Working Draft

DECLARATION
for the
UN World Conference Against
Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

Prepared for the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee
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The American Psychological Association[0]
In consultation with the WCAR Health/Mental Health Caucus
And Various Organizations of Psychological and Mental Health Scientists and Practitioners *

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Preamble and Declaration

Preamble

Respect for the inherent dignity of all members of the human family is the psychological foundation of freedom, justice and freedom in the world. This important principle is recognized in the United Nations Charter(1945), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and human rights declarations and conventions generally, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965).

Therefore, we the signatories to this Declaration propose that the integration of psychological and mental health perspectives into the framework of the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance (WCAR) is essential both to effective understandings of the causes, sources, and impacts of racism and related intolerance, and to effective implementation of remedies and corrective and preventive measures and strategies.

Racism is a system of values, beliefs, and practices involving racial prejudice and discrimination that has been incorporated into the activities and procedures of major institutions, corporations, and social structures (e.g., housing, education, health) and other major arenas of human enterprise (e.g., politics, finance/banking, media). Racism is transmitted across generations and is manifested in individual behavior, institutional practices, and cultural values and patterns.

Racism also serves to both rationalize the hierarchical domination of one racial group over another group**, and to maintain advantages for the dominant group.[2] [3]

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* *A list of these organizations is provided at the end of this document.*

** *In many contexts, racially or ethnically subjugated groups are referred to as "minorities". The term "minorities" refers to a group(s) of people who historically have been politically dominated and/or disenfranchised by another group(s). Minorities may or may not constitute a numerical minority within the nation or state in which they reside.*

Research has documented that:

- There is a global prevalence of individual, cultural and institutionalized forms of racism, racial intolerance, prejudice, xenophobia, discrimination and related acts of power, violence, and intimidation;[3]

- Racism, discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance have interactive, profound and penetrating negative impact on childhood experiences and development,[4] adult behaviors and experiences,[5] the well-being of the elderly,[6] the structure and functioning of families and communities,[7] and experiences and outcomes of primary, secondary, and higher education,[8]

- Racism, discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance limit and constrain perceptions and real opportunities of affected groups in work[9], politics[10],primary, secondary and higher education, economic development, legal redress[11], health/mental health care[12], religious affiliation[13], media representations[14], and athletic participation[15];

- Racism, discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance have direct and indirect effects on health, mental disorders, mental health, and quality of life among all cultural groups, including both victims and perpetrators.

Declaration

Racism, discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance threaten human development because of the obstacles that they pose to the fulfillment of basic human rights to survival, security, psychological and physical development, psychological health, resilience, and social participation. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance are values, attitudes and behaviors that are learned. Racism has been shown to have negative cognitive, behavioral, affective, and relational effects on both child and adult victims, nationally and globally, historically and contemporarily. Racism has been shown to increase anxiety, depression, anger, self-defeating thoughts, hopelessness, and avoidance behaviors, and is linked to a host of mental health, health and medical complications in targeted individuals. Racism has been shown to diminish affected individuals' academic and social development, self-esteem, and personal feelings of competency.

Racism, intolerance, discrimination and xenophobia convey hegemonic, material advantages to members and descendants of dominant groups. It also affects the cognitive and affective development of members of the dominant group by perpetuating distorted views about the self and negative, stereotypical thinking about members of oppressed groups. Racism promotes anxiety and fear in the dominant group members whenever they are in the presence, or anticipating the presence, of oppressed group members, often leading to acts of hostility, aggression and physical violence. Both active racism and passive acceptance of race-based privilege disrupt the mental health and psychological functioning of both victims, and perpetrators, of racial injustice

We also know from evidence throughout the world that humans possess an extraordinary capacity for resilience and optimism. Under exceptional levels of stress, in the face of severe deprivation, trauma, vulnerability, and distorted reality, humans are able to cope, to adapt, to resist, the limitations of their current predicament. Thus, one must view the self-initiated global efforts of oppressed people to liberate and reclaim humanity as a tribute to their psychological integrity and indomitable spirit, and as a testament to the immenseness of the human need for self-actualization and hope.

Platform of Action

The causes of racism and related intolerance and the means for their perpetuation are complex, involving legal vulnerability and discrimination, economic and educational disadvantage, social and political marginalization, and psychological victimization. Solutions that reverse and correct the travesties of racism and related intolerance must involve acknowledgement and consistent implementation of strategies that counteract each of these causes and fully restore and empower humanity.

We call upon governments, academic and professional institutions and organizations, non-governmental organization and other civil society groups , at national, regional, and international levels, and the United Nations to:

I. Promote Understanding of the Causes and Sources of Racism

A. Support interdisciplinary (psychological, sociological, anthropological, biomedical, educational, political, and legal) research that promotes understanding of the varied historic and contemporary forms and expressions of overt and covert racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Suggested interdisciplinary research foci include:

1. the social-psychological impact of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance on victims, including the differential impact of racial hatred on children, adult, and seniors, and the differential short and long term growth and healing potential of individuals, couples, families, and communities;

2. identification of factors that contribute to a group's vulnerability to and adoption of racist-based ideology and practices.

3. Identification of factors that contribute to the transmission of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance across generations.

4. the differential impact of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance across the developmental lifespan on the health and mental health of both victims and perpetrators;

5. identification of individual, family, community, and cultural factors that contribute to the perpetration of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance;

6. the differential ways in which the auditory, visual, and written media have contributed to the establishment and maintenance of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance;

7. the differential effects of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, migration status, age, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, and disability status, on life expectancy, income and wealth, education, social/political participation, and legal protection;

II. Acknowledge and Protect Victims of Racism

A. Acknowledge Victims of Trafficking – Especially Women and Children

1. Acknowledge that the violation of human rights in the form of the trafficking of persons has been disproportionately committed against racially and ethnically marginalized persons. These persons, primarily women and children are largely comprised of Asians, Africans, Latin Americans, and Eastern Europeans.

2. Recognize that the trafficking of persons is devastating to its victims psychologically, physically, and emotionally.

3. Recognize that trafficking is psychologically damaging to the traders and purchasers of these persons. Perpetrators of trafficking are psychologically numb and disconnected from the humanity of those they oppress.

B. Promote Quality of Life and Equality in the lives of Victims of Trafficking

1. Strictly enforce laws against trafficking with appropriate and immediate consequences.

2. Provide culturally responsive and accessible counseling for survivors and perpetrators of trafficking.

3. Expand economic and educational resources and opportunities in developing countries where there are large numbers of persons who are trafficked and thereby decrease the need for persons to seek advancement in situations and locations that are unsafe.

4. End media depiction of eroticized and dehumanized images of racially diverse peoples.

5. Expose trafficking through media coverage.

C. Acknowledge Women and Girls as Victims of Multiplicative Effects of Racism and Sexism

1. Acknowledge that women and girls of racially marginalized groups are discriminated against in the labor market, political realm, educational system, and judicial system. They are disproportionately victims of community violence and racially motivated violent crimes.

2. Acknowledge that this multiplicative discrimination based in gender and race has damaging physical, relational, and psychological effects.

D. Promote Quality of Life and Equality in the Lives of Women and Girls

1. Develop and fund educational and vocational opportunities for racially marginalized girls.

2. Provide education to all members of a society focused on the human rights of all persons including racially marginalized females.

3. Promote positive, empowered images of racially marginalized women and girls in the media and in education curricula.

4. Provide culturally appropriate counseling for victims and perpetrators of racism and sexism.

5. Enforce laws that hold perpetrators accountable by consistently requiring consequences for those who perpetuate violence and discrimination against racially marginalized women and girls.

E. Acknowledge the Racism and Discrimination Experienced by Migrants and Refugees

1. Acknowledge that migrants and refugees are discriminated against in health care provision, working conditions, living conditions, and judicial neglect.

2. Acknowledge that those migrants and refugees who are identifiable by physical appearance, language, and/or accent are often stereotypically blamed for societal ills such as crime, poverty, drug addiction, and even terrorism.

3. Acknowledge that female migrants and refugees are often coerced into sexual activity in order to cross borders and/or to obtain work, housing, or other life essentials.

4. Acknowledge that children of migrants and refugees are also stigmatized for their racial and ethnic background.

5. Recognize that discrimination and stigmatization—especially when coupled with a lack of concern for migrants and refugees by police, judicial officials, and health providers—endangers the physical and mental health of the migrants and refugees.

F. Promote Quality of Life and Equality for Migrants and Refugees

1. Provide culturally appropriate mental and physical health care for migrants.

2. Provide access to educational and vocational resources.

3. Provide legal aid to protect the rights and lives of migrants and their families.

4. Promote swift and appropriate consequences to those who abuse the rights of migrants.

5. Disseminate information on the contributions and culture of migrant peoples in a given area to counter stigmatization.

G. Acknowledge Victimization of Racial Minorities in Multi-Ethnic States

1. Acknowledge that racial minorities in multi-ethnic states have suffered racially motivated physical and sexual violence, and have limited access to economic and vocational advancement.

2. Acknowledge the historical and contemporary stigmatization and dehumanization of racial minorities within the general society as well as within the educational and judicial systems.

3. Recognize that minority status may negatively affect the physical and mental health of victims and of perpetrators.

H. Promote Quality of Life and Equality for Racial and Ethnic Minorities

1. Ensure minorities the right and access to schooling, political representation, leadership positions in communities and institutions, and equitable representation in varying levels of employment.

2. Educate the general public and police, prosecutors, and judges on the principles and processes of racial diversity and the varying nuances of racial discrimination.

3. Provide adequate housing and physical and mental health care.

4. Give priority to conflict prevention, mediation, social development and peacekeeping in terms of resources and programming.

5. Educate constituents on the necessity of promoting human rights for all citizens, including encouraging acceptance of cultural diversity as opposed to attempted forced assimilation and/or annihilation.

6. Provide significant resources, beyond tokenism, dedicated to equity in the economic, political, cultural, social, and psychological status of each citizen, regardless of race or ethnicity.

I. Acknowledge Victimization of Indigenous Peoples

1. Acknowledge that indigenous peoples often endure multiple predicaments including but not limited to poverty, marginalization, and loss of culture, language, and land.

2. Recognize that acts of displacement, forced assimilation, and the violent removal of children from their families into mission schools and/or foster settings have had negative cultural, physical, and psychological effects on indigenous peoples.

J. Promote Quality of Life and Equality for Indigenous Peoples

1. Utilize standards of fairness in settling land claims.

2. Provide adequate physical and mental health services.

3. Promote the acceptance of cultural diversity and cultural respect.

4. Enforce the protection of indigenous peoples rights.

5. Represent the experiences and perspectives of indigenous peoples in the media and education systems.

6. Promote political inclusion of indigenous peoples.

K. Acknowledgment of African Peoples' Victimization

1. Acknowledge that centuries of transatlantic slavery colonization, and racism have resulted in poverty and economic exclusion of Africans and African descendants.

2. Acknowledge that non-African governments and institutions have economically benefitted and continue to benefit, directly and indirectly, from discrimination against African countries, Africans, and African descendants.

3. Acknowledge that racism has had negative effects on the cultural legacy, psychological and physical well-being, political freedom, education, and economic possibility of Africans and African descendants.

L. Promote Quality of Life of Africans and African Descendants

1. Provide quality and culturally sensitive mental and physical health care for Africans and African descendants.

2. Reform legal systems to promote racial equity in criminal justice systems as well as in housing and vocational access.

3. Develop and fund programs to enhance education programs for Africans and African descendants.

4. Revise academic curricula to reflect both the contributions of Africans and African descendants to world history and development, as well as the history of discrimination against Africans and African descendants.

5. Halt depiction of Africans and African descendants in the media that are dehumanizing and stereotypic.

M. Acknowledge Victims of Racism With Physical and Mental Disabilities

1. Acknowledge that persons with physical and mental disabilities who are members of racially marginalized groups are discriminated against in education, economic access, and media portrayals.

2. Recognize that this discrimination can be devastating to the psychological well being of persons with disabilities.

N. Promote Quality of Life for Persons with Disabilities

1. Require accessibility of buildings, programs, and residences for persons with disabilities.

2. Enforce laws against those who discriminate against persons with disabilities regardless of the victim's racial/ethnic background.

3. Provide quality physical and mental health for persons with disabilities who are members of racial/ethnic marginalized groups.

O. Acknowledge Multiplicative Effects of Racism and Homophobia

1. Recognize the discrimination of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender members of racial/ethnic marginalized groups in social, political, educational, and health care arenas.

2. Acknowledge that this discrimination is damaging to the quality of life and health of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons.

P. Promote Quality of Life for Victims of Racism and Homophobia

1. Provide culturally sensitive physical and mental health care.

2. Enforce legal rights of victims of racism and sexism.

3. Include contributions of victims of racism and sexism in educational curricula.

III. Develop Remedies and Corrective Strategies

A. We call for academic and professional, philanthropic, religious, humanitarian and corporate institutions to: (1) publicly condemn racism, discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in all their forms/manifestations; (2) publicly acknowledge their role in creating and sustaining these interwoven systems of oppression;(3) publicly commit themselves to support the WCAR goals by undertaking and evaluating concrete strategies to combat and prevent racism, discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

B. Reduce physical and mental health disparities resulting from racism and racial discrimination in the bio-medical, psychological and social sciences, including discrimination in health/mental health care access and treatment and the lack of effective culturally competent education of medical and mental health care providers.

C. Each government should establish, endorse and actively support financially, an Institute on Racial/Ethnic Equity and Mental Health Promotion, at the highest level, that:

1.places a priority on research and public policy development on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance as deterrents to psychological well-being and positive mental health;

2. promotes research and program development related to the reduction and prevention of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, and their effects in all sectors of society, and the sources of and strategies for effective coping, resilience and positive mental health in the face of adversity; and,

3. collects data that track the effects of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance and the status of related racial/ethnic disparities, especially in social, educational, economic, political, health, and psychological status.

D. Establish programmatic support for mental health on a par with physical health within the World Health Organization and the UN system in general; and give priority to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance as deterrents to psychological well-being and positive health and mental health.

E. Eliminate biases in research and diagnostic instruments, methods and procedures that reflect and perpetuate racial/ethnic disparities and racism in medical, psychological and psychiatric, educational, employment and other institutional assessments.

F. Stop the use of research, diagnostic and assessment procedures developed and validated within one socio-cultural framework and/or population group, and used with populations and groups from different socio-cultural contexts where there have been no systematic validation especially when there is evidence that such practices have an adverse impact on life opportunities and human rights.

G. Demand and fully expect help providers across disciplines (e.g., psychology, medicine, education, and social work) to receive ongoing training on culturally-responsive practices, procedures, and interventions.

IV. Develop Preventive and Anti-Racist Strategies

A. Recognize, and support the use of educational curricula and methods as primary instruments for promoting understanding of human rights, appreciating national and global similarities and diversities, and developing beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors that support cultures of peace. Such programs should be established at all levels of formal education to remediate and prevent racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

B. Call for the utilization of the impressive wealth of existing educational resources against racism and other intolerances including: (1) intercultural curricula, dialogue and other methods produced by many partners, e.g. ethnic and cultural studies, women's studies, area studies, and peace studies, and (2) conflict analysis, conflict resolution, and peace building strategies.

C. Call for broader awareness and effective dissemination and utilization of historical and intercultural approaches developed by UNESCO, the lead UN agency for education against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and for human rights and democratic participation (See information document "UNESCO Contributions to the International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the WCAR 31 August B 7 September, 2001").

V. Enhance International Mechanisms

A. We join with the African/African Descendants Caucus in calling for the following:

1. Establishment of a "focal point" on racial equality based in the UN Office of the Secretary General, charged with the task of overseeing the integration of issues relating to racial equality into the work of all functional bodies and special mechanisms of the UN, at least equal to those provided for women and children.

2. Establishment of an international monitoring body that would make an annual report to the United Nations General Assembly. Governments would be required one year following the WCAR to develop and submit to the monitoring body a 5-year national plan of action, articulating specific goals and strategies for implementing WCAR commitments. Governments would also be required to submit 5-year periodic reports on progress on implementing WCAR objectives.

3. Establishment of an International Research and Public Policy Institute on the Program of Action adopted at the WCAR to monitor and evaluate (1) the promotion and facilitation of capacity-building at regional and national levels for data collection to support the monitoring of WCAR goals and objectives; and (2) the establishment of supportive linkages and exchanges with

existing research and public policy institutes whose work contributes to the fulfillment of WCAR goals.

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APA Division 45, The Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues
APA Division 48, The Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict and Violence
Asian American Psychological Association
Association of Black Psychologists
International School Psychology Association
Kenya Psychological Association

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[1] As an ECOSOC accredited NGO, the American Psychological Association (APA) has shown its support for the struggle against racism by its: (1) support for the ongoing efforts of the United Nations to promote and defend human rights, (2) adoption of UN human rights instruments as standards for its boards, committees, and membership at large, (3) boycott of both professional interaction and financial investment in South Africa during the apartheid era, (4) establishment of the Committee of Ethnic Minority Affairs within the central governance structure of the Association, (5) adoption of policies against various forms of discrimination, as well as policies in favor of increased access of racial/ethnic minorities in all aspects of the profession, (6) establishment of the Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues, whose journal focuses on mental health issues of ethnic minorities, (7) support for interdivisional collaboration to convene a BI-annual National Multicultural Conference and Summit that addresses issues of racism, oppression and intolerance of social diversity, (8) dedication of the 1999 Annual Convention to Racial and other Diversity Issues in psychology, (9) sponsorship of the 1997 APA Mini-convention on Psychology and Racism, (10) support, since 1997, of the APA National Conversation on Psychology and Racism; and (11) its June 2001 resolution publicly denouncing racism and calling for corrective strategies and commitment to support WCAR goals through the promotion of proactive strategies to prevent the occurrence of psychological harm resulting from racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

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