



An International Commission of Inquiry on Racism and Discriminatory Policies and Practices: Anti-Racism Initiative 2024 Policy Brief

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Racism, in its multifaceted forms, is the crisis of crises. Racial injustice permeates the many crises that threaten humanity. Its unaddressed root causes threaten the legitimacy of the international order. Racist practices influence policies and structures that undermines international cooperation in addressing a multiplicity of planetary crises, including food security, climate mitigation and adaptation, and peacebuilding. Efforts that explicitly address racial injustice reinforce the stabilization of the international order and promote economic development.

The G20 Interfaith Forum, through its Anti-Racism Initiative and other policy work, commits itself to confronting racism in all its forms by taking action to eradicate it. Without attending to this goal, healing, reconciliation, and equity remain unachievable. This call to action reflects a continuation of efforts throughout history to address racism, discrimination, and injustice.

Recommendations

The G20 Interfaith Forum continues to recommend that the G20 (19 nations, the European Union, and the African Union):

- 1) Establish within the G20, a High-Level International Commission on Racism, which would act as a solid analytic foundation for continuing action. The Goals of this Commission would be:
 - a) To give central prominence to an issue that affects each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in both national and international relations by tasking the G20 leaders with responsibility to act.
 - b) To assemble a tightly organized, multidisciplinary group of respected states people, scholars, inter-religious leaders, and experts charged with gathering collective wisdom to develop positive action paths.
 - c) To set out specific principles and proposals that will spur appropriate and urgent actions, such as the eradication of racist language and racist legislation that may still exist, as well developing anti-racist legislation.
 - d) The concrete goals of the commission, as specified above, need to be addressed in the light of aspirational goals of a broad and significant nature. Such aspirational goals would include, but not be limited to:

- i) acknowledging and addressing the legacy and persistence of systemic racism:
 - ii) Review and revise policies to ensure all individuals are treated equally.
 - iii) Embed inclusivity in decision-making processes.
 - iv) Redress inequities in policies that serve as barriers to economic prosperity, good health, and quality education.¹
 - v) Eliminate barriers to political participation.
- 2) That the G20, in all of its gatherings, meetings, statements, and actions, seek to recognize, acknowledge, and limit the volatile, dangerous, and destructive presence of hate speech in every aspect of endeavor within the G20. A specific example upon which to build is The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, a non-legally binding intergovernmental statement, adopted by 38 countries as well as hundreds of civil and political entities, including international organizations and hundreds of regional, state, municipal and local governments; international and national cultural organizations; and international and national professional sports organizations. The structure of the IHRA definition may prove a useful template for the G20 to frame a more comprehensive program.
 - 3) That the G20 adjust its focus on the fiscal and medical impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and pursue the equally devastating, divisive, and dangerous social and psychological effects of the Pandemic.
 - 4) That the G20 recognize and utilize in all its expressions the significant role which interfaith organizations already play in recognizing and addressing the legacy of systemic racism. An example of positive engagement of international interfaith organizations is the already contributive programs of the G20 Interfaith Forum (IF20), particularly through the actions of the Anti-Racism Initiative.
 - 5) That the G20 prioritize adoption of policies recommended by such international organizations as Seventh Generation Interfaith and the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility for a just transition for groups that are disproportionately impacted by climate change.
 - 6) That the G20 recognize and address the religious intolerance directed towards African-descent religions and acknowledge that this intolerance which violates freedoms of African-descent religions is based on racism rather than religion; and that freedom of religion and belief is a right of all religious and faith traditions.

¹ One particularly egregious example of persistent inequities pursuant to political promises has been revealed by the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation): In 2015, a clandestine side deal was made by then Prime Minister Harper and Roman Catholic leaders in Canada absolving the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops of all but a modest portion of their assigned reparations with respect to ‘Indian Residential Schools.’

- 7) That the G20 review and utilize the “*Guidelines for Assessing the Intersection of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Group Rights, and Freedom of Religion and Belief*” produced by the Product of the Sub-Committee on Freedom of Religion or Belief of the G-20 Interfaith Forum at Meetings Held in Belém, Brazil, June 13-14, 2024.

As religious communities begin to reclaim their spiritual roots as distinct from their institutional constructs, they may more effectively speak for the needs and aspirations of the over 80% of the human community who have a religious affiliation. The antidote for racism is to accept and embrace the full humanity and dignity of every person. This includes the recognition of the sacredness of human conscience and the ethical and moral precepts and values which are inherent within the world’s religious and spiritual traditions.

Conclusion

This document constitutes a call to action to the G20 to continue and expand upon efforts throughout history to engage racism, discrimination, and injustice including recognition of the 2024 UN theme of “A Decade of Recognition, Justice, and Development: Implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent” associated with the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.²

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² UN, "Humanity, Not Racism," *International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*, 21 March (2024). <https://www.un.org/en/observances/end-racism-day#:~:text=The%202024%20theme%20of%20the,for%20People%20of%20African%20Descent%E2%80%9D>.

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