

U.S. Response to OHCHR Request for Input into Special Report on Systemic Racism

Thank you for your October 26, 2020 request for input concerning OHCHR's report, as mandated by HRC/43/1, on "systemic racism, especially incidents that resulted in the death of George Floyd and other Africans and people of African descent."

The U.S. government is committed to pursuing a human-rights centered foreign policy that complements its commitment to combatting systemic racism domestically. The death of George Floyd was a flashpoint within a longstanding national conversation about policing that has also galvanized a global call to ending the injustices of systemic racism against Black people. As President Biden said about the death of Mr. Floyd, "It stirred the conscience of tens of millions of Americans. [It] marked a turning point in this country's attitude toward racial justice."

While we cannot comment on the underlying prosecution or litigation stemming from the death of Mr. Floyd, President Biden has committed to use the power of the U.S. Justice Department to address systemic misconduct in police departments. Further, the United States enumerates the following steps taken as part of the U.S. commitment to advancing racial equity and redressing systemic racism in federal policies, laws, and programs:

On his first day in office, President Biden took decisive action and signed directives on a number of areas related to systemic racism and economic inequality, including: establishing a whole-of-government imperative to assess and end systemic racism in government policy, programs, and institutions (specifically with respect to African-Americans, Latinos, Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders, and other persons of color, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQI+ communities, among others); taking affirmative steps to end unequal provisions in housing policy that disproportionately affect persons of color and extending the nation-wide eviction moratorium brought about by the impact of COVID-19; extending a pause on repaying student loans during the pandemic, which represent a disproportionate economic burden for students of color; reauthorizing mandatory anti-bias training across the federal government system; ensuring the inclusion of all people present in the United States in the 2020 census, irrespective of their immigration status; preserving the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program; ending discriminatory bans on entry to the United States; and extending full Civil Rights protections to members of the LGBTQI+ communities. During his first week in office, the President signed additional directives on ending the federal government's reliance on the private prison system, the beginning of a plan to reform an incarceration system that disproportionately affects people of color.

The United States is committed to embedding racial equity across our response to COVID-19 and the related economic crisis. In his first week in office, President Biden signed executive actions to provide relief to American families that will aid families of color who are disproportionately impacted by the economic crisis. The White House announced the creation of a COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force on February 10, as well as the delivery of COVID-19

vaccine doses to federally funded health clinics that support underserved areas. Additionally, the President began the process of requiring federal contractors to raise the minimum wage and provide emergency paid leave to workers, bringing much-needed relief to low-wage workers.

The United States is committed to promoting federal respect for Tribal sovereignty, strengthening the Nation-to-Nation relationship between the federal government and American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes, empowering Tribal self-determination, and advancing racial justice for Native communities. President Biden signed an Executive Order to reinvigorate commitment of all federal agencies to engage in regular, robust, and meaningful consultation with Tribal governments.

These actions are just the start of our domestic policy reforms. The United States is committed to working to advance racial equity in our economy, our criminal justice systems, our healthcare systems, and our schools. We look forward to regularly engaging with racial and other minorities to understand their current challenges and stand ready to take future action.

On the international front, the U.S. government has taken concrete action to rejoin multilateral institutions and agreements. The United States has re-joined the Paris Accords on Climate Change; withdrew its notice of intent to withdraw from the World Health Organization; and re-engaged the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) as an Observer State, among other measures. The United States took its first formal action by joining a request by the UK to support a Special Session on the human rights situation in Myanmar and co-sponsoring the resulting resolution. In the near future, the United States will also make a national statement regarding its Universal Periodic Review. We will likewise advance discussions at the HRC on the Item 9 General Debate on racism and related discussions, among other efforts aimed at combatting systemic racism and promoting human rights.

The United States Government takes seriously its responsibilities under domestic law and commitments under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. We believe in a human rights-based foreign policy and trust the above-actions exemplify the U.S. Administration's commitment to racial equity.