the Conference.

National Youth Forum

The National Youth Forum held on 5 May 2001 in Leicester, England brought together 80 young people from Scotland, England and Northern Ireland, as well as youth groups from other European countries, the United States and India. Sponsored by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the event was organized by Minorities of Europe, a UK-based organization involved in coordinating European youth preparations for the World Conference, in co-operation with the Rushy Mead School, an NGO called Youth Voices and the National Black Youth Forum.

At the Youth Forum, various youth groups working at the grassroots, regional and international levels contributed ideas and suggestions for the World Conference agenda and built a national youth position on racism to bring to the attention of the UK Government. Young people also discussed the five main Conference themes and gave their perspectives on education and the media and on many other relevant issues. They explored how school children suffer from different types of prejudice according to their ethnic minority background, and they asked governments to support the develop-

ment of an international youth service programme to increase participation of youth groups worldwide. A practical result of the Forum was a national network that will help support youth initiatives and bring their position to the wider international scene, such as the Youth Summit being planned for Durban.

Artistic Activities against Racism

Youth activities in the UK to prepare for the World Conference are also creative and artistic. Young people will be involved in an exhibition and a performance that will take place at the Tramway Arts Centre in Glasgow, Scotland on 31 August. The event is organized by the UN Information Centre (UNIC) in London in conjunction with Heartstone, a Scottish NGO that is engaged in fighting prejudice and intolerance.

"Descendent of All Worlds" is an exhibition of "photostories" on the themes of fighting prejudice and intolerance focusing on the similarities between people rather than the differences, the effects of victimization, and the need to work co-operatively on a number of global social and environmental issues.

A dramatic performance entitled "Together" is linked to the exhibition and will involve Sitakumari (a dancer/storyteller who works with Heartstone), 100 children and diverse young people drawn from schools across Glasgow, and 10 senior dance students from the Dance School of Scotland. A unique and interesting blend of different dance styles from across the world, the performance is inspired by a repertoire of gestures and movements based on the Indian classical dance style of *Bharatanatyam* and music drawn from international sources. Through dance, spoken narrative and customs, the performance will tell a story to help raise understanding of different cultures.

Entries for an art competition, signed UN pledges against racism submitted by children from schools across the UK and Ireland, as well as public information material about the World Conference, will also be on display.

These events are being supported through local fund-raising by UNIC London and Heartstone, as well as by financial contributions from the Scottish Executive, the Scottish Arts Council and the Glasgow City Council.



More than any previous generation, young people have been born into a world of diversity - they know its benefits and challenges firsthand. Youth see things with different eyes and can bring a fresh perspective to dealing with racism, so the Government of Canada is committed to youth participation in the World Conference against Racism and its preparatory process.

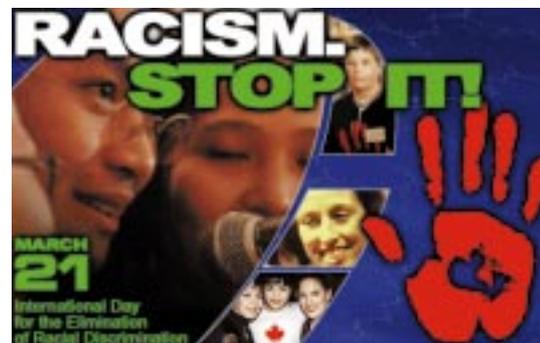
Young people from Canada have been included in government delegations to various preparatory meetings for the World Conference, and have taken part in regional and

also worked with a number of non-governmental organizations to create a positive and lasting impact upon their communities by fostering respect, equality and diversity.

Young Canadians were also involved in a series of high-profile anti-racism consultations both in Canada and abroad. In March 2000, the Government brought more than 120 young people from 25 countries to Ottawa, Canada to take part in the International Stop Racism Youth Forum, organized as part of the "Racism. Stop It! Action 2000" public education initiative. Participants developed

strategies to counter racism in their respective countries and communities. They also forged a network of informed and committed youth representatives from diverse backgrounds who could speak about racism, intolerance and xenophobia with the authority of a young person.

This Forum was followed by the International Youth Forum against Racism which took place from 8 to 10 August 2000 at the Canadian Pavilion at Expo 2000 in Hanover, Germany. Twenty-nine young Canadian delegates hosted their counterparts from 13 other countries during the meeting. They advanced the work that they started at the Youth Forum in Ottawa by coming up with international strategies for youth input and participation in the struggle against racism. The report of the Hanover Youth Forum, fed directly into the preparations for the World Conference. Participants in the Hanover Forum recommended the creation of a Youth Committee within the Office of the High Commissioner Human Rights and the organization of a parallel Youth Summit at the Durban Conference. This last recommendation will now come to fruition thanks



national consultations organized by the Canadian Government. A National Consultation took place in Ottawa on 23 and 24 February 2001. Representatives of student organizations, indigenous and immigrant youth councils worked with various levels of government, members of national organizations, civil society institutions, and indigenous organizations to provide inputs that help to shape the domestic agenda and refine Canada's contribution to the Conference.

Youth representatives on the Civil Society Advisory Committee and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee have joined policy experts from all sectors of society to help develop Canada's positions and priorities for the Durban Conference. Over the last two years, young people have

Young Canadians working to stop racism

to the hard work of youth from many parts of the world.

A number of events organized by the Canadian Government in the context of the ongoing campaign against racial discrimination also involve young Canadians. The annual "March 21" campaign reaches an audience of some 7 million Canadians, mobilises youth and helps build partnerships with business and the media. A key part of the campaign is the "Racism. Stop it! National Video Competition" which gives students between 12 and 18 years of age the chance to express their thoughts and ideas about how to stop racial discrimination by producing a short video.

Canada's Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and the Status of Women, has said about Canadian youth: "In the fight against racism, young Canadians bring creative ideas for proactive action. Their energy, dynamism and openness to change bring hope that they can succeed where our generation has failed to find solutions."



Graphics from the Canadian Government's "Racism. Stop It! Action 2000" public education initiative.

Youth exchanges: bridging "us" and "them"

Through study programmes, inter-community activities or volunteer work, youth exchanges expose young people to other cultures, languages and peoples, early in their lives, giving them experiences different from their own. In this way, young people can question preconceived ideas that they might have about other peoples and ways of life. Youth exchanges help to challenge the stereotypes and prejudices that may be conveyed in their respective society, and they not only have an impact on the young person involved but also impact the "host" school or community. They contribute to a greater understanding between people of different cultures and prepare youth to be better world citizens.

high school students spend a year abroad and "international" high school students are hosted by South African families and local schools.



Youth exchanges can also provide young people with a unique opportunity to gain a particular understanding and knowledge of "real life" in other communities, countries and regions. Living in a community may mean dealing with politics, human rights and economic issues at the local level on a daily basis. Working in a country can bring an understanding of issues such as employment, children's rights, education, freedom of expression, crime, local media, quality of life, and the influence of political parties.

tween people, where individuals teach each other about their own cultures and customs, and help each other to challenge their own stereotypes about the other. A better exchange succeeds in creating concerned and knowledgeable young world citizens who take their place in the international community.

For more information on these youth exchanges, visit the following websites:

UNESCO's ASPnet Project:

www.unesco.org

AMIGOS: www.amigoslink.org

Tomorrow International Club:

www.interlinx.qc.ca/cleo

Kenyatta University:

www.public.iastate.edu

Interculture South Africa:

www.afs.org/partners/rsahome.htm

Monash University: www.monash.edu.my



Exposing young people to different cultures can start with simple inter-community exchanges within the same country, as is the case between Japanese and Indonesian schools in Indonesia. This particular UNESCO Associated Schools (ASPnet) Project, enables teachers and pupils to sample food and display art from their respective cultures during regular meetings organized between the two schools. In Slovenia, another ASPnet Project at the Ciril Kosmac Elementary School of Piran brings 10 to 12 year old children from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Norway, Ukraine and Slovenia together for the International Camp Piran (ICP). During the one-week camp, children teach each other about their countries, their daily lives and the problems they face, through presentations and games.

Development projects and volunteer work are also good ways for youth to be confronted with these issues. Although they can be more challenging than conventional exchange experiences, these programmes allow for a better understanding of marginalized sectors. For example, the non-profit organization AMIGOS which is based in the United States and the Tomorrow International Club, which is affiliated with a college in Canada, run programmes which train young people to plan and conduct community service work throughout Latin America. These organizations offer participants the opportunity to work in an orphanage or on a construction site, to teach in a local community, to experience life in both cities and rural areas and to learn the local language.

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Every year, academic institutions throughout the world organize a variety of programmes that allow young students to study abroad. Students at Monash University in Malaysia can take part in an exchange with one of the university's 80 partners in Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North America. The international summer programme at Kenyatta University offers students from around the world the chance to come to Kenya to learn about Kenyan and other African cultures, while giving Kenyan students the opportunity to meet foreign students and to share with them their own experiences. The non-profit organization, Interculture South Africa also runs a study programme where

By living, studying or working in a different community, young people meet other people and have practical experiences. They can associate problems and benefits to particular societies, which may otherwise remain abstract and faceless. The cultural awareness as well as the knowledge and understanding of local issues gained through personal interaction and relationships help young people to feel directly concerned by key social and political issues.

Young people develop a vested interest in the well-being and human rights of others in the international community. A shared concern about others and their humanity can be nourished and this exposure can help decrease the likelihood of discrimination and intolerance. Youth exchanges can also help forge lifelong friendships that span years, sectors, communities and continents.

Youth exchanges are a practical and positive way to fight racism. A good exchange is one which leads to a true dialogue be-