

IGWG 8th session

Item 8: Structural Discrimination—definitions, approaches and trends

Third draft as of 22 October 2010

1. The Working Group acknowledges the complexity of the phenomenon of structural discrimination and its evolving nature and highlights that further efforts are needed with a view to exploring it in the context of the fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.
2. The Working Group, however, takes note that some of the views expressed during the panel discussion indicate that in general terms structural discrimination may refer to rules, norms, practices, patterns of attitudes and behavior in institutions and other societal structures that represent obstacles to groups or individuals in achieving equal rights and opportunities. Such discrimination may be either open or hidden, and it could occur intentionally or unintentionally.
3. The Working Group also takes note that some of the views expressed during the panel discussion indicate that in general terms structural racial discrimination may refer to racist, xenophobic, intolerant or at face value neutral patterns of behavior and attitudes within societal structures that may have disproportionate effect on specific individuals or groups of individuals in relation to their race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin. According to some of the views expressed during the panel discussion, the existence of such discrimination is related inter alia to the persistence of deeply rooted racial prejudice and negative stereotypes in societies that perpetuate inequality.
4. Bearing in mind the paragraphs above, the Working Group concludes that measures, including affirmative and positive measures, should be considered during further work on the phenomenon of structural discrimination.
5. The Working Group therefore encourages relevant UN human rights mechanisms, including the Human Rights Council's Advisory Committee, within their respective mandates, to consider further studying the phenomenon of structural discrimination in the context of combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.