



UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities

Meeting (Senior Level)

8 February 2023, 8:00-9:00 (EST) / 14:00-15:00 (CET)

Venue: MS Teams

The meeting was co-chaired by Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights (OHCHR) Ilze Brands Kehris and Assistant Director-General for the Social and Human Sciences (UNESCO) Gabriela Ramos.

The meeting attendance included officials from most of the 20+ UN agencies of the Network, including senior officials of DGC, OSAPG, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UNHCR, EOSG, WHO and DCO, in addition to the OHCHR and UNESCO co-chairs (representational and observer attendance follows below at Section III).

I. Decisions and Action Points

1. The meeting took note of a number of landmark developments in 2022, as well as relevant ongoing programming in the agencies and communication opportunities such as the 21 March annual International Day Against Racial Discrimination.
2. The meeting welcomed the consolidating, streamlining and strengthening of the Network Action Plan as presented. The meeting roundly affirmed the continued importance and value of the Network, and the need to continue to undertake efforts to support its vibrance and development, and to ensure that it has sufficient resources to undertake its mission.
3. The meeting affirmed the following documents:
 - (1) Network Work Plan 2021+, as revised for 2023 action, and including a new streamlined structure;
 - (2) Summary of Network Activities 2022;
 - (3) Outcome Document: UN Network Times of Crisis Pillar Summit, 7 December 2022, UPEACE Costa Rica;
 - (4) Proposed Calendar of Meetings: UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities: 12 Months to February 2024.

4. The meeting approved the nomination of the Office of the Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide (OSAPG), represented by Under Secretary General Alice Wairimu Nderitu, to act as UN Network co-Chair (rotating) for 2023.
5. The meeting approved the nomination of the Department of Global Communications (DGC), represented by Under Secretary General Melissa Fleming, to act as UN Network co-Chair (rotating) for 2024.
6. The meeting agreed to open a process among a specifically dedicated group for seeking EC/DC decision on racial discrimination and protection of minorities in peace and security, including prevention, or via another relevant modality, to be identified. It was affirmed that detailed consultation on possible points for EC/DC decision (or other relevant decisional modality) should be convened. Background discussion should include review of existing relevant EC/DC decisions.
7. The meeting agreed to strengthen civil society/rights-holder consultation in the work of the Network, specifically endorsing the proposal to seek to establish a civil society consultation group or panel. The meeting noted complexities and challenges related to representativity in such a group. The meeting requested receipt of a plan in this regard.

II. Background

The 8 February 2023 senior-level meeting of the UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (“Network”) convened at ASG-level (or similar level of seniority), with the objective of hearing the views of senior UN officials as to the future action and concrete plans of the Network. The annual meeting provides an opportunity for senior officials to consider and discuss recent developments and context influencing the Network’s efficacy and prospects, as well as to agree on steps in support of the further development of the Network in the coming period, and its vibrancy and efficacy short-, medium- and long-term. The meeting was originally scheduled for November 2022, but was re-scheduled to 8 February 2023.

The meeting was dedicated to a series of questions related to strengthening and consolidating the work of the Network and the UN system more broadly on racial discrimination and protection of minorities, organised under two discussion heads:

- (1) Reviewing the draft activities of the Network for the period 2023, as situated within the Network Work Plan 2021-2025, agreed pursuant to the 2020 senior Network meeting, and subsequently reaffirmed in 2021. This discussion head includes questions of the 2023 plan of activities; the resources available to the Network to act on its mandate; lessons learned, including as concerns the agencies’ efforts to strengthen diversity and inclusion, as well questions of strengthening the involvement of and engagement with affected groups, including potentially through the establishment of a consultative panel involving representatives of relevant civil society organisations.
- (2) Strengthening work in the area of protection of minorities in peace and security, including prevention, following up a December 2022 UN Network Times of Crisis Pillar Summit, and noting plans for a new Agenda for Peace. In this regard, the meeting will be asked to reflect on questions of how to advance addressing racial discrimination and protection of minorities, including whether the time is opportune to seek an EC/DC decision on racial discrimination and protection of minorities in peace and security,

including prevention. The Network senior leadership has previously recommended seeking EC/DC action on racial discrimination and protection of minorities, in particular at its November 2020 meeting.

The meeting was asked to discuss and endorse the Network activities for 2023, developed within the Network's 2021-2025 Work Plan; review and endorse the Network's report of activities for 2022; and to endorse the Office of the Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide as Network as co-Chair (rotating) for 2023 and the Department of Global Communications as co-Chair (rotating) for 2024.

III. Participants

Officials participating in a representational capacity:

OHCHR Ilze Brands Kehris, UN Assistant Secretary General for Human Rights

UNESCO: Gabriela Ramos, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences

OSAPG: Alice Waraimu Nderitu, Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide

DGC: Melissa Fleming, Under-Secretary General for Global Communications

UNFPA: Diene Keita, UN Assistant Secretary-General and UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme)

UNDP: Asako Okai, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Director, UNDP Crisis Bureau

UNODC: John Brandolino, Director, Division for Treaty Affairs

UNHCR: Monika Sandvik, Senior Statelessness Coordinator (UNHCR)

DCO: George Abualzulof, Senior Human Rights Adviser

WHO: Theadora Swift Koller, Senior Technical Advisor, Health Equity, GER/Director General's Office

UN Women: Beatrice Akua Duncan, Global Rule of Law Advisor and Focal Point for Indigenous and Minority Issues; Marie-Elena John, Senior Racial Justice Lead; and Muthoni Muriu, Senior Adviser, Diversity, Inclusion and Shared Leadership

An additional 29 United Nations personnel from 15 agencies and entities of the Network took parts as observers.

IV. Agenda

1. **Brief introduction by co-Chairs** (6 minutes)

Ilze Brands Kehris, ASG, OHCHR

Gabriela Ramos, ADG, UNESCO

Consolidating and Strengthening Network Action and Efficacy 2023

1. **Tour-de-Table review of 2022 reporting, 2023 plans, resource matters, and engaging with civil society** (20 minutes) – facilitated by ADG Ramos

Questions for reflection

- How does the Network view the design of work plans for 2023, building on the work, successes and challenges of 2022?
- How can the Network resource base be strengthened?
- Are there lessons learned from the agencies' diversity and inclusion efforts which may have broader interest and application across the Network as a whole?
- How should the Network position itself vis-à-vis new relevant human rights structures, in particular the Permanent Forum for People of African Decent?
- How to strengthen engagement with and involvement of affected groups, including potentially through the establishment of a consultative panel involving representatives of relevant civil society organisations? Should this be prioritized in 2023?

2. **Seeking deeper traction and system engagement in the area of racial discrimination and protection of minorities in peace and security, including prevention** (20 Minutes), facilitated by ASG Brands Kehris, based on the Outcome Document of the 7 December 2022 UN Network Times of Crisis Pillar Summit (enclosed Annex 4). The discussion is intended as hearing of views for next steps to strengthen attention to racial discrimination and protection of minorities in peace and security, including a taking-of-the-temperature of possible support for seeking EC/DC discussion of this and/or other areas of the Network's mandate, based inter alia on previous Network recommendations, timing and justification for such a move, with possible details, actions and content to be developed and consulted going forward.

3. **Endorsement of meeting documents and of 2023 and 2024 co-Chairs: OSAPG (2023) and DGC (2024)** (8 mins)

Endorsement of (1) incoming co-Chair 2023 (OSAPG) and co-Chair 2024 (DGC); (2) Network report 2022 (Annex 3); (3) Network plan of activities 2023 (Annex 2); (4) Calendar for Network meetings for the coming 12 months (Annex 6).

Brief remarks by USG Alice Wairimu Nderitu, OSAPG (Network co-Chair 2023).

To facilitate the smooth running of the Network, endorsement is requested for both 2023 rotating co-Chair (OSAPG) and 2024 rotating co-Chair (DGC), working with the OHCHR permanent Network co-Chair.

4. **Conclusions and closing** (4 minutes): co-Chairs

Annex 1: Network Work Plan 2021+, 2023 action revision

Annex 2: Summary of Network Activities 2022

Annex 3: Outcome Document: UN Network Times of Crisis Pillar Summit, 7 December 2022, UPEACE Costa Rica

Annex 4: Calendar of Meetings: UN Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities: 12 Months to February 2024