

Towards an Inclusive Society: Coalition of Cities against Discrimination in Asia and the Pacific



United Nations
Educational,
Scientific and
Cultural Organization

"Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. ..."
(Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

The Coalition of Cities against Discrimination in Asia and the Pacific (APCAD) was officially founded during the “Regional Conference of Cities for an Inclusive Urban Society” held in Bangkok, Thailand, on 3-4 August 2006.

A few definitions

Racial discrimination is defined by the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life”. As such, racial discrimination is banned by the international community as a serious human rights violation. Racism plays a major role in the social processes that give rise to and entrench such racial discrimination.

In its practical manifestations, racism includes “racist ideologies, prejudiced attitudes, discriminatory behaviour, structural arrangements and institutionalized practices resulting in racial inequality ... it is reflected in discriminatory provisions in legislation or regulations and discriminatory practices as well as in anti-social beliefs and acts” (Article 2 of the UNESCO Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice of 1978).

UNESCO against Racism and Discrimination

The fight against racism and discrimination has been at the heart of UNESCO’s mandate since its very creation. For 60 years UNESCO has successfully mobilized academic and scientific communities to join this struggle. By far, the most important instrument, developed through UNESCO, to address this social ill is the **Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice**, adopted in 1978. It is a milestone in the development of international normative instruments in this area and remains a key reference point for UNESCO in the struggle against racism.

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**Declaration of the Asia-Pacific
Coalition of Cities against Discrimination**

Democratic Cities for “Living Together”

The **International Coalition of Cities against Racism** is an initiative launched by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2004 to establish a network of cities interested in sharing experiences in order to improve their policies and strategies to counter racism, xenophobia, discrimination and exclusion for greater urban social inclusion.

This network aims at involving cities and municipalities in a common struggle against racism and discrimination through an international Coalition. During the first phase of this initiative, regional Coalitions are being created in Africa, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Arab States, Europe, and Asia and the Pacific. An International Coalition federating the six regional Coalitions will be launched in 2008.

The objective of the regional approach is to take into account the special contexts and priorities of each region. Under the coordination of a “Lead City” each regional Coalition has its own Plan of Action composed of ten commitments. The cities that become signatories to the Coalition will agree to integrate the Plan of Action into their municipal strategies and policies.

Coalition of Cities against Discrimination in Asia and the Pacific (APCAD)

As for Asia and the Pacific, the **Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA)**, Thailand, acted as the Lead City for the region.

During the Expert Meeting on “Commitment of Cities against Discrimination: Defining a Ten-Point Plan of Action for an Inclusive Urban Society in Asia and the Pacific” (27-29 October 2005, Bangkok), city representatives of Bangkok (Thailand), Chiangmai (Thailand), Matale (Sri Lanka), Sakai (Japan), Suva (Fiji), Vientiane (Lao PDR), Wellington (New Zealand), representatives of NGOs, national human rights commissions, and national ministries, as well as academics, discussed possible actions to be taken into account in the Ten-Point Commitment defined for the region.

The draft was finalized during the **Regional Conference of Cities for an Inclusive Urban Society** held in Bangkok, Thailand, on 3-4 August 2006. The Conference was attended by the city representatives coming from Phnom Penh (Cambodia), Suva (Fiji), Sakai (Japan), Kathmandu (Nepal), Makati (Philippines), Kurunegala, Matale (Sri Lanka), Bangkok, Kanchanaburi, Lamphun, Mae Hong Son, Nong Khai, Prachin Buri, Ratchaburi, Sa Kaeo, Tak, Trat (Thailand) and some Thai Provincial Governments as well as the representatives of the United Cities and Local Governments – Asia Pacific Regional Section (UCLG-ASPAC), academics, representatives of NGOs, national human rights commissions and national ministries. On this occasion, the **Coalition of Cities against Discrimination in Asia and the Pacific (APCAD)** was officially founded and the Coalition will remain open for further signature by municipalities in the region.

Objective of the Coalition

The long-term objective of the Coalition of Cities against Discrimination in Asia and the Pacific (APCAD) is to provide local authorities with an operational programme that will allow a more efficient implementation of policies for a greater social inclusion of their city dwellers in the full respect of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life. Through a series of consultations, a Ten-Point Commitment relevant to Asia and the Pacific has been elaborated, composed of 10 commitments covering different areas of competence of local authorities such as education, culture, housing and employment.

The signatories commit themselves to using their full range of political power to counteract discrimination and exclusion through the implementation of the Ten-Point Commitment. Each signatory will be responsible for establishing, coordinating and/or implementing the local policies against racism and discrimination. This will be based, in particular, on a consultation process with those subjected to racism and discrimination as well as in close collaboration with actors of civil society (NGOs, academics, associations, etc.).

The Coalition aims at providing a worldwide platform for exchange and solidarity. A series of seminars, research and information exchanging activities have been proposed so that member municipalities can meet to discuss and exchange ideas and experiences, think and act together.

Why “Cities”?

Undergoing rapid processes of globalization and urbanization, cities are playing an increasingly important role in civil society and their responsibilities towards city dwellers are intensifying. The cultural landscape is characterized by its diversity of dwellers from diverse origins. Cities today are more than ever at the heart of the reality of cultural diversity. Cities have become the main focus of ethnic and cultural mixing and are home to an ever-greater number of foreigners, from all parts of the world, seeking freedom, work, knowledge and opportunities to exchange.

Cities are the places where the everyday meeting of differences sparks competition, clashing interests and fears that feed the development of the ideologies and practices of discrimination. At the same time, cities are laboratories for learning to live together, a place for an exchange of beliefs, attitudes and styles of life, which can contribute to new forms of democratic citizenship. These dynamic intercultural encounters are the element that generates a positive impact on city life. They are an ideal space within which to conduct a struggle against racism that facilitates effective implementation of the various instruments enacted by States.

Many countries have adopted decentralization policies which enable local authorities with the autonomy of decision-making, the means of intervention and the networks of support that can facilitate innovative and effective initiatives against racism in close interaction with the citizens. Local authorities thus have the capacity to launch brave and innovative initiatives that can be effective against racism on the ground.

Local authorities, especially at city levels, play a key role in mobilizing forces, even in areas that do not fall within their administrative competence, for the implementation of anti-discrimination policies that can make a real difference. For these reasons, UNESCO has chosen cities as the privileged space for creating positive dynamic synergies in people's everyday lives.

Ten-Point Commitment for Asia and the Pacific

Ten-Point Commitment for Asia and the Pacific

What can be done?

Regardless of its origin and form, racism raises barriers against the development of its individual or group victims, corrupts those who practice it, and divides communities and nations. It is a serious threat to peaceful coexistence and exchange between communities that share the same space, and it imperils democratic and participatory citizenship. Racism entrenches and aggravates inequalities within societies.

In view of the deep mental roots of racial and ethnic prejudice inherited from the history and the persistence of discriminatory practices, the struggle against racism, xenophobia and discrimination is a long-term effort. It demands regular updating of anti-discriminatory strategies and policies, along with coordination at international, national, regional and local levels.

There is a need for international conventions, recommendations and declarations elaborated at the upstream level to be ratified and implemented by the States. At the same time, it is extremely important to involve actors on the ground, including the targets of discrimination, to make sure that those international and national instruments are applied and that they respond to concrete problems. UNESCO has chosen cities because they are privileged spaces linking upstream and downstream actions. The role of municipal authorities as policy makers and administrators at the local level is considered key to creating dynamic synergies to address problems of discrimination and exclusion, and to promote human rights.

The efforts must be made on several fronts:

- **prevention and positive action:** raising awareness, and educating citizens about mutual tolerance, respect of cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, peaceful coexistence, human rights and democratic citizenship;
- **monitoring and vigilance:** collecting data and developing relevant indicators in order to assess discriminatory situations and policy impact;
- **empowerment:** supporting victims in their efforts in affirming, organizing and defending themselves;
- **mediation:** arbitration, explanation, awareness raising and reconciliation;
- **punishment:** reinforcing administrative and judicial mechanisms, and uncompromisingly prosecuting racist acts.

Commitment no. 1:

Assessing Racism and Discrimination and Monitoring Municipal Policies

To initiate, or develop further, in collaboration with NGOs, National Human Rights Commissions and institutions and UN systems (e.g. CERD, UN Special Rapporteurs, Human Rights Council), the collection of data on racism and discrimination, establish achievable objectives and set common indicators in order to assess the impact of municipal policies; and to act as “Clearing House” in order to contribute to the national and international reporting systems from the local viewpoint.

Examples of Action:

- a) To systematize the evaluation and analysis of the data on racism and discrimination in all fields of municipal competence that are already made available by research networks, people’s organizations and other relevant institutions.
- b) To establish partnerships with research entities and society networks (e.g. urban poor, unions, etc.) for the gathering of data and information on racism and discrimination in their respective areas in order to analyze regularly the data and information collected, conduct studies at the local level and develop concrete recommendations for the city authorities.
- c) To define achievable objectives and apply common indicators in order to assess trends in racism and discrimination and the impact of municipal policies.
- d) To set up a research council for on-going dialogue between researchers and policy makers in order to actively identify weak points in current policies and practice.

Commitment no. 2:

Providing Political Leadership at the City and Community Levels to Address Issues of Discrimination and Exclusion

To raise awareness of the existence of racism and discrimination among local policy makers and city dwellers.

Examples of Action:

- a) To create, in close cooperation with respective national Human Rights Commissions, a better analytical understanding on the situation of vulnerable groups.
- b) To put racism and discrimination on the agenda of the various consultation mechanisms that exist within the city (e.g. municipal councils, youth parliaments, elders councils, various committees related to the issue, appropriate representatives of different groups including ethnic minorities, women, disadvantaged persons, etc.).

- c) To organize a sensitization and awareness-raising programme targeting municipal staff, police, military, parliamentarians, judges, etc., as well as civil society organizations and chiefs and village councils, as appropriate.
- d) To organize an award for media working for the elimination of racism and discrimination, and awareness-raising activities through media, including school newspapers, etc.
- e) To organize public events, with a range of initiatives to promote awareness and mobilization among city dwellers and policy makers (e.g. on the occasion of the 21st of March, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination).
- f) To encourage schools to integrate issues related to racism and discrimination into the curriculum in order to promote awareness within children and youth from the primary up to the secondary level.

Commitment no. 3:

Promoting an Inclusive Society

To develop and/or strengthen a network of people and organizations to share visions and concerns for harmonious relationships in a diverse and inclusive society.

Examples of Action:

- a) To establish within the municipality a mechanism for consultation with the groups and individuals (e.g. youth, NGOs, community leaders, police, the judiciary, etc.) in order to periodically assess the situation, and to review policies, regulations, ordinances and budgets that are discriminatory.
- b) To set up, in collaboration with respective national Human Rights Commissions and civil society organizations, a monitoring and rapid response network and/or system to identify racist acts and hate crimes/speeches, and bring them to the attention of competent authorities.
- c) To organize on a regular basis, community-based consultations to ensure the involvement of communities in municipal decision-making processes.
- d) To set up, in collaboration with existing mechanisms, such as Human Rights Commissions and Race Relations Commissioners, a scheme for resolving disagreements and dealing with cases of discrimination.

Commitment no. 4:

Strengthening Support for the Victims of Racism and Discrimination

To identify the victims and target groups of racism and discrimination and to support them and contribute to strengthening their capacity to defend themselves against racism and discrimination.

Examples of Action:

- a) To support victims and target groups to organize themselves in seeking initiatives (counseling, monitoring, etc.), remedies and preventive measures for counteracting racism and discrimination.
- b) To establish a formal capacity within the city authority (ombudsperson, anti-discrimination unit, etc.) to deal with claims of discrimination made by local residents.
- c) To establish a committee working on community relations and development that advises the city authorities on access, equity and participation of culturally diverse groups.
- d) To aid community and local entities that provide legal and psychological support to local victims of racism and discrimination.

Commitment no. 5:

Facilitating Greater Participation and the Empowerment of City Dwellers through Access to Information

To ensure better information for city dwellers on their rights and obligations, on protection and legal options, and on the penalties for racist and discriminatory acts or behaviour, by using a participatory approach, notably through consultations with service users and service providers.

Examples of Action:

- a) To publish and disseminate, as widely as possible, a brochure, or municipal bulletin, audio-visual materials, etc., giving relevant information on local residents' rights, the obligations of a multiethnic and multicultural society, and the city authority's anti-discrimination commitments, as well as penalties for racist and discriminatory acts and behaviour.
- b) To disseminate, in various public places, forms or contact information that victims or witnesses can use in the case of racist and discriminatory acts or behaviour in order to contact competent authorities or support groups.
- c) To organize at the community level, on a regular basis, municipal forums open to public, in collaboration with existing organs and mechanisms, as well as civil society organizations, in order to offer an opportunity to discuss the issues related to peace, security and harmonious relations.

- d) To collaborate with local radio and newspapers to disseminate useful information for those needing assistance.
- e) To empower local NGOs and/or designated “goodwill ambassadors” to pursue actions in providing information on, and developing actions against, racism and discrimination.
- f) To compile and disseminate, in collaboration with OHCHR and UNESCO, as well as relevant national institutions, key documents in regard to the major international and national instruments translated into local languages, and print and/or post these on the Internet, and make them available at easy to access sites.
- g) To set up a consultative committee composed of foreign residents within the municipality on the issues of their concern.
- h) To organize a series of information sessions for local employers and employees on available social services provided by the municipality.
- i) To commemorate symbolic national and international Days (e.g. the International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March), with a range of initiatives to promote awareness and to encourage participation among city dwellers.
- j) To collaborate with local folk performance groups in helping deliver the message of mutual respect and equality for all to the public.

Commitment no. 6:

Promoting the City as an Equal Opportunities Employer and Service Provider

The city commits itself to be an equal opportunities employer and equitable service provider, and to engage in considering the needs of people from culturally diverse communities in planning, monitoring, training and development to achieve this objective.

Examples of Action:

- a) To engage in routine diversity audits in order to inform the development of appropriate policies and practices on the basis of an accurate database.
- b) To conduct impact and needs assessments (anti-discriminatory check list) when developing any new initiative. A standardized simple protocol could be developed in order to make this process routine.
- c) To identify and provide support for the learning and development needs of municipal employees by setting up introductory and advanced training for local authority staff in order to: enhance their ability to manage ethnic and cultural diversity; promote intercultural dialogue; develop competence in anti-discriminatory practice; and acquire the necessary competences in order to provide culturally sensitive and appropriate services and clear response procedures to acts of racism and discrimination.

- d) To implement positive action in order to improve the representation of target groups or communities in city authority staff; and particularly in their executive bodies.
- e) To establish a scholarship and training programme for young people from target groups with a view to preparing them for employment by the city.

Commitment no. 7:

Promoting the City as an Active Supporter of Equal Opportunity Practices

Where required, to facilitate and monitor equal opportunity employment practices and support for diversity in the labour market through proactive exercise of powers of the city authority.

Examples of Action:

- a) To employ the existing powers of purchasers through the inclusion of non-discrimination clauses in local contracts.
- b) To set up, in collaboration with relevant institutions, such as the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, associations of shoppers, etc., a certification procedure for local firms, shops and local professional entities who are committed to challenging racism, and who are willing to accept the implementation of local mechanisms for dealing with claims/complaints about discrimination.
- c) To understand and accept the informal sector in employment, housing and service provision, and to establish mechanisms, programmes and projects for its protection, regularization and, where required, rehabilitation; and to cooperate with research organizations documenting the informal sector.
- d) To cooperate with the existing schemes in order to promote a micro-credit, sponsorship, training and mentoring programme, in partnership with businesses, to support economically viable activities developed within target groups.
- e) To set up a partnership with interested businesses, especially those which are part of the UN Global Compact and the Cooperative Social Responsibility movement, in supporting city authority anti-racist policies, and in promoting diversity as an economic strategy and a commercial asset.
- f) To support, in association with professional bodies and trade unions, the development of relevant learning and development programmes aimed at enabling employees to deliver culturally sensitive and appropriate services.
- g) To make licenses (e.g. to serve alcohol) conditioned on non-discriminatory practices of equal access, and perform tests to check whether places of entertainment follow non-discriminatory practices.

Commitment no. 8:

Challenging Racism and Discrimination through Education

To strengthen measures against discrimination in access to, and enjoyment of, all forms of education; and to promote the provision of education in mutual respect, tolerance and understanding, and intercultural dialogue.

Examples of Action:

- a) To intervene to ensure equal opportunities, especially in terms of access to education, through affirmative action policies, offering special subsidies to schools to help children from vulnerable groups, or advising the National Ministry of Education on specific cases.
- b) To compile and disseminate existing resource materials (stories, mythologies, etc.) teaching appropriate national values in addition to universal ones, such as respect, mutual tolerance and human rights.
- c) To enact an anti-discrimination charter and an institutional mandate for teaching and training establishments run by the city authority, as well as private schools located within the city, in order to combat racism in access to education, and racism at school.
- d) To set up municipal libraries and museums as resource rooms for issues related to human rights, cultural diversity, etc.
- e) To promote among youth, schools and communities initiatives aiming to increase intercultural dialogue and mutual respect through the creation of an “Equality School” Certificate to reward local schools for their work, and a “Mayor’s Prize” awarded regularly to the best local school initiative.
- f) To support the development of teaching materials (textbooks, guides, audiovisual or multimedia documentation, kits) on mutual tolerance, respect of human dignity, peaceful coexistence and intercultural dialogue that can contribute in enhancing the ability of pupils, teachers and trainers to operate in a multiethnic, multicultural and intercultural environment and to deal with the pressures and opportunities of such diversity; and to train in particular, school administrators and teachers.

Commitment no. 9:

Promoting Cultural Diversity

To respect the culture of diverse communities including the set of attitudes, beliefs, practices, values, shared identities, rituals, customs, etc.; to ensure fair representation and promotion of the diverse cultural expression and heritage of city dwellers in the cultural programmes, collective memory and public space of the city authority; and to promote interculturality in the community life consistent with international human rights standards.

Examples of Action:

- a) To facilitate, in partnership with professionals from culturally diverse communities, the production of audiovisual materials (feature films, documentaries, programmes, etc.) that enables them to express their experience of, and aspirations for, their city; and to facilitate distribution of such materials at the local, national and international level.
- b) To facilitate on a regular basis cultural projects and meeting places (e.g. events, cultural centres, schools, etc.) that represent the diversity of city dwellers (music, theatre, dance, painting, etc.) and to integrate them into official city programming.
- c) To name places (streets, squares, monuments, neighbourhoods) and/or to commemorate events specifically relevant to groups suffering from discrimination in order to recognize their contributions and to integrate them into the memory and collective identity of the city.
- d) To organize a series of meetings for dialogue among religious and political leaders and to bring together different ethnic groups in order to promote cultural diversity and religious tolerance.
- e) To organize an intercultural exchange programme targeting youth in particular.

Commitment no. 10:

Preventing and Overcoming Racist Incitement and Related Violence

To support or establish mechanisms in dealing with racist incitement and related violence leading to reconciliation.

Examples of Action:

- a) To establish a pool of experts (researchers and practitioners, including those from discriminated groups) with relevant competence to carry out analyses of the situation, to provide the local community with advice, and to ensure that a proper review is followed through before responses are determined.
- b) To establish an inter-agency group of knowledgeable employees, representing agencies with potential ownership of such conflicts (police, education sector, youth workers, social workers, civil society organizations, etc.), with the responsibility of coordinating actions at an early stage when racist crimes or group conflicts arise.
- c) To provide training for racist crimes and conflict management to selected employees from relevant agencies and institutions (schools, youth programmes, integration offices, civil society organizations, etc.).

- d) To elaborate and distribute a manual including case studies, as well as a list of organizations for help.
- e) To provide support to community and local entities which provide legal and psychological support to local victims of racism and discrimination, and to those claiming discrimination.
- f) To collaborate with legal professionals (e.g. bar associations), national Human Rights Commissions and Race Relations Commissions in order to provide arbitration when required.

How to join the Coalition of Cities against Discrimination in Asia and the Pacific

The procedure involves two stages in order to take into account the requirements of the decision-making processes of the various municipalities:

STEP 1) Signing of a **Statement of Intent** conveying the strong interest of the municipality for membership in the Coalition and its Ten-Point Commitment;

STEP 2) Signing of an **Act of Accession and Commitment** by which the municipality agrees to fully adhere to the Coalition and its Ten-Point Commitment. The municipality thus agrees to implement this Commitment by incorporating it into municipal policies and strategies according to its own needs, priorities and capacities as well as allocating appropriate resources, and submits to the Administrative Secretariat its specific plan of implementation.

Implementation

The Ten-Point Commitment, adopted on 4 August 2006 in Bangkok, remains open for signature by Asian and Pacific cities wishing to join the Coalition of Cities on the basis of these Commitments.

The signatory cities undertake to integrate within their strategies and action programmes the Commitment, and, by doing so, agree to commit to it the human, financial and material resources required for its effective implementation.

The actions proposed in the present Commitment are feasible examples that cities can use as a source of inspiration. Each city authority is free either to choose the actions it judges most relevant or most urgent from these examples, or to define other actions according to their past and on-going policies. If there are other on-going or foreseen actions/activities other than these examples, cities are invited to communicate them to the Secretariat, to be shared with other members through the network. Each city is encouraged to implement at least one action as soon as possible in respect of each of the Commitments. City authorities that have already implemented, or are currently implementing, some of the proposed actions are invited to enhance or supplement them through further actions from the Commitment.

Support and follow-up Mechanism

The following organs have been established at the Regional Conference in August 2006.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is composed of representatives of the signatories and UNESCO. It will provide necessary support and guidance in close consultation with civil society organizations. After the election of the members, the committee will discuss its own rules. It is proposed that the Steering Committee meets regularly with the following objectives:

- Developing and coordinating joint initiatives and cooperation among signatories in Asia-Pacific, as well as with other regional coalitions and other bodies involved in actions against racism and discrimination.
- Maintaining a strategic vision for the development of the Coalition and taking all measures and decisions that will be helpful in promoting the Coalition and achieving its objectives.
- Preparing, organizing and chairing of the meetings relevant to the Coalition.
- Reporting on the implementation of the Ten-Point Commitment on the basis of reports submitted by the signatories and of the comments made by interested groups and actors.

1st meeting of the interim Steering Committee

The participants of the August 2006 meeting agreed to set up an interim Steering Committee and contribute to the consolidation of the project in Asia and the Pacific. The 1st meeting of the interim Steering Committee was hosted by the Municipality of Phnom Penh and UNESCO from 5 to 6 June 2007, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

The meeting welcomed the representatives of the following cities and local government institutions: Phnom Penh (Cambodia), Suva (Fiji), Sakai (Japan), Jeju, Incheon (Republic of Korea), UCLG-ASPAC, the All India Institute of Local Self Government (India) and the National Municipal League of Thailand. The Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center (HURIGHTS OSAKA) as well as the Cambodian National Commission and the Australian National Commission for UNESCO attended the meeting as observers.

The participants had an interesting exchange on the main challenges arising for municipalities and how to deal with them with reference to the “Ten-Point Commitment”. The group also elaborated a road map towards the official launching of the Coalition of Cities against Discrimination in Asia and the Pacific that will take place in Jeju, Republic of Korea, on the occasion of the 2nd World Congress of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) (28-31 October 2007).

Secretariat

In cooperation with UNESCO, the Secretariat will take care of the following tasks:

- Coordination of information and communication with the signatories;
- Serving as the Secretariat of the Steering Committee.

The Secretariat is to be rotated and the decision is taken by the Steering Committee.

Resource Centre

An independent resource centre will be established at a later date after consultations with relevant and interested parties including academic institutions and NGOs. The main objective of the resource centre will be to serve as a clearing house for data and information; to conduct specific research; and to monitor the implementation of the Ten-Point Commitment.

International Scientific and Technical Secretariat

UNESCO, in cooperation with the Office of the UN High-Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), will continue to provide, at the international level, technical and scientific support to the Coalition in Asia and the Pacific:

- putting in place mechanisms and structures related to documentation, information and communication;
- making proposals for thematic discussions and studies, the organization of panels, and the development of evaluation tools, etc.;
- facilitating exchanges among the regional coalitions.

Increased Partnership with Civil Society

The struggle against racism and discrimination is everyone's business. It is, first and foremost, a legal and political obligation of States, and regional and international intergovernmental organizations. It is one of the responsibilities of citizenship that professional bodies, trade unions, voluntary organizations and the private sector all share. It is a moral and ethical duty for individuals, especially opinion leaders such as artists, journalists, teachers, academics, and athletes, as well as community, religious and political leaders.

This initiative aims also at gathering civil society actors together around the Coalition. The struggle against racism and discrimination concerns not only municipal authorities, but also actors of civil society committed to defending human rights and the achievement of equality among all members of society. NGOs and committed associations are expected to contribute greatly to the success of this significant project because of their capacity for actions and their role and impact within society. They can contribute in particular by bringing municipal authorities to where their actions take place in an attempt to emphasize the importance of this project, inducing authorities to make a decision to join the Coalition. The role of civil actors will also be essential at a later stage after the adoption of the Ten-Point Commitment by municipalities. The effective implementation of different activities will only be possible through close cooperation with civil society organizations. A well-established partnership of all stakeholders will be crucial for success fully coping with the extremely complex issue of discrimination.

**Declaration of the Asia-Pacific
Coalition of Cities
against Discrimination**

Declaration of the Asia-Pacific Coalition of Cities against Discrimination

The Cities participating in the Regional Conference of Cities for an Inclusive Urban Society (3-4 August 2006, Bangkok, Thailand).

Being Aware of the responsibility incumbent upon city authorities to provide for all city residents and visitors, without discrimination or through exclusion on the grounds of “race”, colour, descent or national, ethnic or religious identity, economic status, disabilities, sexual orientation and/or other origins/status, the conditions in which they can flourish, while acknowledging and respecting the freedom, equality, dignity and rights of all;

Acknowledging that a commitment to address issues of racism and discrimination in the city is among the duties of city authorities, with a view towards engendering a citizenship that respects the diversity from which springs the wealth of societies;

Realising that only with the active participation of all city dwellers in policy development, implementation and evaluation, can action against racism and discrimination attain the scope and effectiveness it demands;

Resolving to draw lessons from past experience in action against racism, and to exchange expertise and good practices with a view to improving policies;

Recognizing that in the increasingly diverse and multiethnic cities, promoting equality and counteracting discrimination is a cornerstone in the sustainable development of cohesive democratic values;

Recalling past commitments made by Mayors of different regions of the world promoting respect and cultural diversity in their cities, as well as the creation of legal frameworks favourable to the expansion of fundamental rights to all city dwellers;

Emphasizing that the growing ethnic diversity of cities is a source of cultural dynamism, economic prosperity and social cohesion;

Have agreed to adopt this Ten-Point Commitment in order to give practical expression to their commitment to combat racism and discrimination in the spirit of the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and its global Programme of Action (2001, Durban, South Africa).

This Ten-Point Commitment will make it possible for partner cities among others, to set priorities in their struggle against racism and discrimination, to rationalise and optimise policies and to reinforce cooperation in this area.

The Ten-Point Commitment is an instrument comprising ten points covering various areas of competence of city authorities and suggests some examples of actions that city authorities might consider with a view to fulfilling each of the points.

The signatory cities or other local government authorities undertake to integrate this Commitment in municipal strategies and policies and to involve in its implementation various actors from civil society, especially those who are the targets of discrimination.

The Ten Points and possible actions proposed in this Commitment make up a minimum programme requiring effective and expeditious implementation within a realistic time frame, and in no way preclude other actions in this area by city authorities.

The Commitment may be amended and expanded as appropriate in light of assessment of its implementation through the mechanisms provided for in this respect.

In addition, the Cities adhering to the Coalition of Cities against Discrimination in Asia and the Pacific will inform UNESCO Bangkok and the Coalition Secretariat of their actions undertaken in order to meet their commitments.



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SHS

Social and Human Sciences

For regularly updated information,
please visit the web:
www.unesco.org/shs/citiesagainstracism

Asian and Pacific Cities and Municipalities interested in joining this initiative should contact:

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The Coalition of Cities against Racism is an initiative launched by Social and Human Sciences Sector (SHS) as one of UNESCO's five specialized sectors.

SHS works to facilitate social transformations where the values of justice, freedom and human dignity can be fully realized.

<http://www.unesco.org/shs>

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