

**Coalition of
Latin American and
Caribbean Cities
against Racism,
Discrimination and
Xenophobia**

RACISM

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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Coalition of Latin-American and Caribbean Cities against Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia

The Coalition of Latin-American and Caribbean Cities against Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia was launched on 25 October 2006 at the occasion of the First Ibero-american Forum of Local Governments..

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.
- As a doctrine, racism derives from theories and beliefs that establish a hierarchy of races or ethnic groups or base attributions of value on racial difference. Theories of racial difference are “scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and that there is no justification for racial discrimination, in theory or in practice, anywhere” (Preamble of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1965). Such theories are incompatible not just with the moral and ethical principles of humanity but also with international law, which recognises all human beings as members of one species, born equal in dignity and rights.
- 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).

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**Declaration of the Coalition of Latin American
and Caribbean Cities against Racism,
Discrimination and Xenophobia**

International Coalition of Cities against Racism

The International Coalition of Cities against Racism, is an initiative launched by UNESCO in 2004 to establish a network of cities interested in sharing experiences in order to improve their policies to fight racism, discrimination and xenophobia. The international conventions, recommendations and declarations elaborated at the upstream level need 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 discriminations, to make sure that those international and national instruments are applied and respond to concrete problems. UNESCO chose cities as the privileged space to link upstream and downstream actions. The role of city authorities as policy-makers at the local level is considered here as the key to create dynamic synergies. The ultimate objective is to involve the interested cities in a common struggle against racism through an international Coalition. In order to take into account the specificities and priorities of each region of the world, regional Coalitions are being created with their own programme of action. The Latin American and Caribbean Coalition of Cities against Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia is a step towards an International Coalition.

A plan of action

The Ten-Point Plan of Action for the Latin American and Caribbean Coalition of Cities against Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia was finalized in June 2006. In close collaboration with the City of Montevideo, which played the role of the Lead City for the region, UNESCO organized an experts meeting. The city representatives, representatives of NGOs and networks of cities, as well as academics discussed together possible actions to be taken into account in the Plan of Action. The finalized Ten-Point Plan of Action is composed of ten commitments covering the various areas of competence of city authorities such as education, housing, and employment as well as cultural and sport activities. It suggests in particular some examples of practical policies that city authorities might complete or develop. The signatory cities will undertake to integrate this Plan of Action in their municipal strategies and policies, and to involve the various actors within civil society in its implementation.

The Latin American and Caribbean Coalition of Cities against Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia was launched on 25 October 2006 at the occasion of the Iberoamerican Summit of Local Governments that took place in Montevideo and brought together representatives from more than 100 Latin American and Caribbean cities. At this occasion, the Ten-Point Plan of

Action for the Latin American and Caribbean Coalition of Cities against Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia was adopted by the plenary meeting of the participants.

Since its initial launch, some 60 municipalities have already joined the initiative directly and as well as over 150 others via their existing networks of cities. UNESCO urges Cities in the region to give their utmost attention to this Ten-Point Plan of Action and join the Latin American and Caribbean Coalition of Cities against Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia.

Why do we need to unite against racism, discrimination and xenophobia?

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 imperils democratic and participatory citizenship. Racism and discrimination entrench and aggravate inequalities within society. In view of the deep mental roots of the racial prejudice inherited from the history and persistence of discriminatory practices, the struggle against racism and discrimination is a long-term effort. It demands regular updating of anti-racist strategies and policies along with coordination at international, regional, national and local level.

What can be done?

The struggle against racism and discrimination must be conducted on several fronts:

- **prevention and positive action:** raising awareness and consciousness and educating in 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:** support of 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.

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 incumbent upon professional bodies, trade unions, voluntary organizations and the private sector. It is a moral and ethical duty for individuals, especially opinion leaders such as artists, journalists, teachers, academics, sports personalities and community, religious and political leaders.

The essential role of city authorities

Cities have become the main focus of ethnic and cultural mixing and are home to an ever greater number of foreigners, from all parts, 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. Cities are also laboratories where new forms of urban citizenship and new ways of living together can be invented. They are an ideal space within which to conduct a struggle against racism that facilitates effective implementation of the various instruments enacted by States.

Cities are run by local authorities who are often close to their citizens, and generally have a degree of autonomy, resources, and support and solidarity networks. They thus have the capacity to launch brave and innovative initiatives that can be effective against racism and discrimination on the ground. Local authorities, especially at city level, have a key role in mobilizing forces, even in areas that do not fall within their administrative competence, and in implementing anti-discrimination policies that can make a real difference.

The long-term objective of the Latin American and Caribbean Coalition of Cities against Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia is to supply local authorities with an operational programme that will allow a more efficient implementation of policies against discrimination. Thus, a Ten-point Plan of Action has been developed, composed of 10 commitments covering the different areas of competence of local authorities such as education, housing and employment.

The signatories commit themselves to using their full range of political power to counteract racism and discrimination through the implementation of the 10 commitments. Each signatory is 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 on a close collaboration with actors of civil society (NGOs, academics, associations, etc.).

Implementation and follow-up of the Ten Point Action Plan

How to join the Latin American and Caribbean Coalition of Cities Against Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia.

Signature of an Act of Accession and Commitment by which the municipality fully adheres to the Coalition and its Ten-Point Plan of Action; the municipality thus agrees to implement this minimal Plan of Action by incorporating the Plan into its municipal policies and strategies, notably by expressly indicating in the form attached to the Deed of Membership, the specific actions that accompany these commitments. The implementation of the Plan of Action implies on the part of the municipality, the allocation of the resources required to accomplish the actions foreseen.

Implementation

The Plan of Action, adopted on 25 October 2006 in Montevideo, remains open for signature by Latin American and Caribbean cities wishing to join the Coalition of Cities Against Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia on the basis of these commitments. The signatory cities undertake to integrate within their strategies and action programmes the Plan of Action and to commit to it the human, financial and material resources required for its effective implementation.

Each city authority is free to choose the policies it judges most relevant or most urgent. However, for reasons of consistency, each city is invited 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 them or to supplement them by further actions from the Plan of Action. The signatories undertake to establish a focal point with responsibility for follow-up and coordination of the Plan of Action.

10-Point Plan of Action

10 commitment to combat racism,
discrimination and xenophobia in
the cities

Introduction

The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination defines 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”. Accordingly, the international community condemns racial discrimination and all kinds of discrimination as a serious violation of human rights. Racism is one of the fundamental factors originating this deeply-rooted discrimination in the social processes.

Regardless of the origin or the form they take, racism and discrimination raise barriers that prevent the development of their individual and collective victims, corrupting those who practice them and dividing communities and nations. This represents a serious threat to co-existence and the peaceful exchange across communities that share the same living space, and places the possibility of democratic and participatory citizenship in jeopardy. Racism and discrimination consolidate and aggravate inequities within society.

We must envisage the fight against racism and discrimination as a long-term activity. This action requires a permanent review of anti-racist strategies and policies, together with coordination efforts at the international, national, regional and local levels.

The signatory cities commit themselves to use all mechanisms available to them to counteract racism and discrimination on the basis of ethnic group, race, religion, nationality, gender, health-related issues, sexual orientation and all other kinds of marginalization and exclusion, by complying with the ten commitments. The signatory administrations are responsible for the implementation, coordination and execution of municipal regulations against racism and discrimination. These measures will be decided, in every case, after a consultation process with those who suffer racism and discrimination directly, and in close collaboration with representatives from the civil society (NGOs, academics, associations, etc.).

1

Make racism and discrimination visible; that is, document both and implement municipal policies to combat both

Identify populations victimized by racism, discrimination and all types of intolerance by compiling data and by documenting racism and discrimination practices that must be fought with municipal policies.

Initiate or enhance the compilation of data on racism and discrimination, set attainable objectives and suggest common indicators that help assess municipal policy repercussions.

Examples for Action

- Produce diagnoses through official data and information collection mechanisms on racism and discrimination at all levels of municipal competence, by introducing adequate variables in the compilation of data.
- Cooperate with research institutions to ensure a periodical analysis of information and data collected, conduct local studies and submit specific recommendations to municipal authorities.
- Define objectives that are both attainable and measurable and use common indicators to evaluate trends in racism and discrimination-related issues and the impact of municipal policies.
- Create research, debate and follow-up instances to ensure a permanent dialogue across researchers, authorities and the civil society.
- Promote the regional exchange, cooperation and coordination of local social policies to combat racism and discrimination.
- Support, systematize and build on existing actions in this field.

2

Create and/or strengthen municipal legislation relative to racism and discrimination.

Create mechanisms for control, surveillance and solidarity against racism at the municipal level.

Examples for Action

- Identify and build on existing legislation or, given the case, establish regulations that are explicit and harmonized with international instruments.
- At the local level, act in conformity with commitments ratified by the States at the international level.
- Establish disciplinary measures to counteract any racist situation or behavior by municipal staff in the performance of their respective daily tasks.
- Incorporate the topic of racism and discrimination in the agendas of the multiple consultation mechanisms available to cities (for example, youth parliaments, elders councils, etc.). Grant authorization to entertainment and leisure premises/areas under the condition that nobody be discriminated, in order to guarantee equal access to all. Conduct inspections to verify that, in effect, no discrimination takes place, in particular due to ethnic or racial reasons.
- Support local entities that provide legal orientation and psychological aid to local victims of racism and discrimination.

3

Commitment, surveillance against racism and discrimination.

Create mechanisms for control, transparency and follow-up that strengthen commitments against racism and discrimination on a municipal level.

Examples for Action

- Create a mechanism for consultation, follow-up and evaluation with different social counterparts (youth, artists, NGOs, community leaders, police, the judiciary, etc.) in order to carry out periodical assessments of the situation in terms of racism and discrimination.
- Create, in collaboration with the civil society, a control and rapid response system --integrating the victims themselves-- that allows for a quick identification of racist acts and crimes or declarations based on hatred and report these situations to the corresponding authorities.
- Improve aid to victims of racism and discrimination.
- Facilitate the participation of victims so they may organize themselves to find solutions, initiatives (counselling, supervision, etc.).
- Create or improve an official service within the municipal authority (ombudsman) to deal with this type of claim filed by city dwellers.

4

The city as active creator, promoter and advocate for labor equity.

4)a The city commits itself to generate jobs and provide its services by equitably applying the equal opportunity principle; and to participate in the supervision, training and development of initiatives to attain this objective.

Examples for Action

- Conduct periodical inspections to report on the progress of policies and adequate measures, in favor of diversity, on the basis of an accurate database.
- Undertake an impact and needs assessment (through anti-discrimination control indicators) when a new initiative is implemented. In this regard, a simple, standard protocol could be prepared to standardize this process.
- Identify and help cover the need for training and development of municipal workers, by implementing basic and advanced courses in order to: build on their capacity to manage social and cultural diversity; promote inter-cultural dialogue; enhance their knowledge in terms of anti-discriminatory behavior; acquire the necessary knowledge to deliver appropriate services that take different cultural sensitivities into consideration.
- Employ positive discrimination or similar policies to improve community representativeness and discriminated groups among the staff of the municipal authority and, in particular, its executive bodies.
- Create a special internship and training programme for youth in discriminated groups, in order to prepare them for jobs in the city.

4)b The city commits itself to favor employment practices that contribute to generate equal opportunities and support equity in the labor market by exercising the discretionary competences of the municipal authority.

Examples for action

- Drawing on their capacity as consumers of services, cities may include anti-discriminatory clauses in contracts with service providers.
- Establish a system to recognize businesses, shops, mass media and professional entities in the city that have engaged in the fight against racism and are in favor of implementing municipal mechanisms to address discrimination-related complaints.
- In partnership with the business sector, install a micro-credit, sponsorship and orientation programme, to support economically viable activities to be developed by groups discriminated against.
- Create collaboration links with those companies interested in supporting anti-racist municipal policies and in promoting diversity as an economic strategy and commercial asset.
- Together with professional associations, civil society, universities and unions, encourage the preparation of training and development programmes aimed at workers so they can deliver adequate services and are responsive to cultural sensitivities.

5

Equitable access to housing, basic services and other habitat-related conditions.

Undertake proactive steps to reinforce policies against environmental discrimination and racism in terms of housing, sanitation, mobility, security and education in the city.

Examples for action

- Prepare regulation instruments (Code of Ethics, Practical Code, Ethics Letter and/or Agreements or Conventions) for public and private agencies devoted to selling or renting houses, in order to combat discrimination in the access to housing.
- Provide other opportunities and incentives to home owners and real estate agents who commit themselves to abide by the rules and/or municipal policies in terms of anti-discrimination.
- Establish or facilitate orientation to make counselling services useful when dealing with discrimination-affected residents who are looking for a dwelling in the public or private sector.
- Elaborate joint strategies with communities to design local community security initiatives.
- Establish proactive measures to combat environmental racism so that equity conditions are developed in the territorial space of the city to protect populations discriminated against from all types of violence -- including institutional violence.
- Promote comeback and/or relocation actions for displaced populations under conditions that guarantee their dignity, voluntary action and security.

6

Guarantee full information and participation in public management.

Guarantee citizens full transparency and access to information relative to their rights and obligations, their protection and legal options, and sanctions that can be imposed on them as a result of racist and/or discriminatory acts or behaviors. To adopt a participatory approach, in particular in consultation with victims of racism and discrimination.

Examples for action

- Call for the creation and/or strengthening of racial equity agencies.
- Promote the voices of victims of racism through community means, other means of communication and municipal communication policies.
- Promote consultative round tables with permanent local participation and the participation of social, government and academic actors.
- Adopt a participatory approach with special attention to the victims of discrimination.
- Publish and broadly disseminate a municipal brochure or bulletin with information on the rights of city residents, the obligations of a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society, as well as on the anti-racist commitments adopted by the municipal authority and the sanctions that may be imposed for racist acts or conducts. In public areas, distribute forms or information so that victims or witnesses of racist acts or behaviors may get in touch with competent authorities or with aid groups.
- Organize periodical municipal fora against racism in cooperation with existing bodies or mechanisms, to provide the possibility of discussing urban racism and discrimination-related issues, municipal policies and their repercussions.
- Every March 21, commemorate the annual International Elimination of Racial Discrimination Day, with a series of initiatives to raise awareness and mobilize citizens.
- Support local NGOs to they continue their job of informing and organizing activities to condemn racism and discrimination.

7

Combat racism, discrimination and xenophobia through formal education in the scope of their competences and/or through non-formal and informal educational actions.

Reinforce measures against discrimination in terms of accessing and enjoying all forms of education; and foster the type of education that respects and promotes racial, ethnic and cultural identities, based on the principles of equity and inclusion, and inter-cultural and inter-social dialogue.

Examples for action

- Intervene to guarantee equal opportunities and equity, in particular in terms of access to quality education and training with positive discrimination measures.
- Enact an anti-discriminatory document and an institutional mandate for schools and training centers managed by local authorities, with the purpose of fighting exclusion in the access to education and marginalization in schools.
- Recognize and encourage schools that perform anti-exclusion, anti-racism and anti-discrimination activities, as well as install a "municipal award" to be presented periodically to the best school initiative against all types of discrimination.
- Prepare educational material (textbooks, handbooks, audiovisual or multimedia materials, pedagogical resources) on the potential of local authorities to uproot racism and discrimination practices.
- Favor initiatives aimed at teachers and educators training providing knowledge on the origins and reasons for racism, discrimination and xenophobia, as well as the design of educational strategies to combat them.
- Encourage the development of non-formal educational methods adapted to the characteristics of each group.

8

Promote inter-cultural and religious dialogue, and safeguard diversity, in particular, indigenous, Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean cultures.

Ensure equitable representativeness and the promotion of a wide range of expressions and cultural heritage of inhabitants in cultural programmes and policies, the collective memory and public spaces in municipalities and foster the inter-cultural life of a city, with special attention to border areas. Likewise, ensure the generation of equal opportunities for the development of cultures, safeguarding their tangible and intangible heritage, language, ritual manifestations and festivities, habits and customs.

Examples for action

8 a) With the participation of professionals, people, populations and communities affected by discrimination, facilitate the production of audiovisual material (films, documentaries, programmes, etc.) to convey their experience and expectations for the city. Contribute to the distribution of this material both in the local, national and international levels.

- Institutionalize policies, programmes and ethnic-cultural projects (such as events, cultural centers, etc.) under the direction and design of the actors themselves.
- Give names to places (streets, squares, monuments, neighborhoods) and/or celebrate events that are especially important to the groups affected by discrimination, in order to recognize their contributions and integrate them to the collective memory and identity of the city.

8 b) Promote respect in the exercise of religious manifestations and inter-religious dialogue.

- Protection of ancestral religions.
- Programmes to promote inter-religious dialogue.

9

Initiative for the protection and attention of vulnerable children, in particular Afro-descendant and indigenous boys and girls.

Support or create local mechanisms and initiatives to address vulnerable children, in particular Afro-descendant and indigenous boys and girls.

Examples for action

- Incorporate the positive discrimination concept to local policies address to children.
- Create a group of experts (integrated by researchers and professionals and including members of the discriminated groups and childhood supporting organizations) with the necessary experience to provide advice and cooperate with authorities and the local community and conduct situation analyses that guarantee that, prior to adopting any measure, situations are thoroughly studied.
- Create a group of specialized workers from several sectors representing the agencies that may be involved in this type of situation (police, educational sector, young workers, social workers, civil society organizations, etc.), in charge of coordinating action, especially at the outset of conflict involving marginalized children.
- Provide information on crimes against children in a situation of risk and the resolution of conflict to relevant agencies and institutions (schools, youth programmes, integration offices, etc.).

10

Eradicate discriminatory practices due to health, gender, ethnic, racial, sexual orientation and disability reasons.

Promote actions to eliminate all kinds of discrimination relative to health, gender, ethnic group, race, sexual orientation and disability.

Examples for action

- Favor recognition and protection of sexual and reproductive rights.
- Campaigns against discrimination of VIH carriers and people with infectious and contagious diseases.
- Foster research, promotion and dissemination programmes on the incidence and treatment of ethnical propensity-related diseases.
- Incorporate ancestral health-illness related practices into local health programmes.
- Implement institutional actions in favor of populations discriminated because of their sexual orientation, especially against crimes involving persecution, violence and hatred.
- Develop local action for the protection and prevention against all forms of violence against women.
- Promote community policies in primary health-care attention, taking into consideration different impacts on men and women.
- Promote measures for the full attention and protection of persons with disabilities, giving value to their own cultures as a means of inclusion.

Declaration

Coalition of Latin

American and Caribbean

Cities against Racism,

Discrimination

and Xenophobia

Declaration

Adopted by cities participating in the Latin American and Caribbean Conference of Cities against Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia, for Human Rights, during its plenary session, October 25, 2006 in Montevideo.

Cities participating in the Meeting of Latin American and Caribbean Cities, held in Montevideo on October 25, 2006,

Concerned by the escalation of all kinds of racism and xenophobia, causing discrimination and violence in our cities;

Convinced that racist and discriminatory ideologies, attitudes and acts against certain groups of citizens or city dwellers represent a serious threat to equality, mutual tolerance, peace, security and social cohesion in the city;

Aware of their responsibility to guarantee all city dwellers the conditions for their development with an awareness and respect for freedom, equality, dignity and rights for all, without discrimination due to "race", color, origin or national, ethnic or religious identity;

Convinced that the fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination in cities is one of the obligations of municipal authorities in order to guarantee mutual respect and the promotion of equality among residents and citizens; and to advocate for a citizenship that is respectful of diversity, the source of wealth in modern societies;

Certain that only through active participation of all citizens in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of policies can actions against racism and xenophobia have repercussions and the efficiency they require;

Resolved to draw on past experiences in the field of actions against racism and to exchange knowledge and good practices to improve their policies;

Recognizing that in the most diverse and multi-ethnic cities it is fundamental to promote equality and fight discrimination in order to build democratic, multi-cultural, cohesive and sustainable cities;

Remembering the commitment of mayors from the world over who met in Paris in May 2004, during the presentation of United Cities and Local Governments, in favor of respect and the promotion of cultural diversity in the city, and also in favor of the creation of a sound legal framework to extend the application of fundamental rights to all city residents;

Underlining that the growing ethnic diversity in cities represents a source of cultural dynamism, economic prosperity and social cohesion;

Have agreed to adopt this 10-Point Plan of Action to express, in a practical way, their commitment to fight racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

This Action Plan will enable member cities, as well as other cities, to establish their priorities in the fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination; to rationalize and to optimize their policies and to reinvigorate their cooperation, accordingly.

The Action Plan is an instrument comprising ten commitments covering various areas of competence of city authorities and suggests some examples of actions that municipal authorities could carry out in conformity with all commitments.

Signatory cities will undertake to incorporate this Action Plan into their strategies and municipal policies and to engage the different civil society actors in their execution, in particular those who are victims of discrimination.

The commitments and potential actions proposed in this Action Plan represent a basic programme that in no way replaces other actions that municipal authorities may wish to carry out in this field.

The Action Plan will be duly corrected and extended after the evaluations made on its execution, with the help of mechanisms designed to this end.

In addition, cities joining the Coalition of Latin American and Caribbean Cities against racism will inform the Secretariat about their first steps towards fulfilling these commitments. At their earliest convenience, they should also report the specific actions they will undertake in each of the commitments, indicating ad-hoc means.



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More information in web site:
www.unesco.org/shs/citiesagainstracism

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