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REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON A NETWORK OF NATIONAL AUTHORITIES AGAINST RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND OTHER FORMS OF INTOLERANCE

SUMMARY

Following 180 EX/Decision 47, this document presents the completion of the feasibility review process for the creation of a network of national authorities against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. It examines its objectives, expected results, modalities of implementation and financial implications. It concludes that the creation of such a network is in line with the objectives of UNESCO in the fight against racism and discrimination.

Administrative and financial implications (see paragraphs 21-23).

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 26.

BACKGROUND

1. **180 EX/Decision 47** invites the Director-General to complete the feasibility review process resulting from **177 EX/Decision 71** and to report to the 181st session of the Executive Board with a view to taking a final decision on the possible establishment of a network of national authorities against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

SCOPE, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE FEASIBILITY REVIEW PROCESS

2. This report focuses on the creation of a regional network in Latin America, as a pilot. On the basis of the model represented by the International Coalition of Cities against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Intolerance, an international network of national authorities against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance could be envisaged at a later stage.

OBJECTIVES OF A NETWORK OF NATIONAL AUTHORITIES AGAINST RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND OTHER FORMS OF INTOLERANCE

3. The objectives of a network of national authorities against racism, discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance are threefold:

- (a) Assist in the development of comprehensive approaches and strategies to combat racism, discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance;
- (b) Strengthen research systems in order to provide policy-oriented research on the fight against racism, discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance;
- (c) Enhance debates, dialogue and networking opportunities in the area of the fight against racism, discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance through awareness-raising and capacity-building activities.

POTENTIAL ADDED VALUE OF THE PROPOSED NETWORK AND RELATION TO EXISTING INITIATIVES INCLUDING THE COALITION OF CITIES AGAINST RACISM

4. The International Coalition of Cities against Racism addresses discrimination and xenophobia at the urban and municipal level. However, to be addressed properly, some issues raised by discrimination and xenophobia can require action at other levels of governance. This is the case, for example, with anti-discrimination legislation, with the training of non-municipal actors involved in the fight against discrimination (police forces and judges notably), or with the drafting and implementation of national or regional policies in fields such as housing, education, labour market or health.

5. In this respect, a network of national authorities against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance could complement the work done by the Coalition of Cities against Racism. Such a network would contribute to a more comprehensive fight against discrimination at all levels and with all relevant stakeholders.

6. The network would bring together various national institutions from each of its participating States. It would operate at both the regional and national levels, via the national institutions that are part of it.

7. At the national level, the creation of a network would contribute to the synergies and complementarities between all actors involved in the fight against discrimination, including ministries of justice, interior, education, labour and housing, human rights commissions and employers' associations.

8. At the regional level, the network would allow a better coordination between its members and regionally operating organizations. It will also allow a better reciprocal knowledge of ongoing and

scheduled initiatives in the fight against discrimination and racism, by organizing regular meetings involving various actors coming from governments, civil society, academia, NGOs, unions, etc.

9. The added value of the network would stem from its ability to create a space of cooperation and dialogue for a wide range of actors and activities involved in the fight against discrimination. It would address the implementation of major human rights instruments in the field, through research activities, policy support and capacity-building.

EXPERIENCES, BEST PRACTICES AND INITIATIVES THAT MIGHT BE THE SUBJECT OF EXCHANGES THROUGH THE PROPOSED NETWORK

10. In recent years, several important initiatives have been taken by national governments and at the subregional and regional levels¹ in Latin America and the Caribbean with the objective of fighting racism and discrimination. These initiatives show the commitment of the region and provide the network with a set of inspiring and relevant experiences.

MECHANISMS OF OPERATION OF THE PROPOSED NETWORK

11. Given that countries differ considerably in their governmental structures and the way they address issues related to discrimination, States joining the network will decide which national entities are to be part of it to serve as institutions of reference.

12. To coordinate the agenda and work of the network and to develop initiatives and build up cooperation, a secretariat should be established. The secretariat would be located in one of the Member States of the network.

13. The proposed network will be able to use operational mechanisms such as:

At the national level:

- (a) Assist in the development of a comprehensive, coordinated and concerted approach to combat discrimination;
- (b) Strengthen the ability of Member States and of their national institutions to protect persons against discrimination;
- (c) Make better known the benefits of inclusive policies, implemented at national level, in particular in the fields of employment, education, training and housing;
- (d) Establish a space for dialogue and coordination on issues of discrimination by bringing together relevant initiatives undertaken in different national sectors such as cultural life, the media, work, housing, health, social services, police services and the legal system, institutions dedicated to the promotion and well-being of women, families, young people, migrants, etc;
- (e) Advocate for adequately monitoring the implementation of human rights instruments associated with discrimination.

At the regional level:

- (a) Promote best practices and facilitate the exchange of information by establishing linkages with regional institutions and organizations and by adapting relevant national and local approaches and policies;

¹

The Andean Letter for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights; The Ibero-American Federation of Ombudsmen and the Central American Council of Ombudsmen; the CARICOM Human Rights Treaty; the Draft Inter-American Convention against Racism and all forms of Discrimination and Intolerance; the Special Rapporteurs on the Rights of People of African Descent, on Racism and on Racial Discrimination, and the V, VI and VII Meeting of MERCOSUR High-Level Authorities in Human Rights and Chancelleries, resulting in the creation of the Technical Group Against Discrimination, Racism and Xenophobia.

- (b) Disseminate information on effective strategies to combat racism, discrimination and xenophobia;
- (c) Promote better synergies at the municipal and national levels;
- (d) Envisage the establishment of a regional observatory to conduct ad hoc independent research on the fight against racism and discrimination;
- (e) Launch large-scale regional information campaigns to ensure wider dissemination of information on the efforts made to eliminate racism and racial discrimination.

COOPERATION WITH EXISTING REGIONAL ENTITIES

14. Some regional entities are already active in overlapping fields. Cooperation with them is necessary to avoid duplication of work and ensure coherence of the initiatives taken by the network.

15. Following consultations in the Latin America region, the following entities have been initially identified for their potential to cooperate with the network:

- Regional organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the Secretaría General Iberoamericana (SEGIB) and the regional parliaments; MERCOSUR through the action of the MERCOSUR High-Level Authorities in Human Rights and Chancelleries;
- The Special Rapporteurs of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights – IACHR (migrants, racial discrimination, women, indigenous peoples);
- National human rights institutions;
- Partners of UNESCO National Commissions (e.g. the MERCOSUR Human Rights Public Policy Observatory);
- Specific thematic groups within the framework of the Meeting of Competent High Authorities on Human Rights and Foreign Ministries of MERCOSUR and Associated States.

16. Patterns of cooperation with these entities include the exchange of information, the sharing of expertise in both research and capacity-building and consultancies where appropriate.

17. Cooperation should also take place with the International Centre for Human Rights Education in Latin America and the Caribbean in Buenos Aires, Argentina, a category 2 centre created under the auspices of UNESCO.

18. As far as cooperation with the Coalition of Cities is concerned, it is to be suggested that the network be given a status of observer in the Coalition and, reciprocally, to create synergies between the activities of both entities.

19. The Coalition of Cities will be the main partner of the proposed network. At the national level, the network will relate to the Coalition by fostering the number of cities joining the Coalition; acting as an interface between high authorities and cities pertaining to the Coalition; defining achievable objectives and applying common indicators in order to assess trends in racism and discrimination and the impact of municipal policies on different social dimensions such as law, housing, employment, education, culture, communication and information; setting up advisory councils for ongoing dialogue between researchers and policy-makers in order to identify weak points in current policies and practice.

20. At the regional level, the network will relate to the Coalition by involving network members in the dialogue, research and information-exchanging activities of the Coalition; forwarding proposals and best practices to Lead Cities of each regional Coalition, putting in place mechanisms and structures related to documentation, information and communication related to discrimination and racism; making proposals for thematic discussions and studies, organization of panels, and development of evaluation tools at the regional level and facilitating exchanges among the national coalitions.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

21. UNESCO would have to provide mostly technical expertise and intellectual support. However, a regular budget provision of US \$45,000 would have to be foreseen at an initial stage in order to launch the network.

22. The actual cost of the operation of a network will depend strongly upon the type and the scope of the activities that will be implemented. These costs are to be covered through the network members or from other outside sources.

23. In line with the proposed draft decision below, the Director-General has included reference in document 35 C/5 to this activity.

CONCLUSION

24. The creation of a network of national authorities against racism, discrimination and xenophobia is in line with the objectives of UNESCO in the fight against racism and discrimination. It would facilitate a better coordination and exchange of information at the national and regional levels on activities to combat racism, discrimination and xenophobia, by ensuring among others a full cooperation with the ongoing Coalitions of Cities against racism.

25. The creation of such a network should pay full attention to already-existing initiatives and foresee cooperation and complementarity whenever possible.

ACTION EXPECTED OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

26. Taking into consideration the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt the following proposed decision:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 180 EX/Decision 47,
2. Bearing in mind the Integrated Strategy to Combat Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance as contained in 32 C/Resolution 28,
3. Having examined document 181 EX/11,
4. Takes note of the conclusions of the feasibility review process;
5. Welcomes the proposal to establish, under the auspices of UNESCO, a network of national authorities against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance, starting as a pilot in the Latin America and Caribbean region, within the 35 C/5.