

**Exhibit: National Inquiry into Missing and**

**Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**

**Location/Phase:** Part III: Quebec City

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## International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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### Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

#### Concluding observations on the combined twenty-first to twenty-third periodic reports of Canada\*

1. The Committee considered the combined twenty-first to twenty-third periodic reports of Canada (CERD/C/CAN/21-23), submitted in one document, at its 2566th and 2567th meetings (see CERD/C/SR.2566 and 2567), held on 14 and 15 August 2017. At its 2580th, 2581st and 2582nd meetings, held on 23 and 24 August, it adopted the present concluding observations.

#### A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the combined twenty-first to twenty-third periodic reports of the State party, which included responses to the concerns raised by the Committee in its previous concluding observations. The Committee welcomes the open and constructive dialogue with the State party's delegation.

#### B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the following legislative and policy measures:

(a) The establishment in 2016 of the Anti-Racism Directorate in Ontario to address systemic racism and to promote fair practices and policies across Ontario Province;

(b) The House of Commons' condemnation of Islamophobia and all forms of systemic racism and religious discrimination, in March 2017;

(c) The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and its final report, released in 2015, entitled *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, which includes 94 calls to action to address historical and ongoing discrimination against indigenous peoples;

(d) The resettlement of 46,000 Syrian refugees in 2016, and the commitment to resettle 25,000 refugees in 2017;

(e) Full restoration of the Interim Federal Health Program to provide limited temporary health-care coverage to eligible groups, such as refugees, in April 2016.

4. The Committee welcomes the vibrant participation of representatives of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis and civil society organizations in the review of Canada. The Committee also greatly appreciates the contributions of the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

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\* Adopted by the Committee at its ninety-third session (31 July-25 August 2017).



## **C. Concerns and recommendations**

### **Statistical data**

5. The Committee regrets again that the absence of recent reliable and comprehensive statistical data on the ethnic composition of the population, including disaggregated economic and social indicators for ethnic groups, African-Canadians, indigenous peoples, and non-citizens, and the lack of detailed data and information on the representation of minority groups in public and political life in the State party, prevent it from evaluating the enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in the State party by these groups. The Committee reiterates its concern about the continued use of the term “visible minority” in the State party to describe minority groups, as it renders invisible the differences in the lived experiences of diverse communities.

6. Recalling its revised guidelines for reporting under the Convention (see CERD/C/2007/1, paras. 10-12), the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Provide statistical data in its next periodic report on the demographic composition of the population, disaggregated in the manner specified in article 1 (1) of the Convention, on the basis of self-identification by ethnic groups and indigenous peoples;

(b) Systematically collect disaggregated data in all relevant ministries and departments to improve monitoring and evaluation of the implementation and impact of policies to eliminate racial discrimination and inequality;

(c) Provide information in its next periodic report on economic and social indicators for ethnic minority groups, indigenous peoples and non-citizens to enable the Committee to better evaluate their enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights in the State party;

(d) Revise its use of the term “visible minority” in the Employment Equity Act, of 1995, and in other legislation, as previously recommended (see CERD/C/CAN/CO/19-20, para. 8).

### **Domestic applicability of the Convention**

7. The Committee regrets the lack of comprehensive information on the equal implementation of the Convention in all 10 provinces and 3 territories of the State party (art. 2).

8. The Committee requests detailed information on the work of the intergovernmental committee on supporting domestic implementation of the Convention and its efforts to ensure the equal application of the Convention at the federal, provincial and territorial levels. The Committee recommends that the State party create an accountability mechanism and ensure equal distribution of resources for the implementation of the Convention at the federal, provincial and territorial levels.

### **National action plan against racism**

9. While welcoming Ontario’s first provincial anti-racism strategy, of March 2017, the Committee regrets the absence of a new national action plan against racism, applicable to the federal, provincial and territorial levels, since the previous plan lapsed in 2010.

10. The Committee recommends that the State party develop and launch a new national action plan against racism, in compliance with its obligations undertaken at the World Conference Against Racism, through a meaningful consultation process with civil society organizations, including ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples, that includes implementing legislation, dedicated resources, targets, and adequate monitoring and reporting mechanisms, using good practices mentioned in Ontario’s anti-racism strategy of 2017. The Committee requests that the State party provide information in its next periodic report on the implementation and impact of Ontario’s anti-racism strategy, and other such strategies in the State party.

### **Anti-racism legal framework**

11. The Committee is concerned that adequate anti-racism framework legislation meeting all of the requirements of article 4 is not yet in place in all provinces and territories in the State party (art. 4).

12. Recalling its general recommendations No. 7 (1985) relating to the implementation of article 4 of the Convention, No. 15 (1993) on article 4 of the Convention and No. 35 (2013) on combating racist hate speech, and reiterating its previous recommendation (see CERD/C/CAN/CO/19-20, para. 13), the Committee recommends that the State party enact legislation in compliance with the requirements of article 4 in all provinces and territories.

### **Racist hate crimes**

13. The Committee is concerned that racist hate crimes continue to be underreported, and that the lack of updated, systematic and coordinated tracking of racist hate crime data in all provinces and territories of the State party may mean that actual numbers of violations may be much higher. The Committee is concerned about the 61 per cent increase in racist hate crimes reported against Muslims. The Committee is also concerned that although the data provided by the State party on the implementation of anti-discrimination provisions does indicate the number or extent of incidents and complaints submitted, it does not indicate the number of ex officio prosecutions, investigations launched and convictions.

14. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Take steps to prevent racist hate crimes against all ethnic and minority groups, migrants and indigenous peoples in the State party;

(b) Facilitate reporting by the victims, and ensure effective investigation of cases of racist hate crimes and prosecute and sanction perpetrators;

(c) Systematically track and maintain data on the number of reported racist hate crimes, prosecutions, convictions, sentences and penalties, and compensation for victims, and provide this data to the Committee in its next periodic report;

(d) Provide mandatory training on recognition and registration of racist hate crimes and other racially motivated crimes to law enforcement officials and judges in order to ensure proper handling of these complaints, and provide updated, detailed information and statistics in its next periodic report, including the time frame for when these trainings were conducted, how many people were trained, and any measurable impact;

(e) Investigate and address the reasons for the 61 per cent increase in racist hate crimes reported against Muslims and the rise of Islamophobia.

### **Racial profiling and disproportionate incarceration**

15. The Committee is concerned at reports that racial profiling by the police, security agencies and border agents continues on a daily basis in the State party, with a harmful impact on indigenous peoples, as well as on ethnic minority Muslims, African-Canadians, and other ethnic minority groups. The Committee is also concerned at the reported disproportionately high rate of incarceration of indigenous peoples and persons belonging to minority groups, in particular African-Canadians, due to reasons such as socioeconomic disparity, high incarceration rates of members of minorities who have mental or intellectual impairments, lack of appropriate community services, overpolicing of certain populations, drug policies and racially biased sentencing. The Committee is further concerned at reports that both African-Canadian and indigenous offenders are overrepresented in "segregation" (solitary confinement), that 50 per cent of indigenous inmate women have reportedly been placed in segregation and that indigenous inmates have the longest average stay in segregation.

16. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure that law enforcement and security agencies have programmes to prevent racial profiling, and that these are implemented and compliance monitored, including through independent oversight;

(b) Make it mandatory to collect and analyse data at the federal, provincial and territorial levels on random stops by law enforcement officers, including on the ethnicity of the persons stopped, the reason for the stop, and whether the stop resulted in an arrest, prosecution and conviction, and report publicly on this data at regular intervals;

(c) Ensure that the staff in law enforcement and security agencies, and border agents, are demographically diverse and include indigenous peoples, African-Canadians and other ethnic minorities. Ensure that all staff are trained in the prevention of racial discrimination, and on policies to prevent racial profiling. Ensure that lawyers and judges are trained on provisions relating to sentencing and alternatives to incarceration for indigenous peoples, such as in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (sects. 29, 77, 80, 81 and 84) and that these provisions are consistently applied. Provide updated, detailed information and statistics in its next periodic report on such training programmes and on the impact of such trainings;

(d) Address the root causes of overrepresentation of African-Canadians and indigenous peoples at all levels of the justice system, from arrest to incarceration, such as by eliminating poverty, providing better social services, re-examining drug policies, preventing racially biased sentencing through training of judges, and providing evidence-based alternatives to incarceration for non-violent drug users, and fully implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on this topic, in order to reduce the incarceration of African-Canadians and indigenous peoples;

(e) Implement key health and harm reduction measures across all prisons;

(f) Systematically collect data and report publicly on the demographic composition of the prison population, including on indigenous peoples, African-Canadians and other ethnic minorities, and on the sentencing of minority offenders;

(g) Limit the use of segregation to exceptional circumstances, as a last resort and for as short a time as possible, in line with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), given its proven deleterious effects on mental health. Implement legislation to provide independent judicial oversight of all decisions related to segregation;

(h) Abolish the use of segregation for inmates with mental or intellectual impairments.

#### **Truth and Reconciliation Commission and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

17. While welcoming the commitment made to implement all of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 calls to action, the Committee is concerned at the lack of an action plan and of full implementation. The Committee is also concerned that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Action Plan has not yet been adopted, while noting the ministerial working group that was established in 2017 to bring laws into compliance with obligations towards indigenous peoples.

18. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Develop a concrete action plan to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 calls to action, in consultation with indigenous peoples;

(b) Implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and adopt a legislative framework to implement the Convention — including

a national action plan, reform of national laws, policies and regulations to bring them into compliance with the Declaration, and annual public reporting;

(c) Ensure that the action plans include regular monitoring, evaluation and annual reporting of the implementation, including the use of statistical data to evaluate progress;

(d) Develop and implement training programmes, in consultation with indigenous peoples, for State officials and employees, on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to ensure their effective impact;

(e) Ensure that the ministerial working group is transparent and inclusive of indigenous peoples.

#### **Land rights of indigenous peoples**

19. Taking note of the recent release of a set of 10 principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with indigenous peoples, in 2017, the Committee is deeply concerned that:

(a) Violations of the land rights of indigenous peoples continue in the State party; in particular, environmentally destructive decisions for resource development which affect their lives and territories continue to be undertaken without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples, resulting in breaches of treaty obligations and international human rights law.

(b) Costly, time-consuming and ineffective litigation is often the only remedy, in place of seeking free, prior and informed consent — resulting in the State party continuing to issue permits which allow for damage to lands.

(c) According to information received, permits have been issued and construction has commenced at the Site C dam, despite the vigorous opposition of indigenous peoples affected by this project, which will result in irreversible damage due to flooding of their lands, leading to the elimination of plants, medicines, wildlife, sacred lands and gravesites.

(d) According to information received, the Site C dam project proceeded despite a joint environmental review for the federal and provincial governments, which reportedly concluded that the impact of the dam on indigenous peoples would be permanent, extensive and irreversible.

(e) According to information received, the Mount Polley mine was initially approved without an environmental assessment process, or consultation with or free, prior and informed consent from the indigenous peoples potentially affected, and the mining disaster has resulted in a disproportionate and devastating impact on the water quality, food such as fish, fish habitats, traditional medicines, and the health of indigenous peoples in the area (arts. 5-6).

20. Recalling its general recommendation No. 23 (1997) on the rights of indigenous peoples and reiterating its previous recommendation (see CERD/C/CAN/CO/19-20, para. 20), the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure the full implementation of general recommendation No. 23 in a transparent manner with the full involvement of the First Nations, Inuit, Métis and other indigenous peoples and with their free, prior and informed consent on all matters concerning their land rights;

(b) Prohibit the environmentally destructive development of the territories of indigenous peoples, and allow indigenous peoples to conduct independent environmental impact studies;

(c) End the substitution of costly legal challenges as post facto recourse in place of obtaining meaningful free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples;

(d) Incorporate the free, prior and informed consent principle in the Canadian regulatory system, and amend decision-making processes around the review and approval of large-scale resource development projects such as the Site C dam;

(e) Immediately suspend all permits and approvals for the construction of the Site C dam. Conduct a full review in collaboration with indigenous peoples of the violations of the right to free, prior and informed consent, of treaty obligations and of international human rights law from the building of this dam and identify alternatives to irreversible destruction of indigenous lands and subsistence, which will be caused by this project;

(f) Publicly release the results of any government studies of the Mount Polley disaster and the criminal investigation into the disaster, before the statute of limitations for charges under the relevant acts expires;

(g) Monitor the impact of the disaster on indigenous peoples affected as a result of the disaster, and take measures to mitigate the impact through the provision of safe water and food, access to health care, and fair remedies and reparations.

#### **Corporations operating abroad**

21. While noting information received about recent judicial decisions allowing litigation before Canadian courts against Canadian corporations operating abroad, and about existing non-judicial mechanisms, the Committee is concerned that victims of alleged actions by transnational corporations registered in Canada, whose activities negatively impact the rights of persons outside Canada, do not have adequate access to justice. The Committee regrets that an independent ombudsman mandated to investigate such complaints has not yet been established (art. 6).

22. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation (see CERD/C/CAN/CO/19-20, para. 14) that the State party ensure access to justice through judicial and non-judicial remedies for violations of rights of persons by transnational corporations registered in Canada, operating abroad. The Committee also recommends that the State party swiftly establish an independent ombudsman mandated to receive and investigate human rights complaints against Canadian corporations operating in other countries.

#### **Violence against indigenous women and girls**

23. The Committee is alarmed at the continued high rates of violence against indigenous women and girls in the State party. While welcoming the 2016 launch of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, the Committee is concerned at the lack of an independent mechanism to re-examine cases where there is evidence of inadequate or biased investigations, and at the failure to provide regular progress reports and to build transparent and accountable relationships with survivors, families and stakeholders (arts. 2, 5 and 6).

24. Recalling its general recommendation No. 25 (2000) on gender-related dimensions of racial discrimination, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Take immediate action to end violence against indigenous women and girls. Provide support and access to equal services for survivors. Enact a national action plan on violence against women, inclusive of the federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions, with special provisions to end the high rates of violence against indigenous women and girls;

(b) Apply a human rights-based approach to the Inquiry by examining the issues holistically to identify barriers to equality and their root causes and to recommend lasting solutions. Monitor progress to achieve these recommendations, with the participation of affected survivors, families and stakeholders;

(c) Establish an independent review mechanism for unsolved cases of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls where there is evidence of bias or error in the investigation;

(d) Publicly report on violence against indigenous women and girls, including data on reported cases of violence, murder, and missing indigenous women and girls, and on the numbers of investigations, prosecutions and convictions;

(e) Improve communication from the Inquiry and build transparent and accountable relationships with survivors, families and stakeholders.

#### **Situation of indigenous persons with disabilities**

25. The Committee is concerned about the multiple forms of discrimination faced by indigenous persons with disabilities, who reportedly face additional barriers to health care, education and social services, in particular if they are located in remote communities with inadequate access to quality services. The Committee also regrets the lack of detailed information on meaningful consultations with indigenous peoples and on the outcome of such consultations on the development of accessibility legislation (art. 5).

26. The Committee recommends that the State party conduct meaningful consultations with indigenous peoples during the development of accessibility legislation. The Committee requests information from the State party on provisions included in the accessibility legislation that address the specific situation of members of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples with disabilities who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. The Committee recommends that the State party create a strategy, in consultation with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous persons with disabilities have equal access to quality services.

#### **Discrimination against indigenous children**

27. The Committee is alarmed that despite its previous recommendation (see CERD/C/CAN/CO/19-20, para. 19) and multiple decisions by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, less money is reportedly provided for child and family services for indigenous children than for children in other communities, and that this gap continues to grow. The Committee is also concerned that the federal Government has adopted an overly narrow definition of Jordan's Principle, as stated in the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision *First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada et al. v. Attorney General of Canada*, in 2016, and has failed to address the root causes of displacement, while tens of thousands of children are needlessly removed from their families, communities and culture and placed in State care (arts. 1-2 and 5-6).

28. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Fully comply with and implement the January 2016 ruling (2016 CHRT 2) and subsequent non-compliance orders (2016 CHRT 10, 2016 CHRT 16 and 2017 CHRT 14) of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, and end the underfunding of First Nations, Inuit and Métis child and family services;

(b) Ensure that all children, on and off reserve, have access to all services available to other children in Canada, without discrimination;

(c) Implement the full scope and meaning of Jordan's Principle so that access to these services is never delayed or denied because of disputes between the federal, provincial and territorial governments over their respective responsibilities;

(d) Address the root causes of displacement, such as poverty and poor housing, that disproportionately drive children into foster care.

#### **Discrimination in the education system**

29. The Committee is concerned at the reported disparity in resource allocation for education and the lack of sufficient funding of mother tongue education programmes, leading to unequal access to quality education, especially for African-Canadian and indigenous children, which contributes to future socioeconomic disparity among these groups. The Committee is also concerned that African-Canadian students are reportedly disciplined more harshly than other students, which forces them out of learning environments and contributes to the "school-to-prison pipeline" (art. 5).



30. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure equal access to quality education for all children in the State party, without racial discrimination and regardless of whether the child lives on or off of a reserve;

(b) Address funding inequalities identified in the Parliamentary Budget Officer's 2016 report, and other funding inequalities of schools attended by indigenous, African-Canadian and other ethnic minority children. Work in consultation with affected groups to ensure that schools are adequately resourced and can meet the distinct cultural and linguistic needs of ethnic minority and indigenous students;

(c) Create a national education strategy to prevent the low educational attainment and high dropout, suspension and expulsion rates of African-Canadian children. Collect disaggregated data on disciplinary measures in respect of African-Canadian children, in order to monitor and track the impact of measures to reduce discriminatory effects of disciplinary procedures.

#### Employment discrimination

31. The Committee is concerned about reports of discriminatory hiring practices and discrimination in the workplace faced by ethnic minorities, migrants and indigenous peoples, and of high rates of unemployment of educated ethnic minorities. The Committee is concerned that reportedly no province other than Quebec has legislated mandatory employment equity for its public sector bodies, and that changes to the federal employment equity regulation have reduced the labour rights approach conditions of the mandatory contractor compliance mechanism. The Committee notes that there is no mandatory employment equity for private employers at the provincial level, which accounts for approximately 76 per cent of the country's labour force. The Committee welcomes the data received from the Canadian Human Rights Commission and after the dialogue from the State party, however it is concerned about the lack of data on labour inspections in the State party's report.

32. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure the elimination of discriminatory hiring practices and discrimination against ethnic minorities in the workplace, including by providing adequate training to employers and awareness-raising campaigns for employees about their rights and effective recourse for reporting violations;

(b) Conduct a comprehensive review of the existing employment equity regime and make necessary changes to increase the representation of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples in the workforce;

(c) Request all public bodies to collect and publish data on the ethnic composition of the public service periodically. That data should include statistics that disaggregate the total number of employees, job categories, and numbers at middle managerial levels and higher levels. All contractors to public service agencies should be requested to do the same;

(d) Request private employers to publish similar disaggregated data on their workforce and to take measures to ensure the elimination of discriminatory employment practices against ethnic minorities in hiring, retention and promotion;

(e) Improve the mandatory contractor compliance mechanism's labour rights approach conditions in the federal employment equity regulation;

(f) Request professional organizations that control the accreditation for professional practice to have their policies reviewed by the State party, with a view to determining whether there are discriminatory barriers to certification of certain ethnic candidates, particularly those who received their academic qualifications in other countries;

(g) Take effective measures to ensure that labour inspections and other administrative or legal procedures reach all industries, with a view to detecting labour rights violations, bringing perpetrators to justice and compensating victims;

(h) Provide in its next periodic report comprehensive data on the coverage of labour inspections and of other administrative or legal procedures, including statistics on inspection visits, violations detected, sanctions or penalties imposed over the review period and compensation provided to victims, disaggregated, inter alia, by type of violation, industry or occupation, age, sex, national origin and ethnic origin of the victim.

#### **Situation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers**

33. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) There is no legal time limit on the detention of migrants. Nearly one third of migrants are held in provincial prisons, leading to deaths in some cases;

(b) Migrant children are detained;

(c) There is a lack of data provided to the Committee on persons in immigration detention;

(d) In the context of limitations in the Safe Third Country Agreement, there is reportedly a sharp rise in the numbers of asylum seekers attempting to enter the State party through irregular border crossings, in dangerous or life-threatening conditions;

(e) Although the temporary foreign worker programme conducts inspections, temporary migrant workers are reportedly susceptible to exploitation and abuses, and are sometimes denied basic health-care services, and employment and pension benefits to which they may make contributions;

(f) There is a lack of access to health care for undocumented migrants (art. 5).

34. In light of its general recommendations No. 22 (1996) on article 5 of the Convention on refugees and displaced persons and No. 30 (2004) on discrimination against non-citizens, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Undertake planned immigration detention reforms. Ensure that immigration detention is only undertaken as a last resort after fully considering alternative non-custodial measures. Establish a legal time limit on the detention of migrants;

(b) Immediately end the practice of detention of minors;

(c) Provide statistical data to the Committee, in its next periodic report, on the number of persons detained in immigration detention, and the reasons for and length of detention of migrants, disaggregated by age, gender, nationality and ethnicity;

(d) Rescind or at least suspend the Safe Third Country Agreement with the United States of America to ensure that all individuals who attempt to enter the State party through a land border are provided with equal access to asylum proceedings;

(e) Reform current policies and measures to ensure protection of temporary migrant workers from exploitation and abuse and grant them access to health services and employment and pension benefits. Implement protective policies for migrant workers. Reconsider the decision not to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Expedite the consideration for adoption of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189);

(f) Ensure that all persons have access to health care, regardless of immigration status, without discrimination.

## **D. Other recommendations**

### **Ratification of other instruments**

35. The Committee recommends that the State party consider ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169).

### **Follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

36. In the light of its general recommendation No. 33 (2009) on the follow-up to the Durban Review Conference, the Committee recommends that, when implementing the Convention in its domestic legal order, the State party give effect to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted in September 2001 by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, taking into account the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference, held in Geneva in April 2009. The Committee requests that the State party include in its next periodic report specific information on action plans and other measures taken to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action at the national level.

### **International Decade for People of African Descent**

37. In the light of General Assembly resolution 68/237, in which the Assembly proclaimed 2015-2024 the International Decade for People of African Descent, and Assembly resolution 69/16 on the programme of activities for the implementation of the Decade, the Committee recommends that the State party prepare and implement a suitable programme of measures and policies. The Committee requests that the State party include in its next periodic report specific information on the concrete measures adopted in that framework, taking into account its general recommendation No. 34 (2011) on racial discrimination against people of African descent.

### **Consultations with civil society**

38. The Committee recommends that the State party continue consulting and increasing its dialogue with civil society organizations working to combat racial discrimination, in connection with the preparation of the next periodic report and in follow-up to the present concluding observations.

### **Declaration under article 14 of the Convention**

39. The Committee encourages the State party to make the optional declaration provided for in article 14 of the Convention recognizing the competence of the Committee to receive and consider individual communications.

### **Follow-up to the present concluding observations**

40. In accordance with article 9 (1) of the Convention and rule 65 of its rules of procedure, the Committee requests the State party to provide, within one year of the adoption of the present concluding observations, information on its implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 34 (a), (b) and (d) and 20 (e) and (f) above.

### **Paragraphs of particular importance**

41. The Committee wishes to draw the attention of the State party to the particular importance of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 16, 18, 20 (a), (b), (c)

and (d) and 32 above and requests the State party to provide detailed information in its next periodic report on the concrete measures taken to implement those recommendations.

**Dissemination of information**

42. The Committee recommends that the State party's reports be made readily available and accessible to the public at the time of their submission and that the concluding observations of the Committee with respect to those reports be similarly publicized in the official and other commonly used languages, as appropriate.

**Preparation of the next periodic report**

43. The Committee recommends that the State party submit its combined twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth periodic reports, as a single document, by 15 November 2021, taking into account the reporting guidelines adopted by the Committee during its seventy-first session (CERD/C/2007/1) and addressing all the points raised in the present concluding observations. In the light of General Assembly resolution 68/268, the Committee urges the State party to observe the limit of 21,200 words for periodic reports.

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