

WCC/CCIA training on

ACHIEVING RACIAL JUSTICE THROUGH UN HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

26-28 March 2019,

Ecumenical Centre, Geneva, Switzerland

Rationale

Racial injustice, discrimination and xenophobia are detrimental to individuals, communities, societies, states. Achieving racial justice by highlighting the life and dignity of victims has been a core dimension of WCC's legacy since its inception, and is integral to building just and peaceful societies worldwide. The WCC Programme to Combat Racism is a concrete example of ecumenical mobilisation that can play a crucial role in achieving meaningful change.

As a follow-up to the 2016 WCC Racial Justice Solidarity visit to the USA and its subsequent commitment to make racial justice one of its priority areas, the WCC/CCIA is organising a 3-day training workshop parallel to the 24th session of the UN Working Group of Experts on people of African Descent (WGEPAD), for approximately 15 representatives from member churches engaged on racial justice issues. The aim is to equip them to engage with United Nations (UN) human rights mechanisms dealing with racial justice, and draw international attention to situations of racial injustice worldwide.

Aim and objectives of the Training

The training will include an introduction to:

- key terminologies such as racism, racial justice, discrimination, xenophobia, afrophobia, etc.;
- the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD): the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination by its State parties.
- the Universal Periodic Review (UPR): a unique mechanism of the Human Rights Council (HRC) aimed at reviewing the human rights situation of all UN Member States every 5 years. Each review produces recommendations which the State under review is expected to implement subsequent to their next review.
- the complaint procedure of the Treaty Body mechanisms - particularly confidential communications that individuals or groups can submit to draw attention to urgent human rights violations. The training will specifically guide them step by step on how to alert the UN system to egregious acts of racism, xenophobia and racial discrimination occurring in their communities.
- the Special Procedures of the HRC: independent human rights experts or groups of experts who are mandated to report and advise on specific human rights issues (civil,

cultural, economic, political, and social) from a thematic or country-specific perspective;

- the [UN International Decade for People of African Descent](#) – which is specifically calling for more recognition of these often poor and marginalised groups, who often experience discrimination in their access to justice, alarmingly high rates of police violence, as well as racial profiling – and its related [UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent](#).

The Training will also:

- provide an analysis on the status of racism and racial discrimination globally;
- include attending a session of the UN Working Group of Experts on people of African Descent (WGEPAD) at the Palais des Nations, UN headquarters for Europe.
- provide the opportunity for participants to share their knowledge and experience of good practices and use of advocacy tools including public campaigns, research on effects of discrimination, evidence-based advocacy, and coalition building among diverse interest groups.
- acknowledge and reaffirm the role of churches and faith communities as agents of transformative justice in order to build just and inclusive communities, upholding a victim-centred approach that recognises that racism violates human beings and rips apart communities.
- acknowledge the importance of confession, apology and forgiveness as essential elements for mending and restoring broken relationships.