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Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 65/199*

Summary

The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance submits the present report pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/199, in which the Assembly requested the Special Rapporteur to prepare for the Human Rights Council a report on the implementation of that resolution based on the views collected in accordance with the request of the Commission on Human Rights, as recalled in paragraph 22 of resolution 65/199.

In the light of the information received, the present report addresses the latest developments identified by the Special Rapporteur with regard to the human rights and democratic challenges that extremist political parties, movements and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and similar extremist ideological movements continue to pose.

In this respect, the Special Rapporteur identifies good practices developed by States and different stakeholders and examines the main areas of concern where further efforts and consistent vigilance are required, including with regard to the protection of vulnerable groups of individuals against racist and xenophobic crimes and the protection and consolidation of democracy and human rights in general.

* Late submission.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/199, in which the Assembly requested the Special Rapporteur to prepare for the Human Rights Council a report on the implementation of that resolution based on the views collected in accordance with the request of the Commission on Human Rights.
2. In paragraph 22 of resolution 65/199, the General Assembly recalled the request of the Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 2005/5, that the Special Rapporteur continue to reflect on the issue of the inadmissibility of certain practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and racial intolerance, to make relevant recommendations in his future reports and to seek and take into account in this regard the views of Governments and non-governmental organizations.
3. In the light of the information received, in the present report, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance addresses the latest developments that he has identified with regard to the human rights and democratic challenges that extremist political parties, movements and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, as well as similar extremist ideological movements continue to pose. In this respect, he identifies good practices developed by States and different stakeholders since the previous report submitted by the Special Rapporteur to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/15/45) and the General Assembly (A/65/323) on the implementation of Assembly resolutions 63/162 and 64/147. In the report, he also examines the main areas of concern where more efforts and consistent vigilance are required, including with regard to the protection of vulnerable groups of individuals against racist and xenophobic crimes and the protection and consolidation of democracy and human rights in general.
4. The Special Rapporteur points out that the current report is based on information received up to 4 July 2011. Furthermore, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/199, paragraph 23, a more detailed report including a summary of the contributions sent by States and other stakeholders on the implementation of the above mentioned resolution, will be submitted to the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.
5. The Special Rapporteur concludes the report with his conclusions and recommendations.

II. Good practices developed at the national level to counter extremist political parties, movements and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and similar extremist ideological movements

6. In the section below, the Special Rapporteur presents an overview of some of the practices developed by States and other stakeholders to counter extremist political parties, movements and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and similar extremist ideological movements. The information provided to the Special Rapporteur shows that legislative, policy and institutional measures have been taken by States. Such governmental measures have also been complemented by encouraging initiatives developed by civil society organizations.
7. In his previous report submitted to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/15/45), the Special Rapporteur noted that the persistent existence of extremist political parties, movements and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and similar extremist ideological movements poses major challenges to a number of human rights and freedoms,

including the human rights principle of non-discrimination. Indeed, extremist political parties, movements and groups bring into question this fundamental principle by propagating an ideology based on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Non-discrimination, together with equality before the law and equal protection of the law without any discrimination, constitute a basic principle in the protection of human rights. As stated in article 2 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, States have the obligation to prohibit racial discrimination by any persons, group or organization and not to sponsor, defend or support racial discrimination by any persons or organizations.

8. A number of States have indicated that their Constitution and legislation prohibit racial discrimination. The Special Rapporteur welcomes such a step. The Special Rapporteur also notes with interest the information provided by States about non-citizens being guaranteed equality before the law and human rights without discrimination. He also welcomes the legislative measures taken to combat racism in sport. However, the Special Rapporteur notes that domestic law does not always fully cover the definition of racial discrimination as enshrined in article 1 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Consequently, the Special Rapporteur urges States parties to this important instrument to ensure that the definition of racial discrimination under their domestic order complies with the provisions of article 1 and prohibit and eliminate any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life. The Special Rapporteur also recalls that, under article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, “any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law”. Furthermore, paragraph 13 of the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference reaffirms that any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence should be prohibited by law, as should be the dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination as well as all acts of violence or incitement to such acts.

9. In their contributions, some countries admitted that, while a national law prohibiting racial discrimination had been adopted, it was not yet into force. The slow process of entry into force of legislation for diverse reasons, including those related to each national context at a certain time, may be an important barrier in addressing the major challenges that extremist political parties, movements and groups represents for human rights and democracy. Indeed, without any operational legal framework the rights of victims of racist or xenophobic crimes by extremist political parties, movements and groups can be hampered and the impunity of the perpetrators fostered. Therefore, it is crucial that appropriate measures be taken to ensure that the legal acts needed for the entry into force of relevant anti-discrimination legislation are adopted and the legislation is fully implemented. Governments must also ensure that the legislation adopted criminalizes racist acts perpetrated by extremist political parties, movements and groups. In this regard, the Special Rapporteur appreciates the fact that, in some countries, racial discrimination and incitement to racial hatred are declared an offence under the criminal code. He also welcomes information indicating that racist or xenophobic motive are aggravating factors in relation to some offences under criminal law. The Special Rapporteur recalls that States must ensure that the provisions adopted conform fully with their obligations under article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

10. Furthermore, the Special Rapporteur notes with satisfaction the adoption of national action plans and policies to combat racism and racial discrimination and to promote the social integration of individuals belonging to minorities. He appreciates in particular the number of programmes specifically launched by some States to combat extremism. In this regard, measures regarding the legal aid provided to victims or programmes to steer youth

away from right-wing extremist groups by offering vocational training and relocation opportunities are welcomed.

11. The Special Rapporteur also wishes to highlight some of the institutional developments reported. These include the establishment of national human rights institutions or specialized institutions to monitor and raise awareness about racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. It was indicated that such institutions are sometimes also empowered to receive complaints and to investigate into cases of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The Special Rapporteur is of the view that this is a positive step and that it is essential that such specialized institutions, which could also monitor and raise awareness about the challenges posed by extremist political parties, movements and groups and advise on measures to counter them, be established. States should ensure that such institutions have a robust mandate and adequate resources.

12. A number of good practices were also identified with respect to awareness-raising activities to foster tolerance and respect for cultural diversity. According to the information provided, some countries have developed awareness-raising measures to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and to strengthen intercultural dialogue. These measures include the organization of cultural events, art festivals of national minorities, exhibitions, concerts, forums and seminars, and the publication of books and brochures promoting cultural diversity. Such initiatives, which offer space for further intercultural dialogue and interaction, are welcomed by the Special Rapporteur. Initiatives including information campaigns broadcast on television and the Internet aimed at promoting harmony and tolerance among different ethnic groups are also noted with interest by the Special Rapporteur. In this context, the Special Rapporteur also notes with interest media programmes that promote diversity and tolerance. Indeed, according to the information provided, the mainstream media in some countries have started to recognize the cultural asset of minorities and to promote the idea of improving the living and working conditions of members of minorities.

13. Other positive examples identified include the training of law enforcement agents. The Special Rapporteur notes in particular that, in some cases, compulsory human rights training sessions were developed for the judiciary and that specific units to deal with hate crimes and racism were also established, including, for instance, in the Public Prosecutor's Office. The Special Rapporteur also notes with interest that some countries have developed data-collection systems on hate crimes, including hate crimes committed against individuals on the grounds of race, colour, ethnicity, origin or minority status, citizenship, language, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender or transgender. It was also reported that some States specifically collect data on racist crimes committed by members of extremist groups.

14. Educational measures also appear to be among the positive steps taken by States in response to the rise of extremist political parties, movements and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, as well as similar extremist ideological movements. The Special Rapporteur notes with satisfaction that human rights education is of particular importance for a number of States. Addressing the root causes of extremist political parties, movements and groups is crucial and education is a key means to address such a challenging phenomenon.

15. Cooperation with relevant international and regional human rights mechanisms and with civil society is also important. In this respect, the Special Rapporteur appreciates the engagement of States with regional and international human rights mechanisms, including the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the special procedures and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Special Rapporteur encourages States to continue to play an active role in countering extremist political parties, movements and groups through further cooperation with relevant regional and international human rights mechanisms.

16. Regarding initiatives developed by civil society organizations, the Special Rapporteur welcomes initiatives such as free legal aid for victims of hate crime, educational activities aimed at unmasking extremist ideologies in secondary schools, monitoring racially motivated crimes in football stadiums and the creation of national associations of intercultural media. Furthermore, in the absence of official data, the Special Rapporteur has noted that non-governmental organizations have played a key role in fulfilling the gap sometimes left by the State in this area by collecting, inter alia, data on hate crimes. It was stated that these initiatives have provided an estimate of the prevalence of such crimes and the possibility of assessing the impact of legislation in the area of racist crimes.

17. While good practices have been developed, challenges remain that require further efforts from States to counter extremist political parties, movements and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and similar extremist ideological movements. These challenges lie in particular in the protection of vulnerable groups of individuals against racist and xenophobic crimes and the protection and consolidation of democracy and human rights in general.

III. Remaining challenges relating to the existence of extremist political parties, movements and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and similar extremist ideological movements

18. In the section below, the Special Rapporteur focuses on the two main challenges that emerged from the information he received from different stakeholders. These challenges concern (a) the protection of vulnerable groups of individuals against racist and xenophobic crimes, and (b) the protection and consolidation of democracy and human rights, challenges that were identified by the Special Rapporteur in his previous report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/15/45).

A. Protecting vulnerable groups of individuals against racist and xenophobic crimes

19. An important feature of extremist political parties, movements and groups already highlighted by the Special Rapporteur in his previous report is their ability to blame specific groups of individuals for the insecurity and socio-economic problems experienced by the population and to incite discrimination against persons belonging to these vulnerable groups. One particular concern is that their ideologies may also go beyond racist, xenophobic and intolerant rhetoric and explicitly incite or justify the perpetration of acts of violence against certain groups of individuals. Their action may also sometimes inflame social tensions, complicate inter-ethnic relations and induce fear in the targeted groups. The information received seemed to show that vulnerable groups of individuals, such as members of minorities, Roma and Sinti, migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, continue to be the main victims of violence and attacks perpetrated or incited by extremist political parties, movements and groups, who also often regard themselves as the only legitimate holders and guardians of the national identity of a given country.

20. In this context, the Special Rapporteur is particularly concerned to see that the preoccupation he raised in his latest annual report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/17/40) about attacks against Roma by extremist political parties, movements and groups, sometimes in total impunity, remain valid and accurate. Indeed, in that report, the Special Rapporteur warned about the rise of extremism, which increases Roma vulnerability to racist violence, and expressed his concern at the reported cases of assault

against Roma by groups of skinheads, and about racist slogans against Roma, written on walls by a neo-Nazi group (named Nazi Swastika). Unfortunately, the most recent reports received by the Special Rapporteur contain similar information.

21. For instance, it was reported that, in some countries, extremist political parties have been at the forefront of political action against Roma camps. In a number of cases, it was also reported that Roma were often negatively portrayed and stigmatized especially, but not exclusively, by extremist nationalist groups. According to the information received, some incidents involving members of the Roma community occurred in recent years. For instance, cases of attacks by skinheads against groups of Roma people leading to injuries were reported. Similarly, some stakeholders reported that the police found the leaflets of a far-right group at the homes of some of the suspects in a case where a youth threw Molotov cocktails into a house inhabited by Roma.

22. The Special Rapporteur is also concerned about the establishment and development of “vigilante” groups or “self-defence guards” with extremist ideologies, including sometimes neo-Nazi ideology, who have attacked individuals, including Roma, sometimes without being prosecuted or sentenced. Reports were received about an increase in the creation and development of paramilitary groups, marching in some cases in the black uniform of the pre-Second World War fascist past, in underdeveloped settlements inhabited by Roma, on the pretence of preventing crime. In some cases, it was reported that the police did not prevent such demonstrations. The information received indicates that these groups share certain characteristics, such as militant posturing in uniforms, with anti-Roma and authoritarian ideology, and promising public security and offering effective protection for citizens in response to the failure of law enforcement agents, including the police, to do so. Some are also openly anti-Semitic. It was also reported that, in some cases, these organizations were supported and sponsored by extremist political parties, which gain political benefit from the media coverage of events involving vigilante groups. Furthermore, their presence in small communities helps the party behind them to maintain regular contact with the local population and therefore to increase their influence, including in rural areas.

23. The Special Rapporteur also received reports about incidents against migrants and foreigners committed by individuals closely linked to far-right nationalist parties, including attacks on houses where immigrants live, arson attacks on houses and places of worship, cases of beatings and stabbings of migrants and asylum-seekers in the street, and racist demonstrations in areas frequented by undocumented migrants and asylum-seekers that have led to them being injured. It was also reported that, in some cases, vigilante groups comprising members of extremist political parties, together with local residents, have been patrolling certain areas and intimidating, threatening and attacking migrants, thus creating “migrant-free zones”. Racist demonstrations organized by “extreme right elements” leaving migrants injured were also reported.

24. The Special Rapporteur urges States to take the measures necessary to ensure that perpetrators of racially motivated acts are held responsible and brought to justice. States should also pay due attention to the victims of such crimes, especially those belonging to vulnerable groups, by providing them with effective means to make complaints and to have access to effective remedies. In this regard, the Special Rapporteur is concerned that the underreporting of racist crimes by victims continues to be a problem, including in the case of irregular migrants and asylum-seekers. This lack of reporting distorts statistics and data, and may as a result create the impression that racist crimes by extremist political parties, movements and groups do not exist or are less prevalent than they actually are. The information received indicates that victims do not report incidents for several reasons, including fear of the police, a lack of trust in the criminal justice system and in public institutions in general, fear of reprisals, and sometimes language barriers and ignorance of the victims of their rights. States should ensure that victims are made aware of their rights and therefore have access to justice, including reparation. Further measures to better

engage with the victims, reduce fears, instil a sense of trust between the police and victims, and encourage the reporting of such crimes must be taken. Law enforcement officers and members of the judiciary should also be provided with specific training to help them deal with racist and xenophobic crimes in an effective, appropriate and human rights-based manner.

25. The lack of ethnically disaggregated data also remains an obstacle in addressing racist crimes committed or incited by extremist political parties, movements and groups. It was reported, for instance, that racially motivated crimes are often under-recorded and that major problems therefore arise when figures or even estimates of hate crimes committed have to be provided. The quality, reliability and pertinence of statistical tools used in some countries were also questioned. The collection of accurate and up-to-date ethnically disaggregated data on racist and xenophobic crimes is important, since it may help inform policy decisions on combating such crimes. The Special Rapporteur encourages those States that have not yet developed a system to collect ethnically disaggregated data to do so.

B. Protecting and consolidating democracy and human rights

26. As stated by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/199, extremist political parties, movements and groups pose a real threat to democratic values. In 2001, at the Durban Conference, States also recognized that political platforms and organizations based on racism, xenophobia or doctrines of racial superiority and related discrimination are incompatible with democracy. Unfortunately, reports received show that extremist political parties, movements and groups have gained influence in a number of countries and regions. Indeed, according to the information received, in recent years, the number of seats occupied by representatives of extremist political parties has continued to increase in national parliaments. Similar trends of particular concern were also reported at the regional level, where a number of far-right political parties managed to obtain seats during parliamentary elections. Furthermore, the Special Rapporteur received reports indicating that rhetoric by extremist political parties blaming migrants for political, economic and social problems has gained more supporters in the current economic crisis. Information received also suggests an increase in some cases of the popularity of extremist political parties engaging in election campaigns, and blaming in this context minorities, migrants and asylum-seekers for the problems of the country. Furthermore, it was reported that some extremist political parties, movements and groups have adopted new strategies to secure a place on the political scene by refraining from openly propagating racist and xenophobic discourse. Their strategy consists notably in adopting a more human rights-based discourse in order to gain votes and avoid being the subject of legal complaints. This will require a more vigilant approach if such strategies developed by extremist political parties, movements and groups are to be thwarted.

27. While countering extremist political parties, movements and groups remains a core challenge, another important challenge is the sometimes equivocal position taken by mainstream political parties towards them. The Special Rapporteur is indeed concerned about information received indicating that traditional political parties continue in some countries to form coalitions with extremist political parties. In view of the upcoming presidential and legislative elections to be held in some countries, the Special Rapporteur calls upon traditional political parties to refrain from seeking coalitions with extremist political parties and to avoid using electoral contexts to fuel populist ideas. He warns traditional political parties about the danger of endorsing through such coalitions the racist and xenophobic policies and programmes put forward by extremist political parties, which often aim at discriminating specific groups of individuals. It is crucial that political parties base their programmes and activities on respect for human rights and freedoms, democracy and the rule of law, and condemn any political message aimed at fuelling racist, xenophobic, discriminatory or intolerant ideas.

28. It is imperative that political leaders avoid playing the game of populism to gain votes and take all the measures necessary to deal adequately with certain social and economic issues, such as immigration, unemployment and insecurity, in particular in the current period of economic crisis and sometimes the discontent with and mistrust of the population in traditional political parties. As emphasized by the Special Rapporteur in his previous report (A/HRC/15/45, para. 30), political leaders and parties should provide answers to the populist and oversimplified statements of extremist political parties, movements and groups through reasoned argument, especially on the issues posed by immigration, insecurity and unemployment.

29. In the above context, the Special Rapporteur would like to recall that any measures to counter extremist political parties, movements and groups have to be taken in accordance with international human rights law and in a manner that upholds democratic principles. The Special Rapporteur is concerned about reports indicating that, in some cases, the law on extremism has been used to deprive political opponents of democratic legitimacy by labelling them as extremist and to unduly limit freedom of expression, including of the media. He recalls that States must ensure that all individuals and groups of individuals enjoy fully their rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association as enshrined in articles 19, 21 and 22 respectively of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Special Rapporteur further reiterates that, in any democratic society, individuals must be able to challenge the system in place and propose ideas for change. Indeed, the free expression of the will of the people must be respected. All individuals, regardless of their ideas, including those deemed radical, should be guaranteed without discrimination the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through chosen representatives, and to vote or to be elected at genuine elections.

30. Some stakeholders also provided information about the increased use of the Internet by individuals and groups of individuals closely linked to extremist movements to disseminate racist ideas. In this regard, the Special Rapporteur would like to express his concern about the use of the Internet to propagate racism, xenophobia, racial discrimination and related intolerance. In accordance with the provisions of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference, the Special Rapporteur encourages States to use the opportunities provided by new technologies, including the Internet, to counter the dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred. Furthermore, he reiterates that determining which acts or expressions may meet the thresholds determined in articles 19 to 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and in article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, is ultimately a decision that is best made after a thorough assessment of the individual circumstances of each case. This decision should always be guided by well-defined criteria, in accordance with international standards, and be made by an independent and impartial court or tribunal, taking into account the local conditions, history, culture and political context.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

31. The Special Rapporteur takes note of the efforts made by States to counter extremist political parties, movements and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and similar extremist ideological movements. However, while good practices have been identified, important challenges remain that require greater efforts and increased vigilance from States. Indeed, extremist political parties, movements and groups continue to pose major challenges, especially with regard to the protection of vulnerable groups of individuals against racist and xenophobic crimes, and the protection and consolidation of democracy and human rights in general. It is crucial that a comprehensive approach based on a solid legal framework that also includes key complementary measures be developed and that it be implemented in an

effective, inclusive and cooperative manner with the involvement of relevant actors. Particular attention should be paid to victims, and the sharing of good practices should also be taken into consideration by States. In this regard, the Special Rapporteur makes the recommendations below.

32. As stated in the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference, any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence should be prohibited by law, as should the dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination as well as all acts of violence or incitement to such acts. In this regard, the Special Rapporteur calls upon all States to respect the commitments made in the Durban documents. He calls upon States parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination to comply fully with their obligations as enshrined in article 4.

33. In order to prevent and to address in an effective manner the perpetration of racist or xenophobic crimes by individuals and groups of individuals closely linked to extremist political parties, movements and groups, States are urged to introduce into their domestic criminal law a provision according to which committing an offence with racist or xenophobic motivation or aim constitutes an aggravating circumstance allowing for heavier sanctions.

34. In this regard, States have the responsibility of bringing to justice the perpetrators of crimes with racist or xenophobic motivation and to fight against impunity. Indeed, as stated in paragraph 81 of the Durban Declaration, any form of impunity for crimes motivated by racist and xenophobic attitudes plays a role in weakening the rule of law and democracy and tends to encourage the recurrence of such acts. Therefore States should ensure prompt, thorough and impartial investigation of racist and xenophobic crimes, and ensure that those responsible are adequately sanctioned.

35. Due attention should also be paid to the victims of such crimes, whose rights to life and security of person are violated. In this respect, the Special Rapporteur urges States to ensure the full access of victims of crimes motivated by racist or xenophobic attitudes to effective legal remedies, including the right to seek just and adequate reparation for any damage suffered as a result of such crimes. The Special Rapporteur also recommends that States ensure that victims of racist or xenophobic crimes are provided with necessary legal, medical and psychological assistance. States should also ensure that all victims are made aware of their rights and of existent judicial and non-judicial remedies. The Special Rapporteur reiterates that States should further engage with vulnerable groups who are at particular risk of racist or xenophobic crimes, reduce their fear, restore confidence in law enforcement officers and allow for better reporting of such crimes.

36. The Special Rapporteur notes with concern the increased use of the Internet by extremist political parties, movements and groups to proliferate, promote and disseminate racist content. He would like to reaffirm the positive role that freedom of expression can play in promoting democracy and combating racist and xenophobic ideologies. In this respect, the Special Rapporteur calls on States to implement fully articles 19 to 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantee the rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association and determine the limitations thereto. He also encourages States to use new technologies, including the Internet, to promote the values of equality, non-discrimination, diversity and democracy.

37. The Special Rapporteur strongly recommends that law enforcement agents collect data on racist and xenophobic crimes and that they improve the quality of such data-collection systems. As the Special Rapporteur stated in his previous report

(A/HRC/15/45, para. 29), data on racist and xenophobic crimes help States to develop effective policies and programmes to tackle crimes motivated by racist or xenophobic attitudes, to assess and monitor the effectiveness of measures taken, and to review existing legislation when necessary. The collection of such data can also help States to identify the types of offences committed and the characteristics of victims and perpetrators, especially if they are affiliated with an extremist political party, movement or group.

38. The Special Rapporteur also recommends that States strengthen the capacity of law enforcement agents and members of the judiciary through adequate and mandatory human rights training, with a focus on crimes motivated by racist or xenophobic attitudes. Law enforcement agents should be provided with the necessary instructions, procedures and resources to identify, investigate and register racist and xenophobic crimes.

39. Concrete steps should be taken to raise awareness among the population about the adverse effects of the ideologies and activities of extremist political parties, movements and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and similar extremist ideological movements. The organization of cultural events, festivals, conferences, seminars, competitions, exhibitions, research work and publications, as well as information campaigns and other events aimed at providing a space for intercultural dialogue and interaction, are further positive measures which contribute to the building of a society based on pluralism, tolerance, respect for cultural diversity, multiculturalism and non-discrimination. The Special Rapporteur emphasizes that human rights education is a key tool in countering the rise of extremist political parties, movements and groups. Educational measures are indeed crucial in promoting human rights and democratic values at an early age.

40. Preserving and consolidating democracy is essential to effectively prevent and combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. In this regard, political leaders and political parties must strongly condemn all political messages that disseminate ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination or xenophobia. Political leaders and political parties should be aware of the moral authority that they bear, and promote tolerance and respect, and refrain from forming coalitions with extremist political parties of a racist or xenophobic character. Respect for human rights and freedoms, democracy and the rule of law must always be the cornerstone of any programme or activity developed by political parties, while they bear in mind the need to ensure that the political and legal systems reflect the multicultural character of their societies at all levels.

41. Efforts made by States to counter extremist political parties, movements and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and similar extremist ideological movements should be enhanced through the replication of good practices. In this regard, it is important that the sharing of good practices among all relevant stakeholders be increased. Indeed, as stated in the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference, a broad sharing of best practices in all regions of the world aimed at preventing, combating and eradicating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance can assist Governments, Parliaments, the judiciary, social partners and civil society in the effective implementation of the provisions of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

42. To conclude, the Special Rapporteur would like to recall the importance of cooperating closely with civil society and international and regional human rights mechanisms to effectively counter extremist political parties, movements and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups, and similar extremist ideological movements. The Special Rapporteur emphasizes in particular the important role played by civil society in collecting information, working closely with victims and promoting democratic principles and human rights. The Special Rapporteur also calls

upon national human rights institutions to develop appropriate programmes to promote tolerance of and respect for all persons and all human rights, and to combat extremism.
