# Integrating the Elimination of Inequalities due to Racism into the Framework of the UN Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda:[1] Recommendations from Civil Society

Submitted by:

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Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in all their insidious forms are human rights violations transmitted across generations and are manifest in the cultural values and patterns, institutional and national norms and practices, and everyday behavior of individuals and groups in every society (Essed, 1991; Jones, 1997; Dovidio, Glick, & Rudman, 2005).  Racism, and racial discrimination serve simultaneously both to rationalize the hierarchical domination of one racial or ethnic group over other groups and to maintain psychological, social and material advantages for the dominant group, while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for its victims and those it has placed at a disadvantage (Jackson & Inglehart, 1995).   Structural Racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism as it continually re-produces old and produces new, forms of racism.  It is infused into the entire fabric of society, including its history, culture, politics, economics and other systems.  All other forms of racism (e.g. institutional, interpersonal, internalized, etc.) emerge from Structural Racism.  Both active racism, and passive acceptance of race-based privilege, disrupt human rights to optimal mental health and psychological functioning of both victims and perpetrators of racial injustice (Jones, 1997).

Despite some advances in decades of struggle, racism and racial/ethnic discrimination, both overt and covert, continue as sources of global conflicts and inequalities, causing disadvantage and marginalization among people in all regions of the world.  These inequalities are evident in disproportional poverty rates and limited access to power, justice, education, physical and mental health including psychosocial

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services; social security; access to basic needs like safe drinking water; equal protection against the ravages of climate disasters; political participation, as well as, protection against racial/ethnic profiling and police violence (Glaser, Spencer & Charbonneau, 2014). Groups most affected by historic and contemporary forms of racism and racial/ethnic discrimination include: Africans and persons of African descent, Asians and persons of Asian descent, Indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, minorities, and the Roma/Gypsy/Sinti/Travellers (Durban Declaration and Programme for Action, 2001).

We are deeply concerned that the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Targets are disturbingly silent about eradicating the causes and effects of racism and racial/ethnic discrimination. Therefore, we offer this statement in the hope that, going forward, the remaining intergovernmental negotiations will provide opportunities for member states of the United Nations to broaden the framework of the SDGs further by including language regarding the elimination of racism and racial discrimination in the following components of the Outcome Document: (1) The Declaration; (2) General Principles to guide the development of indicators; and (3) the Review Framework.

The Declaration

According to H.E. Ambassador E. Courtenay Rattray, Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations (17 February 2015), "**Our collective vision for the world in 2030 must be one wherein we have made significant progress (to achieve the SDGs) through the removal of all structural and systemic impediments to (their) fulfillment."** We propose that racism and racial/ethnic discrimination will continue to function as structural and systemic barriers to sustainable development if they are not addressed.

Therefore, to be truly transformative, it is critically important that the Declaration of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda:

- ✓ Reaffirm the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the core international instruments relating to human rights and international law, beginning chronologically with the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) followed by listing the other core human rights conventions (See Paragraph 7 of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals).

- ✓ Affirm that inequalities rooted in structural and systemic racism are obstacles to sustainable development. Envision the possibilities and practical necessity of a world where inequalities, conflicts and human suffering from continuing racism, racial/ethnic discrimination and xenophobia are eliminated as obstacles to human dignity, human rights, social justice and sustainable development.

- ✓ Make a genuine commitment to the standard of "leaving no one behind," by calling for disaggregated data, thus affirming the human rights non-discrimination principle as the criterion for the attainment of each SDG and target, "without distinction of any kind, such as age, race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 2)."

- ✓ Place people at the centre of sustainable development, according to Paragraph 4 of the Introduction to the Proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals which states "People are at the centre of sustainable development and, in this regard, Rio+20 promised to strive for a world that is just, equitable and inclusive, and committed to work together to promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and

environmental protection and thereby to benefit all…"

✓ Emphasize the significance of promoting an ongoing process of human rights learning by individuals and groups at all levels and in all sectors of society as an essential enabler of the successful implementation and realization of the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

 Guiding Principles for the Development of Indicators

The UN Secretary-General's Synthesis Report (2014) underscores the urgency of addressing inequalities by "agreeing that no goal or target should be considered met unless it is met for all social and economic groups." The development of indicators for the 17 SDGs and 169 targets provides a significant opportunity to ensure that the human rights non-discrimination principle is applied. Paragraph 17 of the Introduction to the Proposal of the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals applies the non-discrimination principle by stating: "In order to monitor the implementation of the SDGs, it will be important to improve the availability of, and access to data and statistics disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts to support the monitoring of the implementation of the SDGs. There is a need to take urgent steps to improve the quality, coverage and availability of disaggregated data to ensure that no one is left behind."

Also, according to Annex 2 of the Technical Report by the Bureau of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) on the process of the development of an indicator framework for the goals and targets of the post-2015 development agenda (18 March 2015), consensus was reached by the Expert Group on the necessity "to ensure disaggregation of indicators and to include a human rights dimension to the indicator framework (following the "no one left behind" principle)."

While both of these references to the importance of disaggregated data are encouraging, the framework for the indicators needs a specifically articulated data disaggregation principle, including a broad diversity of vulnerable social groups, and placed strategically at the beginning of the indicators to be applied to all sustainable development goals and targets. Accordingly, we respectfully recommend that the following four principles guide the development of indicators for the Post-2015 SDGs:

 I.     Data Disaggregation. Indicators are required to assess the attainment of each sustainable development goal and target by all groups (as relevant), including age, gender, race/ethnicity, indigenous identity, income, disability, rural/urban residence, national origin, migratory status, language, and religion.

II.     Reducing Inequalities and Discrimination.  We support the recommendation of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights which calls for "identifying strong indicators that measure the (elimination) of inequalities, the elimination of discriminatory laws, policies and practices, and equity in global governance of development"(22 April 2015).

III.     Race/Ethnicity Disaggregation. Given its cross-cutting nature, the indicators for all relevant goals and targets (especially Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,10, 11, 12, 13, and 16) shall include a disaggregation of data based on race and ethnicity.

IV.     Human Rights Compliance Data. Indicators should include the use of data from the existing mechanisms for monitoring compliance with human rights standards, especially the Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR) of the Human Rights Council and reviews on compliance with the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).

Principles for the SDG Follow-up and Review Framework

We respectfully recommend that the Follow-up and Review Framework of the SDGs should:

1. Focus on monitoring the four types of data identified above as central to assessing progress in the elimination of racial/ethnic inequalities and discrimination within States.

2. Encourage Developing and Least Developed Countries to enter multistakeholder partnerships including Developed countries, UN agencies, or civil society organizations for developing the technical and statistical capacity and infrastructure needed to acquire and manage the quality of evidence-based data required for monitoring and reviewing progress on the SDGs.

3. Include opportunities for national, regional, and international civil society organizations to submit reports on progress of the SDGs in countries for which they have the expertise and experience and to participate in intergovernmental review processes at the regional and international levels.

Thematic Interactive Dialogue on Tackling Inequalities

During the UN Summit on the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda, we strongly encourage Governments to host a thematic interactive dialogue on Inequalities that will include a focus on how to transform the structural and institutional basis of racial/ethnic inequalities.  As member organizations of the Sub-Committee for the Elimination of Racism of the NGO Committee on Human Rights and the Psychology Coalition at the United Nations, we would like to collaborate with governments and UN agencies in planning and co-hosting such a dialogue and recommend that the following sub-themes be among those considered for inclusion in the program: Understanding that race and racism are socially constructed, are neither inevitable nor grounded in biology; racism is structural and systemic, embedded in societal institutions, resulting in discriminatory outcomes and inequalities; intergenerational transmission of racism and its effects; effective remedies for disrupting racism and related intolerance including, but not limited to: non-discriminatory laws and practices;  human rights learning; programs that promote understanding and changing implicit biases in everyday life; developing multicultural understandings with mutual compassion; redress, truth, reconciliation and other healing processes; conflict resolution training; measures/assessments of reduction in racism/racial discrimination, and mechanisms for reparatory justice.

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