

**National Action Plan Round Table Dialogue and Launch
St George's Hotel and Conference Centre**

25 March 2019

Message of support from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights delivered by Ms Abigail Noko, Head: Regional Office for Southern Africa Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights congratulates the Government of South Africa on the launch of its National Action Plan to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. It comes at the heels of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which is an occasion to remember the Sharpeville massacre and renew our promise to end racism.

In many regions of the world, racial violence, hate speech, prejudice and stereotyping continues unabated with some groups facing intersectional forms of discrimination, whilst others are disproportionately disadvantaged, silenced or negated. Racial discrimination continues to hinder progress and the enjoyment of rights for millions of people.

In order to eliminate the conditions which cause or perpetuate racial discrimination, the World Conference against Racism, the Durban Review Conference, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Human Rights Council, through its universal periodic review, have all recommended that States adopt national action plans against racial discrimination as a basis for the development of a comprehensive public policy for the promotion of racial equality.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has been providing technical assistance to states in the formulation of their action plans across the world. This has enabled us to develop best practices and facilitate experience sharing amongst States.

In line with this, we recommend that all national action plans against racial discrimination should share the following characteristics:

1. They should be based on human rights standards, particularly the principle of equality and non-discrimination and coordinated with other national action plans
2. They should be comprehensive in scope focusing on the right to non-discrimination as an autonomous right, as well as in relation to civil and political rights, and to economic, social and cultural rights
3. They should truly be a national undertaking, involving all elements of government and society
4. They should be action oriented and describe the current situation, identify challenges that should be overcome, contain benchmarks for evaluating progress, prioritize actions, specify who should take action, establish a timeframe, a budget and provide for monitoring and evaluation.
5. They should be public documents that are widely disseminated, accessible and easily obtainable.
6. They should be continuous and viewed as part of a long-term process.
7. They should reflect internationally recognized standards and accord with international good practices

The adoption of this national action plan is part of South Africa's continued contribution to the global human rights movement, a demonstration of the leadership shown by South Africa in spearheading global efforts to combat racism through the hosting of world conferences, the adoption of several intergovernmental resolutions and a national legal and institutional framework to combat racism.

It is a call to all of us to condemn notions of racial superiority or hatred, or which incite racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Implementation is where the rubber hits the road and we stand ready to support you in the implementation of this plan by providing continued technical assistance.

Together, we must take a stand for human rights and end racism.

I thank you.