**Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)**

**Thematic Discussion on Racial Discrimination in today's world: Racial profiling,**

**ethnic cleansing and current global issues and challenges.**

**Geneva November 29th 2017**

**Introduction to the Discussion**

**Anastasia Crickley Chairperson CERD**

Friends, colleagues and state representatives from near and far, thank you for the solidarity that your presence here, or your connecting with us where you are, represents for your commitment to the global struggle to eliminate racial discrimination which we in the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination have the honour to be part of. Thank you for your interest in our work and your faith in our remit and capacity to carry it out and let me say at the outset that we look forward to your interventions and welcome your comments and suggestions this afternoon and will listen carefully.

Friends, the toxic global discourse which is fuelling and fanning racism globally is both insidious and persistent while the legacies of slavery continue to be visible in the ongoing discrimination against people of African descent and structural discrimination also continues to blight the lives of minorities and Indigenous Peoples globally. Hate speech continues unabated, including at the highest levels of government, and racist hate crimes, including violence, tear apart lives of minorities, migrants and people on the move. Most alarming of all is the climbing death toll of people who are killed on the basis of their ethnicity, identity and colour.

Hierarchies of oppression serve only to divide and distract the oppressed but different forms of racism emerge as being particularly prominent at different times. Just now there can be no doubt about the persistence and targeting of racism towards people perceived to be from Muslim backgrounds globally. What is in effect racial profiling in the name of state security is a clumsy, discriminatory and usually ineffective method of enhancing the security of states and their citizens which serves to institutionalise oppression and further alienation. CERD also notes with concern differentials in prison populations, in who gets stopped and searched for what and which crimes against who are most likely to lead to convictions. At its worst racial profiling, leads to ethnic cleansing and here I cannot but repeat the concerns already expressed by the High Commissioner about the situation of the Rohingya and call again on Myanmar to sign and ratify the ICERD Convention so that its protection can be available to them and to supporting the state to make this possible.

Racial discrimination is complex and one response does not fit all - responses which do not take on board the intersections with other forms of oppression are limited and insufficient and in this regard as a woman I cannot but recall the intersection between racism and women's oppression, often evident in sexualized and violent forms, including but not only during times of conflict globally. Responding also demands that we look to other initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals with their commitments to leaving no one behind, to equality within and between nations and to having the disaggregated data necessary to inform these struggles which CERD has asked states to produce for many years as an essential tool for addressing racism. Just now we need also to engage with the development of the Global Compacts on Migration given the major barrier racism is for all migrants, whether women, children or men.

Since the ICERD was adopted more than fifty years ago as the first UN Convention after the UN Declaration on Human Rights, we need also to acknowledge that progress has been made - apartheid has ended in South Africa, civil rights were achieved in the USA and legislation prohibiting racism exists to varying extents and with various degrees of implementation in most states globally - but this progress is now being eroded by the absence or discontinuation of the special measures necessary to secure progress and by ignoring the ongoing realities of racism.

Sidestepping racism structurally and institutionally as well as individually, or calling it other than what it is, will not address or eliminate it. In this regard we need to be clear that while xenophobia is intolerable it does not have the global normative framework of the ICERD within which it can be addressed. It can also be reduced to an 'understandable' psychological fear of strangers but it is in effect as the Durban Declaration points out one of the main routes to racism today. CERD is clear and has made clear in recent Decisions, including that addressed to the USA after the white supremacist marches in Charlottesville this August, that naming and addressing racism is also a responsibility of those who take on leadership roles.

I encourage you to name racial discrimination, racial profiling, ethnic cleansing and other current global manifestations of racism as you see and experience them wherever you are, and whoever or whatever is perpetuating the awful oppression and I look forward to listening with my colleagues to your suggestions and inputs for the afternoon.